EmuLa
The Emulator Launcher
RC v1.4 (v22)

User Guide

1.0 - INTRODUCTION

EmuLa is one of my biggest project, it's my own vision of the definitive retrogaming universal frontend!

Retrogaming it's one of the most loved hobbies for people who like to re-vive games they have played when they was childs, but there are also people that love to play old classics without spending big moneys to buy old consoles and old games.

Since I'm a retrogamer inside I've tried hundreds of softwares to manage my collections but even if there are very good products available, no one is able to satisfy what I was looking for.

Many softwares of this kind offers great flexibility, they can be configured as you wish and can run several emulators, but for a newcomer this is a pain! A gamer that just want to play a game must first configure the front-end, then the emulator needed for his games, then he have to scan his media for a type of rom (game) and if all was setup correctly, finally he can play the game.
Sometimes it is difficult to configure the front-end and sometimes you can easily spend hours to figure out why your game is not running: that's why I've decided to write my own universal front-end for the most common emulators, a front-end easy to manage, almost completely automated, some-thing you can setup in seconds without spending half of your life life to configu-re stuff.

With my free time I'd like to play not to became old configuring obscure things, and I think to share this feeling with many retro-players around.

1.1 - But exactly, what is EMULA?

EmuLa stands for **EMU**lator **LA**uncher and it's my attempt to create a cross platform software able to manage, recognize and run games (legaly) ow-ned by the user.
One of the most important goal is to let the software be easy enough for everyone, even for people with no emulators knowledge, and for people that have no computer skills, but just want to play their games as fast as pos-sible.
Another feature I was looking for was to have a tool that let me access to the infinite library of homebrew, public domain and demo-scene easily, directly from one program: now EmuLa can do this, and with just one mouse click!

1.2 - How can be done?

Emula recognizes roms using the rom's CRC and the rom's size, without going to deep into details you should know that any file (so even roms) have a

unique CRC, something like a footprint, and we can use this "magic number" to let EmuLa recognize roms even if the files have a misleading names.

This system also take some good things to the end user, for example he will never be prompted to make a choice in case of ambiguos roms and will never download wrong additional data (game art for example) for his rom.

Have you ever tried to scan your rom folder with any of the existing front-end and after the scan you came up with games informations completely wrong that you need to edit by hand? This is frustrating but most important it's time consuming: well, this situation will never happen with EmuLa!

Another benefit using this system is that you don't need that your roms are organized into folders or have correct file names, you can have all of your roms messed up in your hard drive or in your USB thumb drive and EmuLa will still be able to recognize your roms and which emulator is needed to let you play with it. Only one scan process is needed to find all supported roms, forget multiple scans (one for each supported platform), forget time spent watching your computer asking you to resolve ambiguos rom manually, forget hours spent editing wrong rom informations!

1.3 - Emulators? I just want to play old games!

That's the point: **I want to spend my free time playing games!** The software must do the rest and with EmuLa you don't need to configure anything!

EmuLa will do the hard work for you, as it should be! Once you have scanned your devices to identify the rom files, you will get the list of recognized roms, just click run on one title and if that rom need an emulator not yet installed in your system, EmuLa will download it, install it and run the selected game!

So let's recap :
- Only the first time (or when you add new roms) : press the **[SCAN]** button
- Press one of the supported system buttons to populate the game list
- Select a game and press the **[RUN]** button

Isn't it easy enough?

1.4 - Game Art?

During the scan process all available art will be downloaded for you, banners, fan art, logos, front and back covers, all this stuff will be done automatically without user interaction.

No cryptic questions, no cryptic choices, just fun with your retrogaming!

1.5 - Is EmuLa free?

EmuLa will be released in one single version, but if you want to access premium feature you have to subscribe buying a license code that will unlock EmuLa for some time.

I think this is the best choice because you can use EmuLa as a free tool but if you want to support further development and access all premium features you can subscribe for 3, 6, 12 or 24 months at reasonable prices. You can also buy a lifetime subscription and forget about renewing the subscription.

For further details have a look at the official EmuLa's web page:
http://www.a-mc.biz/_software/emula/

The development is open, and if many users will request specific features I will be glad to add them to the future EmuLa versions. You can discuss about EmuLa on its official forum:
http://a-mc.biz/support/categories/-emula

With EmuLa you will never lose one more second of your life configuring emulators or try to figure out why your games does not run, you only have to click on a game title and hit the **[RUN]** button.

