

# creatures

www.creatures.net

## Docking Station

### What's It All About?

Docking Station is an open-ended game – you play however you like to play. Some players choose to try and maintain a steady, healthy population of Norns; others prefer to concentrate on a single creature or perhaps breed for appearance. It's completely up to you!

The Norns of the game are living creatures – they have a complex biochemistry, a system of organs, a brain that is capable of learning, and a genome that specifies all of it.

Norns also have a computerised genetic code called Creatures Digital DNA. It controls everything about them – their appearance, their ability to digest food, their intelligence and their health. Norns can breed and pass their unique DNA to their offspring.

Keeping Norns healthy isn't always easy. It's your job to steer them through life, teach them right from wrong, and patch them up if it all goes wrong!



### Capillata, a Living Space Station

Far back in the mists of time, the ancient race of Shee left Albia, in search of a new home in a huge biological spaceship, the Shee Ark.

That, however, is another story...

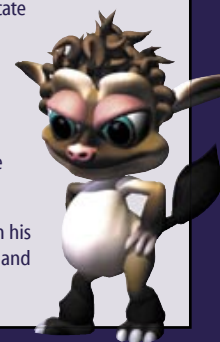
The Shee were not known for their timekeeping skills, and when the huge ship left, one Shee scientist was left behind on an empty planet. He'd been working on a new method for travelling from place to place and only noticed that the others had left when he was satisfied his new device was fully functional. This device would have saved all the work that had gone before – if only they had waited for him!

His device allowed you to open up these, er... blue things, and step through. The other end of the blue thing could be configured to drop you out at all sorts of places – some of the things he saw were a bit warped for his taste. Hmmm... "Warp". That would be a suitable name for the blue thing! To be honest he wasn't really sure whether the warp connected places in space or places in time – come to think of it he wasn't 100% sure that the place he was in now was where he actually started. But it looked very similar and at the end of the day that was all that mattered.

He decided he had to follow the rest of the Shee and show them what they had missed, so using various spare genomic bits and bobs from around the planet he built a new living spaceship, which he called Capillata.

The last Shee loaded up what supplies he thought would be necessary, and packed some samples to tinker with during the journey. He had a brilliant idea for launching the space station – exploding the old volcano would give Capillata the necessary thrust to leave Albia. Of course, this would destroy a lot of Albia's delicate ecosystem, but you can't stand in the way of the march of science. He'd left explicit instructions with the few Ettins left on Albia for them to clean up after the radiation levels had died down sufficiently. Surely even the Ettins couldn't mess that up!

So the last of the Shee travelled on, in his eternal quest for the Shee spaceship, and hopefully a new source of tea, too.



HUD – Displays currently selected creature, name and gender. Click on name to open Creature History. Click hand icon to enter Agent Help mode. Clicking an agent when in this mode will bring up information about the agent. Click the red button to go online.

Favourite Places icons

Warning Icons – Click to clear and deal with the cause of the warning.

Life Events – Click to clear and zoom to event location.

Creatures Menu – The Creature Menu allows you to see a summary of all of your creatures and their names. You can also import and export Norns to and from your hard drive from here.

Options Menu – Set various game preferences here.

Inventory – An in-game box you can use to carry things as you move around the station.

A portal – Configure this in the Workshop to send Norns to other Docking Station worlds around the internet.

The HoverDoc – Click Ctl-H to find it in the world.

Agents – Left-click on an agent to activate it; right-click to pick it up.



Currently Selected Creature – Left-click to reward/punish. Right-click to lead it around.

Selected Creature's focus of attention

The Hand – This is your in-world presence. You can move the Hand around with the mouse.

# The Six Step Guide to Your First Norns

## 1: Name Them

Norns can be named using the Agent Help facility: Press F1, or click on the hand icon in the HUD. The Hand object will change to show a question mark.

Right-click the Norn you wish to name. A window will open that lets you see all sorts of information about the creature, including major life events, such as births, pregnancies and deaths, a photograph album, and some genetic information.



**Talking to your Norns** Once you've taught your Norns their words, you can communicate with them. Move the Hand near to them and type something! Press the enter button to 'speak' your typed words.

