Accordion Instruction Manual

DEAL

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Accordion Instruction Manual

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing Accordion; it is a decision you won't regret. If you have already seen the Accordion Demo, you're probably familiar with the game. But even so, take the time to glance at **Getting Started** and **The Advice Column**. If you haven't seen the demo, read the whole manual; a few minutes of reading might save you a lot of frustration. But most of all, don't be afraid to learn by trial and error. Accordion is a well designed game that won't go berserk; if it does, we want to hear about it. (The first person to report a reproducible bug gets two Unsane Creations products free.) Accordion is more than just another solitaire game; it's solitaire like you always wished it could be.

Getting Started

The Accordion Key Disk is a bootable disk with key disk protection. This means that if you make backup copies or to copy Accordion to your hard disk, you will be prompted put in the Accordion Key Disk before you can play.

When you open Accordion you will see two versions, Accordion and Accordion Strip. The Strip version is a 34K version that lacks a few options. It is designed to take up less memory so you can easily multitask, but is essentially the same. You will also see demos of other UnSane Creations products. Take the time to look at them and pass them on to your friends.

Accordion stores its scores and other information in a file called "Accordion Scores" in your S: directory. Among the other information stored in this file is the seed for the random number generator. Accordion changes this seed every time you quit. If you leave a game without quitting, you will play that same game the next time you play. If you use another disk to boot from, copy the scores to the S: directory of that disk or assign S: to the Accordion Key Disk. If you don't, you'll find that you're playing the same games over.

Standard Rules

For those of you experienced at playing different solitaire games, here is a quick summary of the rules: The object of the game is to condense all the cards into one pile. The cards are dealt face up from left to right one at a time. Piles are built by moving a card or pile from the left onto a card or pile to the right. Piles move as their top card, which can be moved one or two cards to the left

provided one of two conditions is met: one, the card to the left is of the same suit or two, the card to the left is the same number. For a more detailed explanation, read on.

The playing field is divided into two areas. The top, where the cards are dealt face up from left to right, and the bottom, where the undealt cards are kept. See figure 1. The undealt cards are kept out of the way at the bottom of the screen so you can concentrate on the cards showing. You are free to deal or undeal them as you wish.

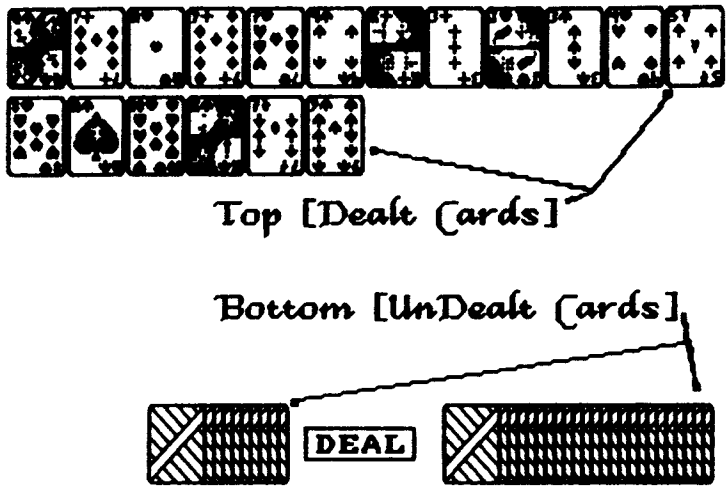

Figure 1

A game begins with four dealt cards. Let's assume that those four cards are from left to right, the queen of spades, the seven of diamonds, the ace of hearts, and the nine of diamonds. There are two things we can do at this point, take the one move possible or deal another card.

Let's assume that you wanted to take the move. Since cards can be moved one or two cards to the left onto a card of the same suit, you place the nine of diamonds onto the seven of diamonds, as in figure 2. The nine of diamonds and

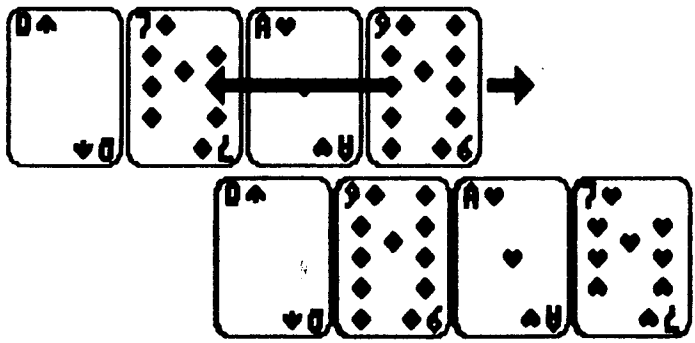

Figure 2

seven of diamonds form a pile, but you can forget about the seven of diamonds for the rest of the game since the pile moves as if it were the top card. Accordion keeps track of these piles so you can undo moves, but you need never worry about them. You now have three cards showing, the queen of spades, the nine of diamonds, and the ace of hearts. You cannot make a legal move with these three cards, therefore Accordion will automatically deal you cards until you can make a legal move. Let's say Accordion deals the seven of hearts. Once again you must decide whether to take the move, putting the seven or hearts onto the ace of hearts, or to deal another card.