Moreover, for the Premium version, there are some nice upcoming features like cheats sharing, worldwide hiscores, download of homebrew (partially implemented) and demos, soundtrack, and many other goodies that will make your retrogaming more addicting and… ehm… more modern!

If you decide to use the free version you will be able to play like in the Premium version but without all the whistles and bells of the Premium version.

The reason why I'm asking money for the Premium version is that it is taking much time to be developed, make EmuLa recognize all roms requires time also adding all free contents available for EmuLa downloads requires time.

Anyway I think the price is fair considering what your getting, paying for the Premium version is a way to keep me motivated on this project so I can add more fetures, more supported roms, more downloadable contents and make you happy with your retrogaming.

2.0 - EMULA INTERFACE

Here is a screenshot of the main window:
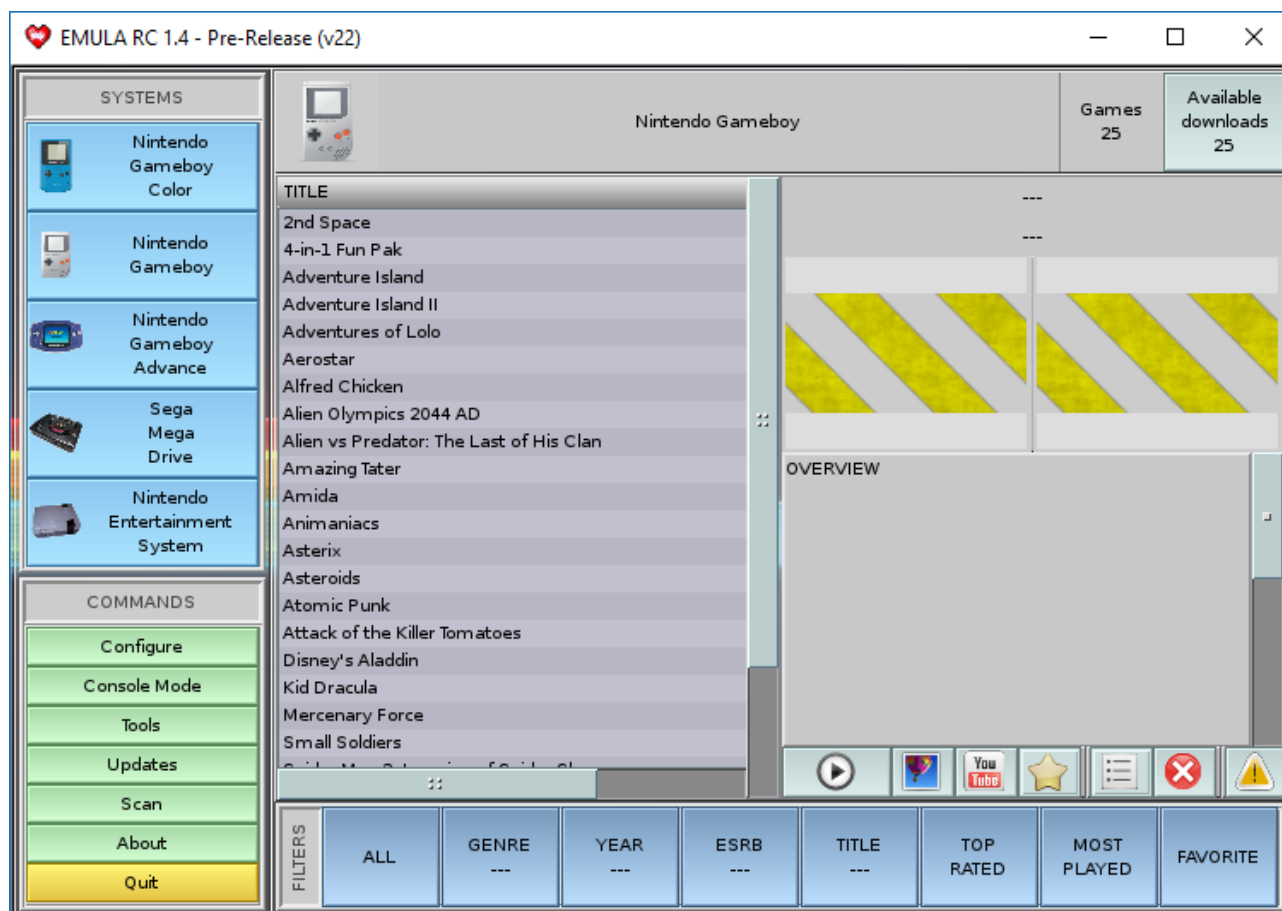
The interface is very easy to understand, as you can see from the picture above you have a left column divided into two areas, the top area let you access available systems and the bottom area holds EmuLa commands.

