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DIABLO

(ENGLISH VERSION)

DIABLO

The Diablo screen represents a horizontal plane made up of 119 dynamically movable panels originally holding two pieces of track each...a total of 238 pieces of track in all. The ball advances at a constant speed continually during play (speed increases with each level). There is one unused black panel which allows the player to manipulate the other panels. Each time the ball traverses a piece of track, that track is removed from the screen. Diablo starts out easy with lots of track and a slow rolling ball. As play continues with decreasing pieces of track, it becomes more difficult until "wrap around" goes into effect. The available tracks are then more accessible, but difficulty increases as the number of pieces of track continues to decrease. With each level of play, the ball goes faster and "wrap around" is harder to attain.

Starting the Program

Double click on the "DIABLO" icon when it appears on the screen. The playfield is in the centre of the screen. The left side of the screen will show the status of the game (score, etc.). The bottom of the screen keeps the player's current score and the high score per session. The right side of the screen contains options for the game. These are detailed in the following instructions.

Manipulating the Track Panels

The playfield consists of 119 panels with two tracks per panel (238 pieces of track in all). There is one blank (missing) panel. Panels that are adjacent to the blank will slide into the blank space when the mouse pointer is placed over them and the left mouse button is clicked. The player will see that this results in rearranging the continuity of the track. Using this method, a continuous section of track may be extended to keep the ever advancing ball from rolling off. Only panels in the same row or the same column as the blank panel will move. If the panel containing the ball is moved, the ball will move along with the panel. Multiple panels may be moved as long as they are in the same row or same column as the blank panel. To illustrate this, click on the box containing the word "NEW". When the ball appears, click on the panel containing the ball (while it is still in the same column as the blank panel); all of the panels will move down. Then click several panels below the one just clicked in and the panels will move back up. Note the different configurations of track that these moves create.

The Playfield Border

When the playfield first appears, the border will be red. Track that touches this border terminates there. Should the ball roll to the red border, the ball will fall off and be lost. After a specified number of track pieces have been removed from the playfield, the border will turn green. The number that must be removed is dependent on the level of play (see "WRAP COUNT"). When the border is green, the ball will "wrap around" to the track on the opposite border, dynamically increasing the possibilities of track combinations. There must be track in the panel on the opposite side of the playfield to receive the ball or it will fall off.

Scoring

The player's score is increased by ten points for each piece of track removed. Bonus points are added each time all of the pieces of track are removed (see BONUS SCORE). The bottom of the screen shows the player's current score (YOUR SCORE) and the high score per session of play.

Options During Play (Right Side of Screen)

The right side of the screen shows options that may be used to start or during a game of Diablo. They are selected by a single click of the left mouse button. The options are:

New

This option will reset the scores and present a new configuration of Diablo for play. See LOAD and SAVE for multi-player competitive play. A box will appear for you to select the type of games (SERIES or RANDOM) that you wish to play (see LEVEL). It takes several seconds for the game and graphics to reset, during which time a title box appears. Each player begins a NEW game with three balls (the one on the

playfield and two shown under "EXTRA BALLS"). The game is over when all balls have been lost.

Note: For multi-player competitive play, you can save a game configuration as soon as a new game begins and then reload it again for the next player to attempt to beat the previous score. Using this method, each player starts with the same board and level of difficulty. Or you may have each player begin with a new game, allowing the random arrangement of the board to be a factor of fate.

Load

You may reload a previously saved game. This game will begin at exactly the same configuration of the board and score as when it was saved. See the "note" for multi-player competitive play explained under "NEW" as above. You will be presented with a box showing the names of existing files. Double-click on the file of your choice.

Save

You may SAVE a game at any time during play. The board will be blanked and you will be presented a box to specify a file-name to identify the type of file. The current game will resume after the SAVE is completed. It is recommended that you use a unique filename and include some way of consistent identification for it so the name identifies the file on the diskette. We suggest using the player's initials, the date, and an extension of "DBL" in a manner similar to this: JD0307.DBL (John Doe's DIABLO game on 3rd July). If you use the name of an existing file, the game data will replace any existing data under that filename. You will be warned if a filename already exists.

SAVE should be used, instead of PAUSE, when a player expects a long delay before restarting. Or it may be used for multi-player competitive play explained under "NEW" above.

Pause

The player may PAUSE a game at any time during play. Clicking on this box will blank the playfield and highlight the PAUSE box. Clicking on the PAUSE box again will resume the game. This is useful for temporary interruptions eg. phone calls.

Quit

Click on this to quit the DIABLO game entirely and return to your previous task.

Music Icon (toggle)

Click on this to mute the music. The other sounds will still be heard. Turn the volume off if you do not want sound. Click on the music icon to resume sound.

Hyper-Ball Icon (toggle)

Click on this to speed the ball up. This is useful when a long section of track is established and the player wishes to clear some tracks that are in the way of further track manipulation. Click on the Hyper-Ball icon again to return the ball to normal speed for the current level of play. Use this feature with discretion as it greatly affects the strategy of play. (See "Strategy Hints".)

Status Items (Left Side of Screen)

The left side of the screen contains items that pertain to the status and scoring potential of the current game. These are:

Level: Each time a player clears all of the track from the playfield he will advance to the next level of play, and the playfield will reset to a different configuration. You may specify a consistent series (for competitive play or to try to beat your previous attempts) or take your chances with random ("luck of the draw") configurations. You choose the type of game (SERIES or RANDOM) when you start a new game by clicking on NEW.

- a) **Series Level** - A standard game will generate a consistent series of playfields and competitive play will result in each player getting a specific configuration, followed by the next in the series. Series Level 1 is an easy configuration and increases in difficulty with each level.
- b) **Random Level** - Each playfield is randomly drawn and its degree of difficulty will be the luck of the draw. Sometimes the player will get several easy

configurations in a row or several difficult configurations in a row. Generally they will be mixed in their level of difficulty.

Wrap Count: This counts down the number of pieces of track that must be removed before "wrap around" begins. At Level 1 (either Series or Random) it will be 50 and increases by fifteen for each additional level of play. When Wrap Count reaches zero, the border turns green and "wrap around" begins. "Wrap around" allows the ball to roll through a border and come back in the opposite border if there is a piece of track to receive it.

Bonus Score

This starts at 1500 for each level of play. It decreases by one for each change of the position of the panels. When a playfield is cleared of all panels, the value that remains is added to the player's score. Thus, clearing the playfield of all pieces in fewer moves results in a higher score.

Extra Balls

An extra ball is added for each 5000 points accumulated.

An extra ball is added for each level of play attained.

Strategy Hints

1. Stay as far ahead of the ball as possible so that you have time to manipulate the fewer and fewer panels as the game progresses. Spend any waiting time planning better arrangements of track; try not to use the Hyper-Ball option unless you are very far ahead of the ball.
2. Try to keep the blank panels (after the tracks are removed) toward the centre of the screen and group the remaining pieces of track together into one area (preferably the bottom or left side of the playfield) so you can work the remaining pieces of track into longer sections.
3. View the easy time you have when there are lots of pieces of track as an allotment to plan and arrange for the difficulty that will come when you are down to the last pieces.
4. Strive to reduce all the panels to single pieces of track (you cannot clear two pieces from one panel at the same time) and then clear those single pieces systematically.
5. When a ball is lost, the next ball will appear when a piece of track is found in a search starting at the centre of the top row, left to right, top to bottom. The ball will travel downward if possible or from the left. Use this hint to your advantage. If you are destined to lose a ball (because there is not enough time to move pieces of track to the disaster area), anticipate where the next ball will appear and arrange to continue from there.
6. Relax, have fun, enjoy Diablo!