Let's go back to the beginning of the game and assume that you wanted to deal another card instead of taking the move. You deal the seven of hearts. You now have five cards showing, the queen of spades, the seven of diamonds, the ace of hearts, the nine of diamonds, and the seven of hearts. Because you dealt another card, you now have two possible moves. You can place the nine onto the seven of diamonds as before or you can move the seven of hearts onto the ace. Let's move the seven of hearts, as in figure 3. You now have from left

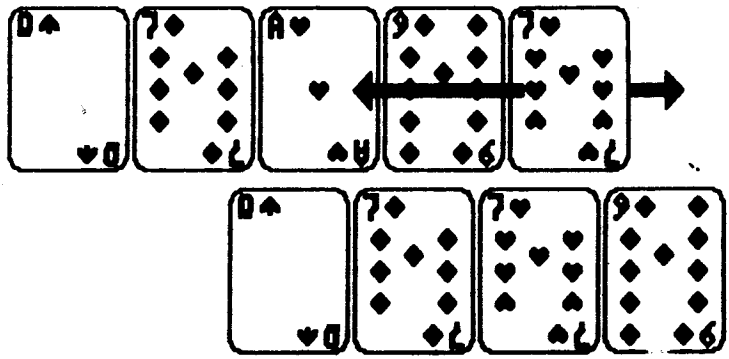

Figure 3

to right, the queen of spades, the seven of diamonds, the seven of hearts, and the nine of diamonds. Accordion won't deal you more cards so you still have at least one more legal move. Since cards can be moved one or two cards to the left onto a card of the same number as well as onto a card of the same suit, the seven of hearts can be placed on the seven of diamonds. Only after you take this move will Accordion automatically deal more cards. You must choose whether to take the move or to deal another card. You continue until you've condensed all the cards into one pile, at which you've won the game and are ready for another.

Variations

Accordion allows you to change its rules, giving you a total of two hundred twenty-eight different playable variations. You can change Accordion's rules by selecting Change Rules under the Edit menu. When you do, you see the following options:

Cards may be moved one place left
Cards may be moved two places left
Cards may be moved three places left

Cards may be moved one place right
Cards may be moved two places right
Cards may be moved three places right

Cards go on same number only
Number may differ by one

Cards go on same suit
Cards go on same color

The italicized options are the rules used in standard play. You can vary the game's difficulty by changing these options, making Accordion challenging for anyone, from the youngest novice to the oldest master.

The first set of options governs movement to the left. The standard rules only let you move one or two cards to the left. By changing these options you can move one, two, or three cards to the left or any combination thereof. You can even insure that no cards will move to the left.

The second set of options controls movement to the right. Normally you can't move cards to the right, but with these options you can choose to move cards one, two, or three cards to the right or any combination thereof.

The third set affects the number you put a card on. In standard play you can only put cards of the same number on one another. For example, you can place the seven of hearts on the seven of diamonds. But by changing this option you can put cards that differ by one on one another. In other words, the seven of hearts can now go on the six or eight of diamonds as well as the seven.

The fourth set similarly affects the suit you can put a card on. Normally you can only put a card on its own suit. But you have the option of putting a card on its same color. A heart could then go on a diamond, and a spade on a club.

The **Project** menu contains four possible selections. About contains important information about Accordion. Take the time to look at this at least once. New Game, or the right Amiga-N key combination, starts a new game. Same Game, or right Amiga-S, permits those interested in tournament play to compete with the same game. It clears the Undo/Redo and Cheat buffers just as if it was a new game. And finally Quit, or right Amiga-Q, allows you to leave. When you quit, Accordion automatically saves your current position so when you play Accordion again, you will be exactly where you left off, even if you were in the middle of a game.

