

Overflow (1985) – Anschuetz/Weisgerber/Anschuetz

Game Play

The following description of the gameplay was written by the A/W/A Team to be submitted to a computer magazine along with the game.

In Overflow, you're a plumber trapped in the central conduit of a network of pipes. Water is advancing relentlessly toward you through the secondary pipes. If the water gets far enough, it will flood the main pipe, drowning you and ending your game. This is a situation you (as a devout plumber) obviously want to avoid. Luckily, you can temporarily reverse the flow of water in a pipe by hurling your plunger down the pipe at the onrushing column of water. Scoring is based on the fact that when the plunger makes contact, in addition to making the water recede, you earn ten points. Controlling the flow of water is simply a matter of moving up and down in the main pipe and throwing your plunger down the pipes closest to the point of overflowing. Unfortunately, even if you manage to gain control of the situation, at five-hundred points the width of the main pipe doubles, making your job all the more difficult. Movement is controlled from a stick in port one. To move up and down in the central pipe, push the stick forward and back. To throw your plunger, push the stick left and right.

The following gameplay instructions for Overflow were published in Antic Magazine.

Dear Miss Goodmanners:

Is there a correct way to stem a rising tide of bathroom back-ups while entertaining distinguished guests in my 49-room mansion?

Concerned

Dear Concerned:

Miss Goodmanners prefers the term water closet... Sadly, overflow problems are part of our modern age and must be dealt with firmly and quickly. Miss Goodmanners would never commit the faux pas of embarrassing guests during a sumptuous banquet by confronting them with a mass of raw sewage.

Miss Goodmanners would award you credit for decisively hurling your plumber's helper at each of the overflowing water closets, while tactfully running between pipelines without scaring the guests. Of course, sewage problems tend to get worse as a party

wears on-especially if guests discover that the duck pate has disagreed with them.

With apologies to our favorite etiquette columnist, this program uses players for the plumber, plunger and central pipe. All vertical motion is produced using a string printed at the correct place in memory. The main graphics mode is ANTIC 5.

An unusual technique here is the use of basically the same memory address for every line of the playfield graphics. Each line has its own LMS and the high byte on every one is set to the same page. The water is moved back and forth by incrementing the low byte on each LMS. The increment for each line is held in a one-dimensional array. If a column of sewage is hit by the plunger, the increment's sign is simply reversed.

Recollections

This game was written entirely by John Weisgerber, but he graciously consented to credit the game to A/W/A authorship and even split the \$200 to \$300 from Antic Magazine for its publishing rights. This program uses Player/Missile graphics for the plumber, plunger and central pipe. All horizontal motion of the water flowing through the pipes is produced using a string printed at the correct place in memory. These were some pretty sophisticated techniques in the early days of BASIC programming.

More information about the technical aspects of this game can be read in the original accompanying article sent to computer magazines, A/W/A Game Write-Ups section of this document.