Internet Scrabble Club
Getting Started

Introduction

Internet Scrabble Club (or ISC) is a website that allows players around the world to play Scrabble. Once a user has a registered account for ISC, a game of Scrabble can be played using an Internet-connected computer. Game play will be familiar to competitive Scrabble players: for example, the computer version uses timed play, players can challenge plays using a standard dictionary and, when desired, a player may turn in all or a portion of one's rack for new letters.

For an interesting account of ISC from the New York Times, see `https://nyti.ms/3bMYuKu`.

First Steps

To get started, here's what you need:

- An Internet-connected computer

- An email address

- An ISC username you wish to use (recommended: choose a pseudonym)

- A password you would like associated with your ISC username

To create an account for ISC, follow these steps:

1. Open a browser and go to `https://www.isc.ro`. (You may want to bookmark this site in your browser for future ease of reaching ISC.) In response, you will be greeted by a window like the one shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Window from a first visit to the ISC site.

2. To accept the default language, USA English, click on OK. In response, you will see the window shown in Figure 2
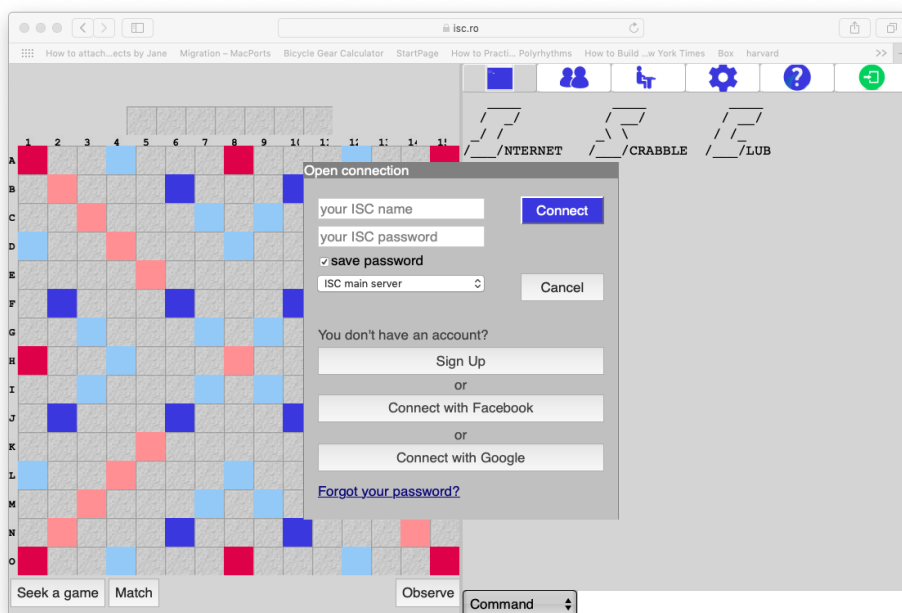

Figure 2: Getting ready to establish an ISC user name and password.

3. As you can see, there are three ways to sign up for an account. To keep things simple, we will focus on the first of these, i.e., using the Sign Up button. Click on this first choice within the Open connection sub-window. In response, you will be greeted by a Sign Up window, where you are invited to enter your desired ISC name and password, along with your email address. (Your ISC name must not already be taken by another user, so you may need to make an alternate choice in the rare case that your user name is already in use.) Provide these, then click on Create an account. In response, the ISC server will send you an email with a PIN and an included link, intended to verify that you control the email address you provided. You can ignore the PIN if you choose to follow the link, as described here.

4. Go to your email, find the welcome mail message from ISC and click on the included link. In response, you should receive a message indicating that your email address was verified. When you return to the ISC window, you will see that you are now connected to the site. For now, exit the site by clicking on the red, door-shaped icon near the upper right of the window.