In the bigger right space the screen is divided into three main horizontal areas, starting from the top we have: emulated system details, available rom list (left) and selected rom's details (right), rom filters.

Let's see each section in details.

2.1 - COMMANDS
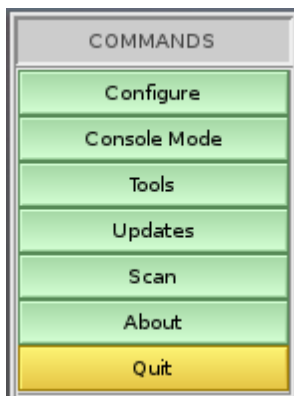
This area is used to let EmuLa perform actions, the first button **[Configure]** opens a configuration window, right now you can select the fullscreen mode resolution and if you want to play your games on fullscreen mode or on windowed mode.

The second button **[Console Mode]** allow you to switch to the fullscreen interface. You can use they keyboard, the mouse, or a joypad/joystick to browse your roms. This mode is even simpler the the GUI mode and I'm planning to exampand it a bit more.

The third button **[Tools]** will open a window with some useful tools like **Audit**, **Backup & Restore**, and **Reset**.

The **[Updates]** button will check the EmuLa server for updates.

The **[Scan]** button will prompt you for a folder to scan in search of roms.

The **[About]** button will show you some basic informations about EmuLa and your current license.

Finally the **[Quit]** button will shut-down EmuLa.
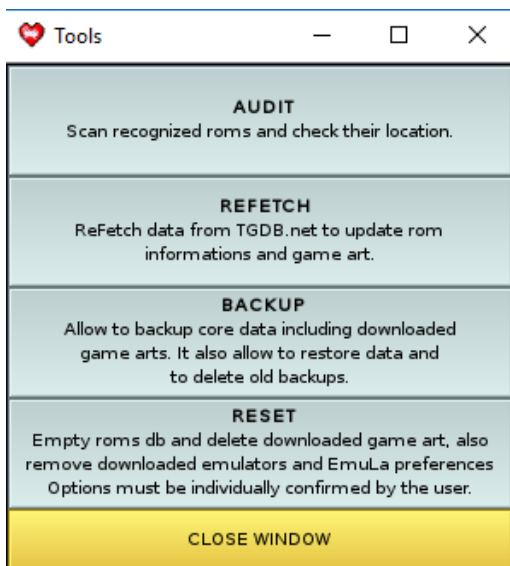
2.1.1 - CONFIGURE

As said before this button will open a window with two options: one to select the fullscreen mode resolution and one to select if you want to play your games in fullscreen mode or in windowed mode.

This window will be populated with more options with the upcoming EmuLa releases.

2.1.2 - TOOLS

The **[Tools]** button will open a window like the one showed on the right:

AUDIT

This button performs a check on your current rom-set. Before starting this process you should connect any external media where your roms are stored.

The purpose of Audit function is to check if a previously recognized rom is still on it's original path, if the rom is not found you will be asked if you want

to remove the rom from the recognized rom's database.

This function is particularly usefull after you have moved your rom set from one location to another and you want to clean up the database to update rom's paths.

REFETCH

The refetch button is used to sinchronize the rom's informations you have with the most recent available, also, if you are missing game art, or new game art is available, the refetch function will download all the missing/update stuff.

BACKUP

This button will open another window where you will be able to backup your precious data, but you will also be able to restore data previously saved. The backup process will make a complete copy of all EmuLa databases, downloaded contents and game art. It is really usefull whenever you want to move your installation or if you need to restore a backup to avoid to download again the same stuff.

RESET

Reset is used to completely reset EmuLa database, it is a selective reset because you will be prompted if you want to reset recognized roms database, game art folder, downloaded contents folder and installed emulators.

