BLOCK ON LEGS: FIRST STEPS
v1.1

Entry for the abbuc software contest 2019

By Jason Kendall (c) Kendallsoft 2019

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Title screen and document artwork by Mike Pruett of Siding Studios.

SIDING studios
severnsideart.co.uk/sidingstudios

For Atari 8-bit Computers, requires 48K RAM. Supports PAL and NTSC systems

Loading: Boot disk, automatically disables BASIC. Levels are loaded from disk and high scores are saved to it, so leave it in!

Contents

Executive Summary:

You are "Block On Legs"; where you came from is unknown, maybe a chip off the old block... Your mission is unclear, but at this time instinct to collect gems is primary...
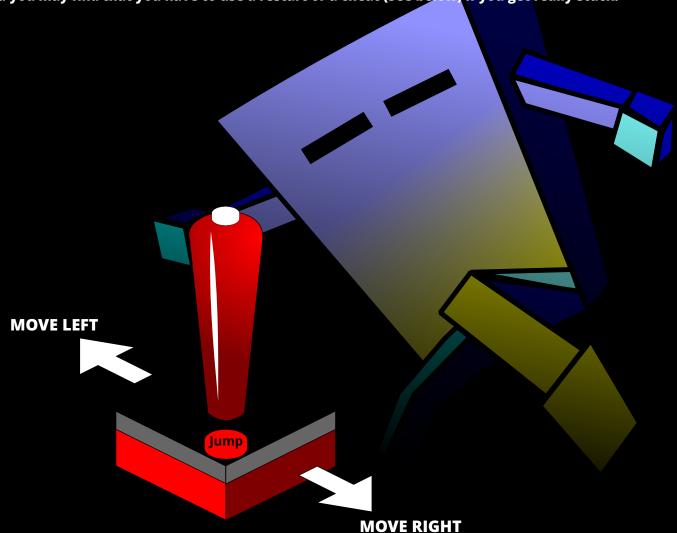
My theory is that there are two types of Atari gamer: the first type like me who enjoy exploring games and work things out and then only read the manual if they are stuck or want to see if there's anything they've missed or want to maximise their score, but, if you are the other school of player who wants to know everything up-front then read on...
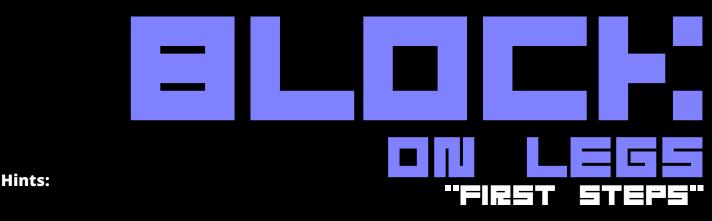
BLOCK:
ON LEGS
"FIRST STEPS"

Introduction:

"Block on Legs: First Steps" is a horizontally scrolling platformer. Your semi-agile character can change height! There are various game features to explore. Falling too far or into a hole loses a life! [Start] or Fire to begin your game. [Space] to pause, move stick to resume. Move joystick L/R to walk, buton to jump either up or across. Hint you can jump up through the platforms!

You start with 10 lives to complete the *12* levels included on the game disk. The game will support additional levels; I will try and create some more soon. The ones here have been put together fairly quickly and demonstrate most of the game features, though they are not fully tuned for difficulty and you may find that you have to use a restart or a cheat (See below) if you get really stuck!

MOVE LEFT

Jump

MOVE RIGHT

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Hints:

When you seem stuck there is usually another route to get to a platform or item; try jumping up again to position your feet higher on the platform, look at the feet - sometimes they sink into the platform but other times you land on the top of it. More obviously, get your foot to the end of the platform before jumping across. When you are grown you may find you can jump more easily onto a platform!

Block on Legs, yes that's his name, has a special move!

Reverse Jumping - You can make a reverse jump when part of your body is inside a platform, usually after you have jumped up to it, if you then stand in the edge of the platform and jump left or right you will bounce to the opposite direction, this is very useful when you are tall and can't seem to jump to the next platform without banging your head.

Safe Jumping - the game should be played without using this feature but I have left it in: if you struggle with the harder jumps stand on the edge of the platform and keep fire held and you will keep jumping up, you can then hold l/r to jump across without any danger of falling off.

Title Screen:

To set game speed press [1] faster[2] normal [3] slower [4] more slower! [5] you get the idea.
[Start] or Fire to begin play.
[Select] View High Score Table.
[Option] Activate/Deactivate the "Level Randomizer" - you can play the levels in any order, if you skip any they will re-appear, when all have been compelted the game is over!
[Joystick] move it to set the starting level, the game will still end after the last level has been completed.