5. When you return to https://www.isc.ro you will be given an opportunity to open a connection, by providing your ISC user name and password. If you are using you own computer, you may wish to check the save password to make connecting a bit simpler. Otherwise, leave this unchecked and enter your ISC user name and password each time. In either case, click on the Connect button to get connected to the ISC site. If successful, you will be greeted with the sound of trumpets! You will now see a window similar to the one shown in Figure 3.
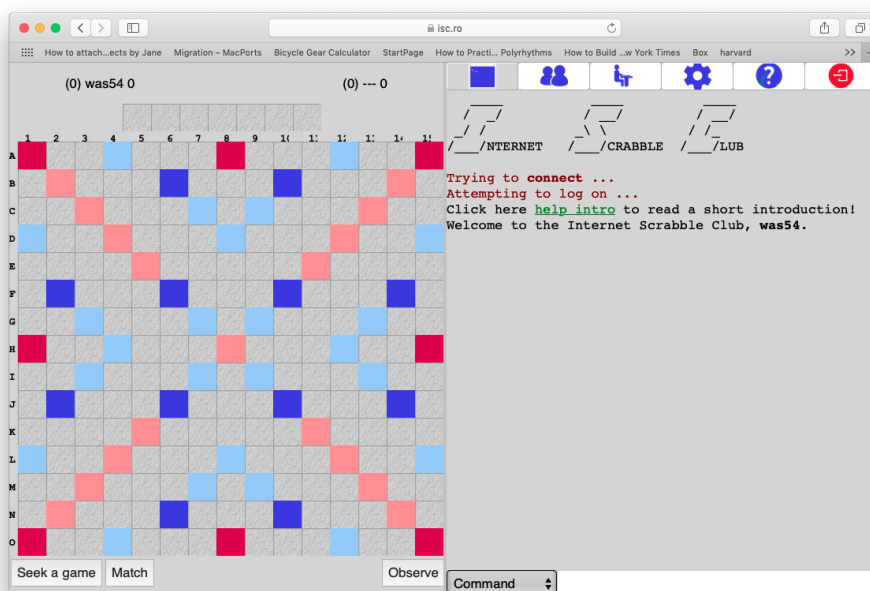
Figure 3: After connecting to the ISC site.

Let's take a few moments to see what is in this window. On the left is the familiar Scrabble board. The right hand side varies, depending upon the choice made from the upper right menu icons. From left to right these icons are: the main console, a list of "buddies," other players seeking a game, settings, and help. (We have already encountered the exit door icon on the far right.) These will be discussed in greater detail below.

Menu Icons

Console

The console is used during game play to record each player's moves. Games are played in console mode, which is the default upon logging into the ISC server.

Buddies

Use Buddies to create a roster of Charleston Scrabble club members. Click on the Buddies icon, the two silhouetted blue figures. For each club member, enter their ISC name, click on Search, then add them to your list by clicking on the bold-face name which appears.

Seek

We will not need this for club play.

Settings

Click on the gear icon to reveal settings which control game play and overall appearance. There are a few settings you need to change for club play.

- For Interface Settings, accept the defaults. Close the interface settings by clicking on the small triangle to its left.

- For Game Settings, click on its small triangle to see the options. Set the initial time to 35 minutes per game, with 0 increment, 2 for quietplay, 2 for mood, and 1 for notify me when a buddy joins/leaves. The three options below this—noescape, private and rated—should be unchecked. Ensure that the American dictionary is set to TWL, and that challenge is set to DOUBLE.

  Double check these settings, then close the Game settings by clicking on its triangle.

- Skipping to the Set chat channels, open this section and choose to Leave chat channel #20, which will reduce the amount of chatter that you would otherwise see.

Help

Explore this as the need arises.

Game Play

Games are played in console mode. For club play, there are two ways a game can be started, depending on who initiates play. Suppose you wish to start a game. To do this, click on the Match button on the bottom left of the game board. Provide the ISC name of your opponent, then click on the Match button within the smaller window that appeared. After this player accepts, play begins. Things to note while the game proceeds:

- At the top of the board, next to each player's name the current score and time remaining appears. You should get audible feedback to know that it is your turn, but you can always note which timer is counting down.

- Tiles in your rack can be rearranged by dragging them with the mouse. Two tiles will trade places as a result of this action.

- Tiles can be placed on the board using the mouse, dragging each into place. When you are satisfied with your play, use the Enter key to pass play to your opponent. (Alternately, click on DONE.)

- If you change your mind about a play, prior to hitting the Enter key, a quick way to return the tiles to your rack is to simply click on your timer.

- For some players, a quicker way to place tiles on the board is to use the mouse to indicate where your first tile is to be placed. A click at that square will toggle the orientation you intend for the word. Then, simply use the keyboard to type your word.

- All or a portion of your rack can be exchanged by using the Change button. Similarly, you may give up your turn using the Pass button.

- The console window will show what word your opponent played, its location, and point value for the play. If you wish to challenge the play, use the Challenge button. The computer will consult the TWL dictionary and judge accordingly.

- The bag icon shows the remaining tiles, i.e., what is in the bag along with your opponent's tiles.