CAVERN CREEP

GAME MANUAL



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PROGRAMMED BY XBATAXEL

Cavern Creep is compatible with your Atari 2600 (original), Atari 2600+, and Atari 7800+ systems.



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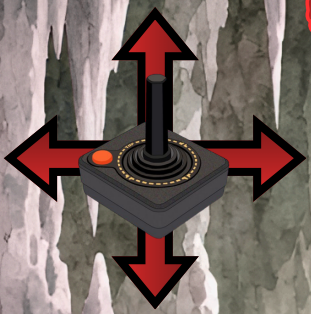
CONTROLS



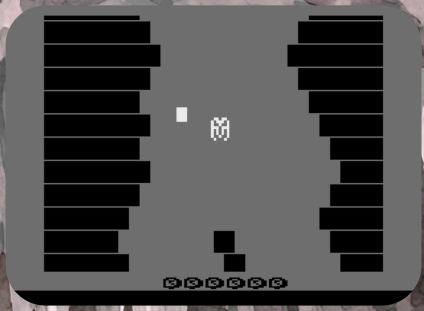
The monster moves automatically forward through each cave. Besides this restriction, its movement can be controlled as follows:

Strafe left / right: joystick left / right
Slow down / speed up: joystick down / up
Dash: joystick button

GAMEPLAY

The caves are randomly generated, meaning that every playthrough will contain different caves.





Magic lamps appear randomly in the cave. The monster collects a lamp by simply moving over it. Once a lamp has been collected, lamp energy bars on the bottom of the screen increase (see sample screenshot below). The left energy bar is filled first, followed by the right energy bar. If both bars are entirely filled, the level is complete, and a message screen appears. After that, the next level starts.

While moving through the cave, the monster keeps a vertically centered position on the screen. It can divert from this position by either dashing (moving down from the center) or by colliding with the cave walls (moving up from the center). If the monster is diverted from the vertically centered position, it will automatically return to it. However, if the monster moves beyond the top of the screen, it dies and the current game ends.

Enemies can be either avoided by moving around them, or they can be destroyed by the monster dashing into them. A dash is possible only if the monster is located at or above the vertical center of the screen. This is indicated by the monster's animation: if no dash is possible, then the monster is not animated. Collision with an enemy kills the monster and ends the current game.

The monster can break through cave walls, for example if it wants to traverse a separating wall between two cave tunnels. A single wall layer is broken by the monster dashing into it. Note that for breaking through several wall layers, the player must hold the joystick button, rather than pressing it once. However, breaking walls consumes lamp energy, indicated by a decrease of the energy bars on the bottom of the screen. If no lamp energy is available (meaning that both the left and the right bars are empty), then the monster cannot break any cave wall.

The player is awarded points for collecting lamps and destroying enemies. Points are added to the score that is shown in the bottom center of the screen. These points depend on the monster's speed (slow/fast), and are given as follows:





Collecting a magic lamp: 1 point (slow), 2 points (fast)
Destroying a block: 3 points (slow), 4 points (fast)
Destroying a cave roamer: 5 points (slow), 6 points (fast)
Destroying a bouncing wall: 4 points (slow), 5 points (fast)
Completing a cave: 20 points

Note that no points are given for destroying static cave walls.

The game ends when the monster is pulled through the top of the screen or when it collides with an enemy.

GAME HISTORY

A violent storm has devastated the monster's underground home, such that its magic lamps were blown around and spread all over the neighboring caves. The monster must now traverse these neighboring caves to retrieve back its magic lamps.

GAME OBJECTIVE

The player must successfully navigate the monster through as many levels (caves) as possible while avoiding or destroying enemies that are roaming these caves. A level is complete once all the lamps inside have been collected.

GAME CHARACTERS / OBJECTS:



The monster is the main character of the game. If animated, it is able to dash. Otherwise, the monster must first move to the vertical center of the screen or above it.



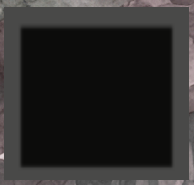
The magic lamp is a small white block, randomly distributed throughout the caves.



The block is a static obstacle that flickers and is larger than the magic lamp. It can be avoided or destroyed by a single dash.



The cave roamer follows the monster, trying to catch it. It can be avoided or destroyed by a single dash.



The bouncing wall moves back and forth within a cave tunnel. It can be tricky to avoid the bouncing wall in narrow tunnels, therefore the player should consider destroying it by a dash or breaking through the cave walls to circumvent it (if possible).



While collision with the cave walls does not harm the monster, it is pulled towards the top of the screen. The cave roamer can traverse cave walls, but the bouncing wall cannot.

CHEAT FOR LEVEL SKIP

Since progress is lost upon ending the game, there is a “cheat” for skipping levels. During gameplay (not on a message screen), the player must hold the joystick button while pressing joystick up, then joystick left, then joystick right. This immediately completes the current cave.

CREDITS



Programmed by Xbataxel
Designed by Xbataxel
Distributed by Olioni Games
Cover Art: João Pedro F. Olioni

I am a mathematics professor who enjoys programming games for the Atari 2600 in my spare time. I like that the hardware limitations turn programming into a kind of puzzle, where ideas matter more than raw power. My favorite game genre is survival horror.

END.

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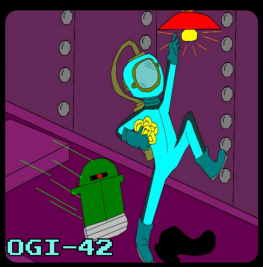

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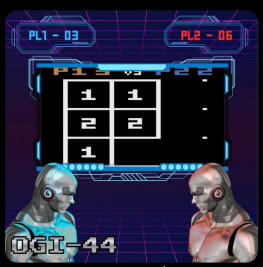

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