Console Keys In Game:

Press [Start] to restart the current level; you might have used up all the pills etc. Your score is reset to what it was at the start of the level.
Press [Select] to level up if you are stuck on a level; this way you can explore the other screens and maximise your score. There is no end of level bonus or extra lives when doing this.
Press [Option] to re-spawn somewhere on the left side of the screen!
Hold in [Option] and press [Select] to abort the game.

You earn *3* extra lives after completing each level, with a maximum of 10 lives at any time. You will need to use a few lives to learn each level. There is a 10pt bonus for each life left at the end of each level. The bonus is *not* awarded if you use the following cheats: fly, use the basement, or re-spawn.

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Features:

Platforms

to bounce into, fall off and occasionally land on! If your body ends up inside the platform jump up again before jumping left or right.

Holes

to fall into, some are dark and scary.

Ladders

to climb, jump up at the top to land on the platform.

Gems

to collect, 10pts each my precious.

Grow Pills

you grow taller and can reach higher up but will bump into more platforms. When grown you can't make some of the tighter jumps, and You might not be able to pick up some of the lower items. You can grow even taller by collecting a second pill, but wait for the first to have taken full effect first. If you lose a life you return to normal size. Hard to explain why but despite growing you can sometimes land inside the edges of platforms without bouncing off.

Shrink Pills

you return to normal size - without losing a life!

Folding Platforms and Fake Folding Platforms

jump up and hit them from underneath. The un-folded platforms are also <sinking platforms> which may either help you to land on a lower platform or lose a life if the wait was too long. Extra points can be earned for expanding the platforms.

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Sliding Platforms

"sliders" - there are switches to activate or reactivate them and another to deactivate them, drop or jump onto them and jump or drop off when you get to the other side of the screen or to a tricky platform. After a while they will stop and then disappear! For now I've added in extra platforms so the sliders are not necessary to complete the early levels, though they can help you to reach tricky places.

Switch   **Platform**

You *can* scroll the screen when on the sliders by walking L/R when aboard them - wait for them to hit the edge of the screen and you are then pushed to the edge of the slider, then you can walk a little bit, repeat this until you can see somewhere to jump to!

The High Score Table holds the top 10 scores and is displayed at the end of your go. Enter your initals using the joystick. It automatically loads and saves scores. if the disk is read only it will time out and continue without saving.

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Conclusion:

I like my games to evolve and to see how they turn out and B.O.L. has turned into an interesting one; a quirky platformer with some thinking required. There are several features that make the game a bit different. Check out the unusual horizontal movement and scrolling combination and the ability to jump and scroll the screen at the edges. Also When your player's body hits the platforms he bounces off!

There may still be a couple of bugs, watch out after respawning you might still be over a hole and may fall in again if you do not move: while his legs are flashing you can move over the holes. I should be able to speed up the wait between levels and make some other improvements when I get more time. Anyway "JUST GET THE GEMS" and have some fun.

Programmed on an Atari 130XE using MAC/65 Assembler, Envision, some home made BASIC utilities, plus lots of pencils and scrap paper!

If anyone wants to do playfield / character set or player missile graphics or sound or create some levels please get in touch with me "therealbounbybob" on atariage.

Have fun playing and greetings to all at abuuc and to all atari fans

Lookout for the sequel "Block on Legs: A call to Arms"

Jason

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Supplemental:

Here is some declassified debug and testing stuff that you might like to explore or use if a level is being stubborn to complete, or you just want to flat-out cheat!

Press the keys in game (note: 5-9 will be reset at the start of each level)

0 turns off fly mode, sky effect, jump and slow modes

1 speed normal

2 speed slower

3 speed more slower

4 speed even more slower - also When you then press Option it will start (or reposition) the slider!

5 "Fly Mode" you can fly around the screen without getting killed - good for kids or if you are stuck!

6 "Slow" movement left/right much slower if you find it too tricky. Combine this with speeds 1-4 first.

7 "Jump" different action when jumping up through the platforms, also can repeatedly jump l/r by holding in fire.

8 "Sky" dli effect, also really slows things down.

9 "Floor" adds an underground "basement" to make it much easier, now you can jump back up again! - again a good one for kids.

Technical:

Disk uses DOS 2.5 Executable is BOL.XEX renamed to AUTORUN.SYS Loads to RAM at $2000

Level files are BOLLEVEL.nnn where nnn is the level number from 001 to 095. Level files 000 098 and 099 are for the pictures and 096 is for the high score table.

If you delete BOLLEVEL.096 the high score table will be reset to the default values.

An Atari XL/XE Game

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COMING SOON:

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