Under the **Edit** menu there are six more selections. Undo, or right Amiga-X undoes a move. You can undo all the moves from the very end of a game to the very beginning. Redo, or right Amiga-R, redoes an undone move. Undo and Redo compliment each other and provide you with a powerful tool for solving Accordion. Deal, or right Amiga-D, deals a card. You can also deal a card by clicking on the **DEAL** gadget at the bottom of the screen. When a card is dealt, the computer will check to see that there is at least one possible legal move, if there isn't it will deal another card. Undeal, or right Amiga-U, undeals a dealt card. It will undeal cards one at a time. If the last card is really a pile, Undeal is disabled. You must first Undo cards from the pile before it is reenabled. Reset Scores, resets Accordion's scores. For more information on how Accordion keeps score, see the **Scoring** section of this manual. The final option, Change Rules, permits the user to change Accordion's rules. For more information on this option, see the **Variations** section.

The final menu, the **Options** menu, contains five options. The first, Help!, provides you with an online summary of the standard rules for Accordion. You can also get this summary by hitting the 'Help' key or the right Amiga-H key combination. This option is not included in the Strip version. The next, Slow Cards/ Quick Cards controls how cards are moved by the computer to the stacks. The cards can either move with blinding speed or stately decorum depending on your preference. The option in use is the opposite of what shows in the menu, which means that when the cards move with blinding speed, Slow Cards shows in the menu, and when the cards move with stately decorum, Quick Cards is visible. The next option, Cheat or right Amiga-C, offers you computer aid. Further information on this option is covered in the **Cheating** section. Background On/Off enables you to turn the background picture on or off. Like the Slow Cards/Quick Cards option, the menu shows the option not in effect. This is another option not included in the Strip version. And finally, Sound On/Off allows you to switch the sound on or off. Normally Accordion tells you when you pick up a card, when you make a legal move, and when you make a illegal move with sound. If this becomes annoying, turn it off.

There are two ways to cheat. One is to change the rules to make the game easier. The other is to use Cheat from the Options menu. For information on how cheating affects scoring, see the Scoring section.

Changing the rules is the easiest way to cheat. It is very easy to get into a situation where you think to yourself, "If I could only do this, I could win the game." Accordion permits you to do just that and win the game with Change Rules under the Edit menu. For more information on this option, see the Variations section.

But if changing the rules doesn't appeal to you, there is always Cheat in the Options menu. If you select this option, the computer begins to examine every possible move among the dealt cards. It will determine, given the time, whether or not it is possible to condense those cards into one pile. If it finds a way, it will make one move toward that goal. Selecting Cheat again will cause it to make another move toward the goal. Cheat only makes you wait when it needs to think, which means that after its finished thinking, it will be spontaneous unless you've changed things significantly. If it isn't possible to win, it will determine the best game you could play, i.e. the least number of piles created, and make a move toward that. Cheat was not designed to solve games from the beginning. The sheer number of possible moves involved prohibits it. What it does is help you out of tight situations. If you get the point where you're stuck and can't decide what to do, run Cheat. With only a few number of cards showing it usually gives you an answer relatively quickly. Take a break for a few minutes and Cheat will probably have an answer for you. If you find you can't wait any longer, press the left mouse button. You will see a requestor with four options: Quit Cheating, Keep Working, Save Work, and Take Best Move. Quit Cheating stops the computer and Keep Working restarts it. Save Work saves the information from the cheat buffer and quits the game. When you start Accordion again, you will begin cheating where you left off. And finally, Take Best Move forces the computer to take the best move it has found so far. Usually the computer will find a good move, maybe even the best move, long before its sure what's the best move. Take Best Move allows you to take advantage of this phenomena.

While the computer cheats you will see an illuminating new pointer. This pointer gives you information on how the cheat is progressing. The search progresses in a tree of all the possible moves from your current position. The light rays on the pointer change when the search moves down another branch. If the light rays don't change, it means that the search is progressing down the same branch and that means that you are probably close to a solution. It's up to you to decide how long to wait. Some solutions, especially those with fewer cards showing, occur almost immediately while others can take days or weeks

Cheat can be used as a opponent. Deal out a row of cards. Cheat. Deal out another row of cards. Cheat again. Do this until you've dealt out all of the cards. Count the number of piles. Now select Same Game from the Project menu. Play the game any way you like, just don't cheat. See how many piles you can condense the cards into. The player with the fewest piles wins.

Scoring

The computer keeps a number of statistics: games won, games lost, average number of piles, minimum number of piles, and maximum number of piles. And it keeps track of each of these statistics for each possible game variation. If you use Cheat you will get a warning saying that if you continue the game will count as a loss. Likewise if you Change Rules in the middle of a game you will also get a warning; the computer assumes that you're making them easier. In both cases, it will record a loss for the game you're playing to the rules you started with. The only time you won't receive these messages when you begin to cheat is if you are replaying a game you've already won or lost; you've already been accorded a win or a loss, so it doesn't matter. And finally, you can reset these scores by using the Reset Scores option under the Edit menu.