2.1.3 - UPDATES

Click this button to let EmuLa look for updates, possible updates can be:
- Supported roms
- Supported systems
- Downloadable contents
- EmuLa program package

2.1.4 - SCAN

This button will ask you for a folder to scan, once the process is started EmuLa will start to look for roms in the base folder and in all subfolders recursively. Zipped files will be unzipped and checked so it's perfectly legal to have your roms zipped on your storage.

Once a rom is recognized EmuLa will try to download additional informations and game art from TheGameDB.net.

Remember that:
- You <u>don't need</u> to do multiple scan, one for each platform like on the majority of front-ends out there.
- You <u>don't need</u> to watch your screen while scanning because EmuLa will never ask you to resolve ambiguities. The only requester you can see could be caused by a unavailibility of the Internet connection.
- Each rom can be stored in zip archives to save space, **EmuLa is able**

to handle them properly even if the emulator does not support it.

- Be patient during the scan, it can take some time but you will never need to do additional scans unless you will add new roms that need to be added.

2.1.5 - ABOUT

hitting this button an informative window will be showed, like this:
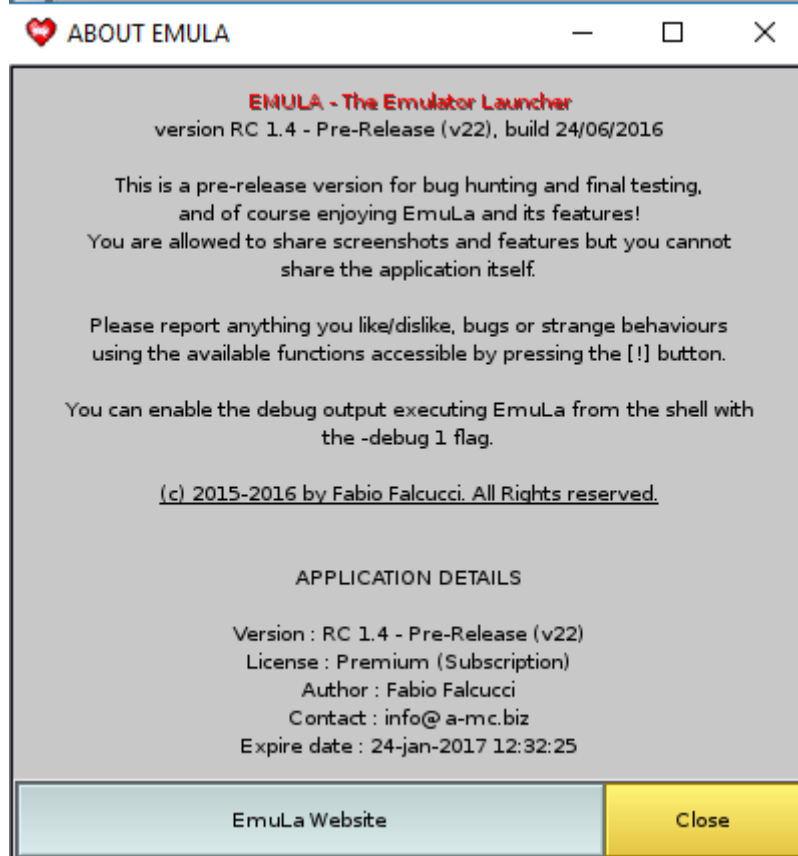
2.1.6 - QUIT

Hit this button to quit EmuLa.
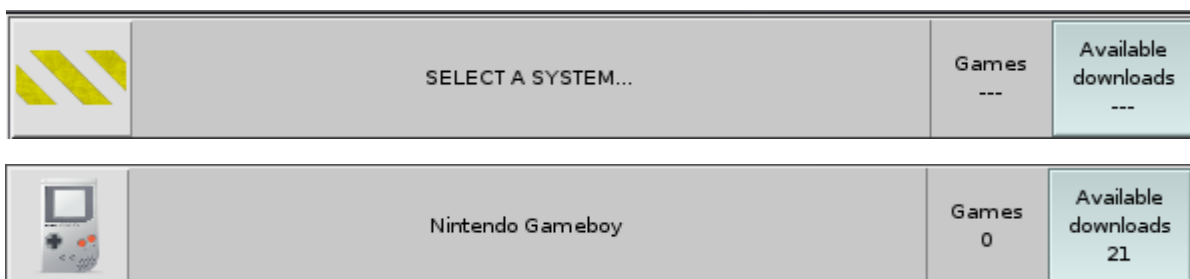
2.1 - SYSTEMS

This section is used to switch from one system to another. Once you have performed a **[Scan]** operation you can hit one of the supported systems to populate the list on the right side of the interface.

