

Snowball

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Homepage: www.snowball.retrovertigo.de

This is a small jump'n'run game with some puzzle elements, inspired by games like „Solomon's key“ and „Spherical“. It's written in python (www.python.org) and uses the fantastic pygame package (www.pygame.org), which is based on the „simple direct media layer“ (sdl – www.libsdl.org).

The player controls Tux the penguin through the levels. Help him to guide a snowball save to the exit. To achieve this, Tux has the ability to create and remove ice-blocks, use teleporters, switches, collect keys, etc. There are enemies and traps of course, so watch your step!



The player

Use the cursor keys to move Tux around. Set and remove ice-blocks with the return key. You can customise the control in the options menu.



The snowball

It keeps on rolling under the forces of gravity, so you can only stop it with an ice-block. The level is finished if the snowball reaches the exit. It can also flip the switches!



The ice-blocks

Tux has some magical powers that allows him to transform air into ice-blocks. Unfortunately his powers are limited so you can only create 12 ice-blocks per level. If there are already some ice-blocks at the beginning of the level, the number decreases. The player, the snowball and the enemies can stand safely upon the ice-blocks, so you can limit the movement of the snowball and the enemies.

The enemies

You cannot kill the enemies, but limit their movement with the ice-blocks.

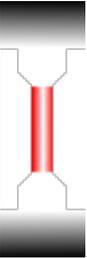
The different type of enemies have various properties: some move only horizontal, some can turn on and of the switches, some can fly (even through walls – eg. ghosts...).

The objects

There are various objects to interact with:



Exit: the snowball has to roll into it, in order to complete the level.

	Box: you can move it around, but beware: it's one way only!
	Spikes: don't ever touch them!
	Force field: not dangerous, but you can't pass through them while they are on.
	Switches: turn the force fields on and off. Note the right colo(u)r.
	Transporter: beam me up scotty (rip).
	Door: you need a key to open them. Only four keys max.
	Clock: Some (not all!) enemies will sleep for a few seconds. Use them wisely
	Traps: They turn into solid blocks after moving over them.

The leveleditor

Up to 50 levels are supportet by this version. Use the left and right mousebuttons to draw the objects on the screen.

There are two layers in the game: a background layer which is only eye-candy and the foreground layer, where all the action happens. To switch between the layers use the keys 1, 2, 3 and 4.

If you press „1“, only the background is visible, if you press „2“, only the foreground is visible. Pressing „3“ or „4“ will show both, but only the background („3“) or the foreground („4“) is editable.

Each layer has its own set of graphic objects. And each layer has its own set of mouse objects. Use the left mousebutton to draw the left object and the right mousebutton to draw the right object.

In order to change the objects you can use the following methods:

„+“ and „-“ will change the object for the left mousebutton and „shift +“ and „shift -“ will change the object for the right mousebutton.

It's very handsome to have different objects for the left and right mousebutton, so you can draw nice patterns using only the mouse and without changing the objects too much.

You can also change the objects by using „shift left mousebutton“ and „shift right mousebutton“ to pick up an object on screen.

To save the level press „s“, a sound signal will confirm the success. Use „n“ and „p“ to move to the next and previous level. With the „c“ key you can clear the current layer. It will be filled with with the right object. Press „ESC“ to return to the main menu.

Configuration

From the main menu you can reach the configuration menu. Here you can change the player control and the sound options.

Hints

- Remember that you have only a limited number of ice-blocks. So don't forget to collect all the unused ice-blocks.
- This is also a hint for level designers: If you place more than 12 ice-blocks onto the level, the player doesn't have the ability to create ice-blocks at all! So the player has to make the level without ice-blocks or go to a dangerous place to collect some!
- It's always a good practise to stop the snowball's movement with some ice-blocks first. Then you can examine the level without too much hussle.

Developer

The game itself is very modular. The most action happens in the level-class. The player, the snowball and all the enemies are derived from the (gfx)object-class. This class does have quite some funtionality, so the enemies don't need too much code. See the skull, shredder and ghost classed for yourself.

Another nice class is the font-class. It currently has two modes of operation: „write“ and „dance“. „write“ will just write the given text on the screen (optionally horizontal alligned), while the „dance“-method will produce a nice sine-waving text.

The code is easy to read and understand. At least I hope so ;-)

Credits

All the graphics have been made by myself. I've used GIMP (www.gimp.org) and Blender (www.blender.org). Most of the sounds are from „www.externalharddrive.com/waves/index.html“ and have been modified. The rest has been recorded by myself. I've used Audacity (audacity.sourceforge.net/) to record and modify the sounds. Special thanks to Thomas Grosser (www.retrovertigo.de) for the webspace!

Todo

- The code is nearly complete. I have to clean it up a bit more. If new objects and enemies are included, new code has to be written, of course.
- More enemies and objects.
- More levels. Right now it's too early to design a lot of levels. The number of objects and enemies will change and thus the level data.
- Better gfx and sfx. I'm not an artist and want to spend my time more on coding than on pixeling ugly sprites ;-)
- A main menu music and a in-game music would also be nice.

So if someone wants to help out, just contact me: <grandor@gmx.de>

Have Fun!