The Advice Column

1. Don't start with the standard rules. Start simply and make Accordion fun as well as challenging. Two good rules to add are 'cards may be moved one place to the right' and 'cards may be moved two places to the right.' If the game is still too hard, change a few more rules. The point is to learn to play Accordion without getting frustrated. After all, aren't games supposed to be fun?
2. Always check the cards two or three places to the right and the left before making a move. A good move or a bad move is determined more by the cards near it than by the move itself.
3. Always deal more than Accordion automatically deals. When Accordion deals, it deals until you have at least one possible move. But this often means that you have only one possible move. If you only take the few moves Accordion deals, you are going to win very few games. Deal at least three or four cards more before you make a move.
4. Whether you've only dealt out a few cards, a row of cards, or the whole deck, work from the upper left to the lower right. There is a strong tendency for people to work first with the cards they have just dealt or in other words, from the lower right to the upper left. But for some unknown reason, most people

tend to do better when they work from left to right. It's probably because it forces them to consider the cards around the ones they want to move. Try playing the game both ways. See which way you play best.

5. Before you cover a card, look for others of its kind. If the eight of clubs is just four cards always from the eight of diamonds, don't cover the eight of diamonds with another diamond without determining if it is possible to get to the eight of clubs. The real key to condensing cards is not just covering hearts with other hearts or clubs with other clubs, but hearts with clubs and diamonds with spades, etc...

6. Use your pairs, triplets, and quadruplets frugally. Move them as far left as possible before you condense them. As an example see figure 4. If you don't move the pair to the left you would have a pile of three cards, the seven of

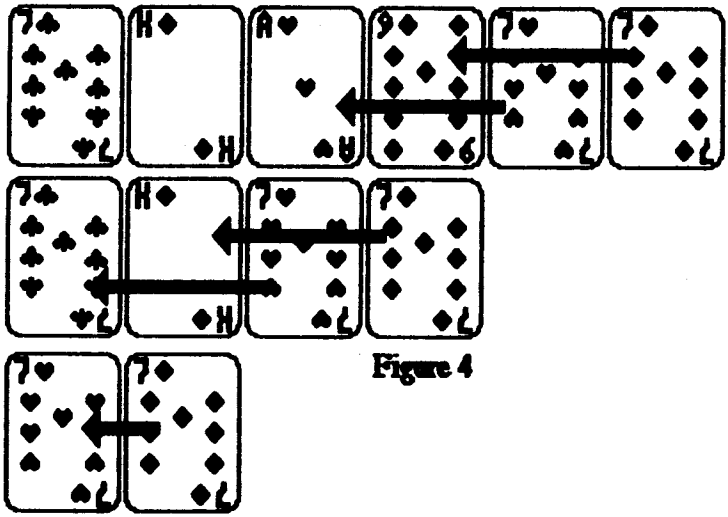

Figure 4

diamonds, the seven of hearts, and the nine of diamonds from top to bottom respectively. But if you first try to move them individually as far left as possible you can make that same pile six cards, instead of three. The point is that pairs, triplets, and quadruplets can be incredible useful in solving Accordion; don't just throw them away.

7. Don't always take all your moves. Leave a few moves before dealing more cards or concentrating further right. You have more possibilities later in the game if you leave yourself some leeway. Don't limit yourself unintentionally. You can always take these moves later in the game.

8. Use Undo. Use it when you're in trouble. Use it when you make a mistake. But use it, even if you have to Undo to the start of a game. Undoing is not cheating. You can always Redo an undone move.

9. If, in time, Accordion becomes too easy, make it harder. The ability to change Accordion's rules not only provides you with the means to make Accordion easier, but it also allows you to make it harder. Accordion can be made trivially easy or virtually impossible. It's up to you.

10. And finally, like many other prominent psychologists, astrologists, and Advice Columnists, I may not have the slightest idea what I am talking about. Use your own judgement.

Rumors

Steve, Accordion's programmer, has been abducted by UFO's a total of six times. Each time the aliens somehow conveyed that they were extremely disappointed that he wasn't an overweight, aging, rock star before they let him go. If you wish to speak to Steve, about Accordion, UFO's, or anything else for that matter, feel free to contact him at (314) 892-5367 or write to him c/o:

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Credits

Manual
David Tolbert

Program
Steve Francis

Cards
Rovena Kessinger