Actually supported systems are:
- Game boy
- Game boy color
- Game boy advance
- NES
- Genesis / Mega Drive

But more systems will be added, a total of 23 retro-platforms has been planned!

2.2 - SYSTEM DETAILS

Above you can see how the system details section appear when you start Emu-La and just after you have pressed an available system's button (in this example the Game Boy has been pressed).

On the left there is the system icon, in the middle the system name and on the right you can see how many roms you have for this system, and how many **downloadable roms are available**.

2.2.1 - DOWNLOADABLE CONTENTS

The button on the right side of the system details shows how many downloadable contents are available for the selected system, if you have already downloaded some stuff this number will show you how many roms you can still download, this way you will only see stuff you don't own yet avoiding confusion and/or download roms you already have in your collection.

Downloadable contents will be updated from time to time with homebrew software, public domain, abandonware and demos from the demo scene. Only free (or licensed) roms will be available through this button.
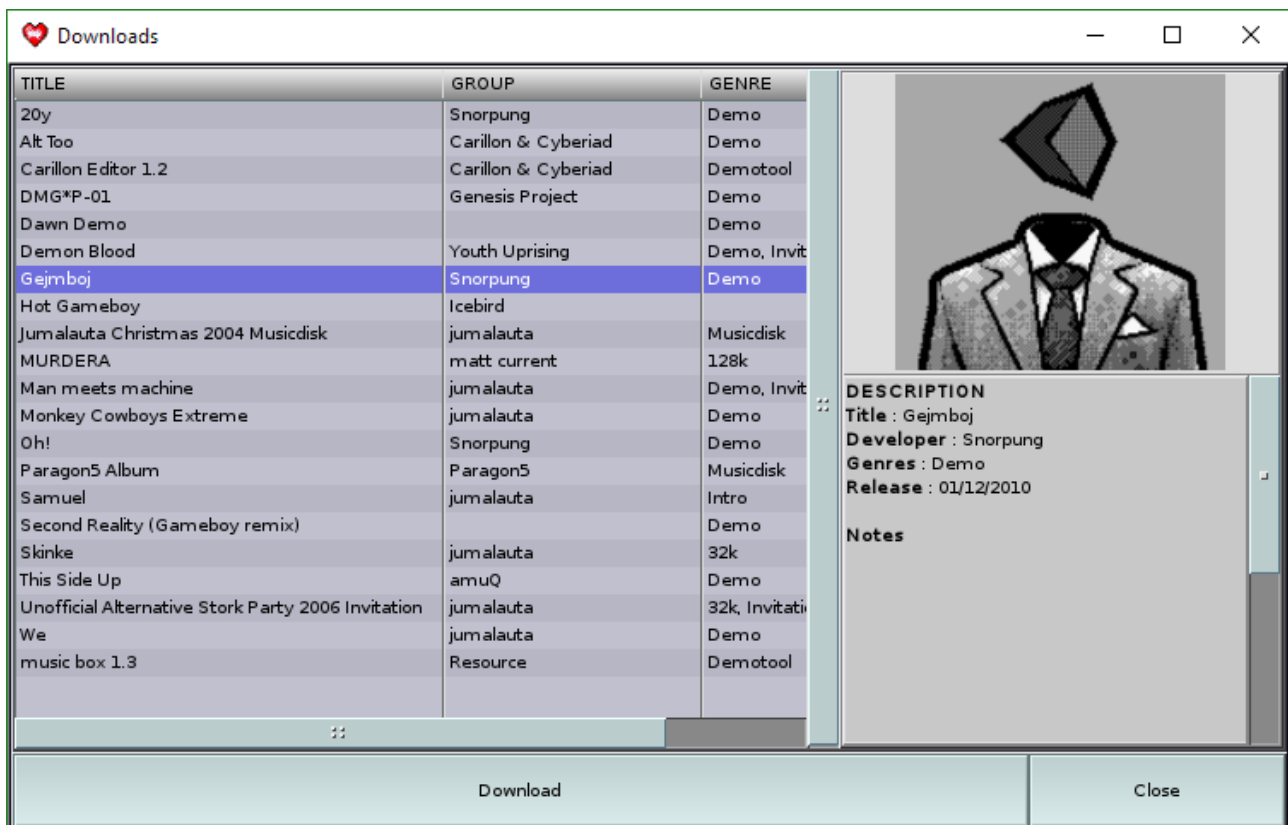
When you press the **[Download]** button the following window will be showed:

On the left side you will see a list of downloadable contents while on the right side you can see a screenshot (on the upper side) and some details (on the lower side) of the select content.