Verb	Action	Verb	Action
Yes	Another way of rewarding a Norn for good behaviour	No	Another way of punishing a Norn for bad behaviour.
Push/Pull	Perform an action on an agent.	Look	Look at an agent
Stop	Stop performing an action	Eat	Eat an agent
Approach	Walk towards an agent	Express	State current desires and needs
Retreat	Walk away from an agent	Rest	Encourage a creature to take a rest.
Hit	Hit an agent or other creatures!	Left	Travel towards the left
Get	Pick up an agent	Right	Travel towards the right
Drop	Drop whatever you are carrying	What	Asks what a creature is doing

## 2: Right From Wrong

Your Norns will mostly learn the differences between positive and negative actions themselves. When they eat, they learn that eating reduces hunger – so when they're hungry, they'll look for food.



Although they're very effective at learning by themselves, you can help with this process by rewarding them for good behaviour, or punishing them for bad actions. If you click on a Norn's nose, you'll hear a little scratching sound. This will reward the Norn, and make it feel happier and more relaxed. Likewise, if your Norn does something bad, you can punish them by clicking on their bottoms to slap them.

## 3: Teach Them to Talk

Norns have a simple language that lets them communicate with you and with each other. In most cases, this takes the form of subject-verb-noun sentences such as 'Melanie eat food'. Norns can also express their current need, so you may also see creatures saying things like 'Melanie very tired'.

**Agents** - All agents on the ship are placed in different categories. All edibles, for example, are either seeds, fruit or food. To find out the Nornish names for agents, switch on Agent Help and click on the agent you wish to find the word for.

**Actions and Feelings** - Norns can also express their current emotional state, or declare their current action. The Holistic Learning device that can be activated by Norns, teaches them the entire vocabulary, including actions, feelings and the agent categories.



## 4: Breed Them

Once you've taught your Norns some basic language and you're successfully dealing with the moment-to-moment care such as providing food or entertainment, you can work towards your first second-generation Norn. Norns are usually ready to breed after about an hour of life (according to the game time clock). The Creature History will tell you at which life stage your Norns are.

When Norns mate, they make a long kssssss-pop sound. Females will not always become pregnant after mating, as it depends on where she is in her hormonal cycle. If she does become pregnant, you'll see a pregnancy Life Event icon appear below the HUD.

You can trace a particular Norn's ancestry via the Creature History screen.



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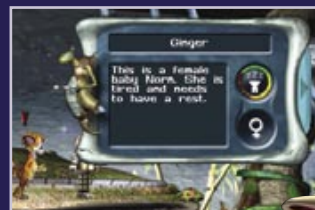
## Keyboard Shortcuts

TAB:	Cycle between creatures	CTRL + S:	Repeat the last command
ESC:	Exit Docking Station	INSERT:	Force tickle when clicking a creature
F1:	Toggles Agent Help on or off	DELETE:	Force slap when clicking a creature
F6 – F12:	Programmable Speech Hot-Keys		

## 5: Care For Them

Generally speaking, a well-fed, well-looked after Norn will enjoy good health for most of its life. Nevertheless, there are hazards out there the novice Norn breeder should be aware of, including infection and disease, poisoning and starvation.

Don't lose hope if you get a sick Norn. There are two powerful medical tools in the Capillata designed to diagnose and treat illness:



**The HoverDoc** – This Shee constructed device is capable of diagnosing all known Norn diseases, and suggests a cure. Right-click to pick it up and drop it on the Norn you'd like to diagnose.

**The Containment Area** – This is where new Norns arrive on your station, and acts as quarantine for new creatures. However, you can also place any of your creatures in there to check their health.

## 6: Give Them a Good Burial

It is said that nothing in life is inevitable, save death and taxes, and this is partly true for Norns. They don't pay taxes, but they are bound to shuffle off their mortal coil sooner or later – hopefully later. The natural life span for a Norn is about seven hours, although you may get longer lived mutants. Of course, they can die of disease or misfortune before this time, so it's up to you to try and give them a long and full life.

If you have had a Norn die for no apparent reason, the HoverDoc can perform post-mortems, and tell you what went wrong.

