Soko-Ban (1988) – Anschuetz/Weisgerber/Anschuetz

Game Play

Sokoban is an addictive puzzle game that was popular to play on PCs about the same time as Tetris came out. After entering your initials and selecting one of 55 levels, your objective is to move several blocks into the landing area.   To move a block, the player positions the character behind a block and pushes the joystick in the direction he wants to move the block. The difficult part is getting the player positioned behind each block, so the player needs to be careful not to push blocks against walls that he cannot maneuver behind.   Each level is a different puzzle with a different room configuration that must be solved differently. At the bottom of the screen, there is a level indicator. Above that, there is a timer, plus indicators that keep track of the number of moves you make and the number of times that the blocks are moved.

Recollections

This game was written entirely by Eric Anschuetz. The program employs character set redefinition and no Player/Missile graphics. The game makes use of the Atari's built in real-time clock to keep track of the time it takes to complete each level. The game also has a separate level editor program that was used to create the various levels.   Each level is stored on the disk drive, and loaded into the game as needed.   Because of the limit of 64 files on the Atari DOS 2.0 filesystem, there was a limit to the number of levels in the game.

Eric had played PC Sokobon at work during "lunch breaks" with some co-workers. This was in 1988 or 1989 when there were very few PCs. Several engineers worked together to solve the puzzles. They ended up solving every one of them. The Atari game uses the same exact puzzles (plus a few extra levels that were built at Eric's work using the original PC game's level editor).

The game plays exactly like the PC original, but with slightly worse graphics. One of the screens on the original was impossible to solve (as Eric and his colleagues figured out), so it was modified at Eric's work and also in this game. This is the last game that the A/W/A Team ever wrote!