This feature <u>need an Internet connection</u> because the screenshot is fetched from Internet, if you don't have Internet you will not be able to see the screenshot and you will not be able to download the contents.

Pressing the **[Download]** button EmuLa will start immediatly to download the content and, after the download has completed, it will be immediatly available in your library, ready to run!

A progress bar will keep you informed about the download process.

2.3 - ROM LIST
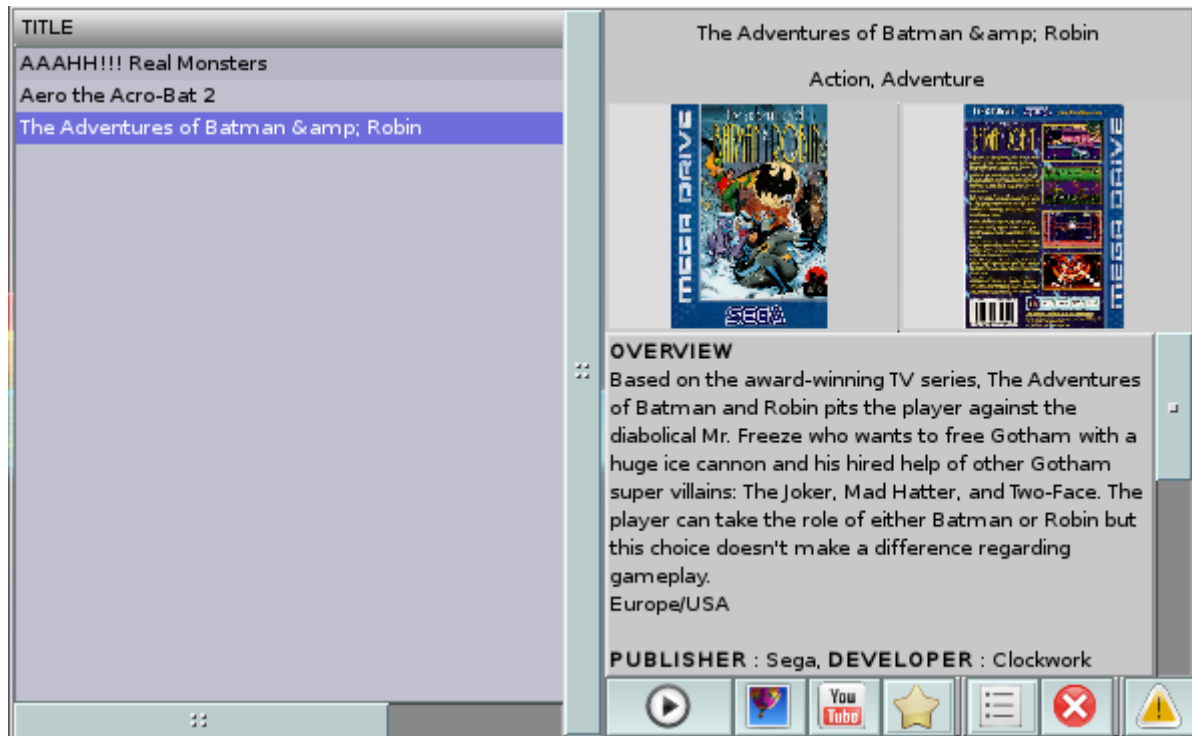
Just below the system details section there is the rom list (on the left) and the rom details box (on the right). Clicking a title on the rom list will update the rom details and also will make you able to run the selected rom using the **[Run]** button command, the one with the play synbol.

The small command bar below the rom's details have the following buttons (from left to right):
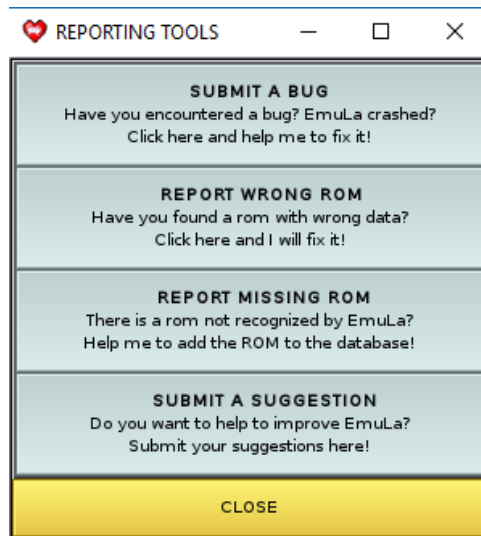
- **[Run]** Push this button to run the selected rom, if it is the first time you run a game for the active system a suitable emulator will be downloaded and installed for you!
  Note that when you run a game EmuLa will freeze, this is a feature not a bug because while you are playing EmuLa will elapse the game time to give you some statistics, EmuLa will also be able to sort your roms by the most played ones using the total play time spent on each rom.
- **[Art]** Opens the game art browser: you can easily view available game art, like fan art, cover boxes, banners, logos and so on.
- **[YouTube]** Opens your browser to the linked video on YouTube, this is usefull if you want to review the rom.
- **[Favorite]** is a switch, you can use to put/remove the active rom in/from your favorite list.
- **[Multi Select]** This switch enable/disable the multiselect mode in the rom list, this is mostly used if you want to remove one or more roms form your database, maybe because you don't like them or because they are duplicates.
- **[Delete]** This button will remove the selected rom from your databa-

se, you will be asked if you want to also remove the rom file or if you want to keep it on your storage.

- **[!]** This button is used for user's feedback and bug reporting. Hitting this button will open a window with some reporting tools so you can help me to make EmuLa a better software. Below there is a datailed description.

2.3.1 SUBMITTING REPORTS

Pushing the **[!]** button opens the following requester:

Please select the appropriate option to submit your request, actually you can:
- **[SUBMIT BUG]** To submit a bug, a wrong behaviour or a crash.
- **[REPORT WRONG ROM]** To submit the currently selected rom as wrong, for example if EmuLa has recognized this rom wrongly.
- **[REPORT MISSING ROM]** To submit a rom that EmuLa is not able to recognize (so I can add it in a future update)
- **[SUBMIT SUGGEST]** To submit a suggestion to improve EmuLa or to add new features.

 Note that <u>all submissions are collected anonymously</u>, this means that nor you or your system details will be tracked.
 If you need to be contacted back remember to include an e-mail address on your report or there will be no way to contact you back!
 You can also use the support forum (listed at the top of this guide) to submit bugs.
 When you submit a missing rom your rom will be scanned and only the rom file name and its CRC will be transmitted, your rom will not be transmitted in any way because it's illegal.

2.4 - PROGRESSIVE FILTERS

Finally we have the progressive filters on the bottom:

Progressive filters means that you can apply one filter on the top of the previous one until you have found what are you looking for.

Actually you can filter by:
- **[GENRE]**
- Release **[YEAR]**
- **[ESRB]** rating (based on TheGamesDB.net ratings)
- **[TITLE]** (you can use wildcards)
- **[TOP RATED]** roms (based on TheGamesDB.net ratings)
- **[MOST PLAYED]** roms (by you)
- **[FAVORITE]** titles

When you need to reset all filters just hit the **[ALL]** button and you are done.

3.0 - USING EMULA

Here is a brief tutorial to make use of EmuLa, even a newbie will be able to use it!

To install EmuLa you only need to **unarchive the zipped package somewhere in your system** where you have read & write rights.

Once you have installed EmuLa you only need to follow these steps:
- Push the **[SCAN]** button, EmuLa will ask you to select the folder where all your rom collection is located. You can perform this step as many times you wish, for example if you have roms on several devices or if you have added roms on already scanned devices.
- Let EmuLa finish the scan, if available EmuLa will also download game art and additional informations.
- When EmuLa have finished you have to click on one of the supported systems to populate the rom list.
- Select a rom you wish to play and push the **[RUN]** button, if needed EmuLa will download a suitable emulator to run your rom, if the emulator is already installed the rom will be immediatly launched.
- Have fun!

4.0 - FUTURE

EmuLa is missing some key features that will be added on future releases, some of them are:

- More advanced statistics about your rom collection
- A report to show all your missing roms (useful for collectors)
- Worldwide Hiscores: users will be able to submit their hiscores and will be able to access global worldwide hiscores to track his position.
- Configuration menu for advanced users
- Save games sharing
- Save states sharing
- Access to game's soundtracks, streamed directly in your system or (whenever possible and legal) downloaded in your local storage. Also remakes and remixes will be part of this section.
- Linux (x86, arm, ppc), MacOS, AmigaOS4, AmigaOS3, MorphOS ports.

...and more to come!

5.0 - LICENSING SYSTEM

Some words about the licensing system used by EmuLa.

I think that the end user should be bothered as little as possible with the licenses and legal aspects so I've decided to implement a licensing system simple and anonymous that allows users who have purchased a regular subscription period for a hassle-free experience.

The standard edition of EmuLa allows to perform most operations freely, but for example, does not allow you to download additional contents and, in its current state, it does not allow you to create backups.

By purchasing a subscription you'll get a serial code in a file that you will have to copy to the folder where the executable program is located. When Emula is started it will look for this serial and will proceed to activate it: **the subscription period will start from the activation time**.

The security check is done when EmuLa is started, it connects to a server that checks the expire date of your serial, but also checks how many simultaneous logins are currently active. This is to avoid that the serials are shared on Internet, if (for example) 10 users are using the same serial at the same time a warning will be prompted to the user.

The user can contact me to resolve the problem (as the prompt will tell him) or can just ignore the warning and continue to use his premium account, but if the situation persists the serial may be banned.

So you are ancouraged to contact me whenever you should see something like this:
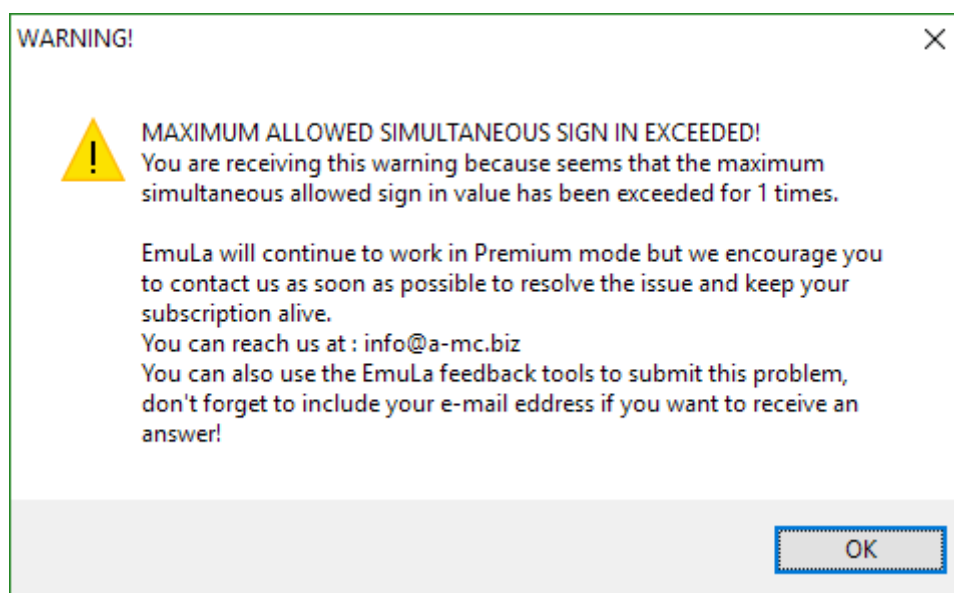
If you are a legit buyer you will get another serial, so please, contact me for any problem, I will be happy to help you!

Once the license has been activated you will be able to run your premium subscription without the Internet connection.

For any problems or qustions feel free to to contact us at:
- eMail address : info@a-mc.biz
- EmuLa support forum : http://a-mc.biz/support/categories/-emula (you need to register to be able to post).

FINAL WORDS ABOUT ME
My name is Fabio Falcucci, from Italy, and I'm a middle age man with many passions including music, retrogaming and programming; I'm the only one responsible of EmuLa development.

When I was young I was in love with the mighty Commodore 64 and the Amiga 500/1200 and now I spend most of my free time programming and composing music.

I've invested an incredible amount of hours to plan and implement the easiest possible way to let everyone play retrogames and many hundreds of hours must be invested to support more platforms.

If you find EmuLa a good software that really let you help playing your roms easier and faster consider a subscription to help me go further with this project and add more and more features and game systems.

If you find that EmuLa does not suits your needs, please let me know why :)

Happy Retro Gaming!

Fabio Falcucci aka Allanon