Atomix Analysis

Atomix is a molecular chemistry themed tile-based puzzle game released in 1990 by Thalion Software. The player is tasked with completing molecules shown in the bottom left of the screen. To touch on UI later, as the player progresses levels the background will change but not drastically. When the player initially boots the game up they can notice a face of presumably, Albert Einstein on the start screen.

Gameplay and Mechanics:

As stated before, the game is a tile-based puzzle game where a molecular chemistry theme is present. And through this focus the player tries to assemble molecules by using the environment via moving the atoms around. The molecules are selected using a red square cursor on the screen.

Starting screen

Moving the atoms is not as simple as it sounds because the movement is based on the environment. The atoms slide until they hit another obstacle, either a wall or another atom. The trick is to manipulate the atoms using the environment to complete the desired molecule shown in the bottom left. The atoms have a precise position to be in as their bonds do not dynamically change, they are static meaning they will stay in one direction. This forces the player to move around and plan next steps when moving the atoms around.

Game screen,
UI is on the left displaying:
- The player label
- Score
- Highscore
- Level number
- Time
- Desired molecule

And in the middle the game is underway where there are walls and atoms with their bonds.

Difficulty and Time:

The game can be considered fairly difficult where a timer is imposed on the player based on the selected difficulty setting which in all honesty is not a great addition. Difficulty setting does not change the puzzle or the map but rather it only limits the given time, easy is more time while Hard will give less time to solve the level puzzle. As the game is a tile-based puzzle game a timer ticking down as the player tries to solve the puzzle does not make it more rewarding, on the contrary it puts an unneeded strain on the player. The game will still benefit from a timer though, just that the current timer be reversed and fail condition taken out. A new timer where it shows the player how much time they spent solving that level's puzzle would be a great fix for the difficulty.

Levels:

The game consists of 30 levels each of them a molecule puzzle with each increasing in complexity of molecules desired. Starting with H_2O (water) and ending Ethin. There are bonus levels every 5 levels where players need to order liquid flasks from empty to full grantig points adding to score. In the levels there are walls which the player is supposed to take advantage of to assemble the molecule.

Level 29:
(This is the Amiga version)
Molecule: Ethin
Background changes from level to level yet not a drastic change; colours and rotation of the image can change.

UI and Game Screen:

The UI is very basic, the game window is centred and the information panel is on the left. Information panel contains the player number, highscore (in the amiga version the high score is displayed above the game screen), current level number and time. Also located in the lower left of the screen is the target molecule where the molecule's name, layout and bond between atoms are shown. Game screen contains the wall's atoms and the background of both the maze and the screen. Then there is the cursor which is a red square frame which is used to interact with the atoms. In the amiga version the cursor is a hand pointing.
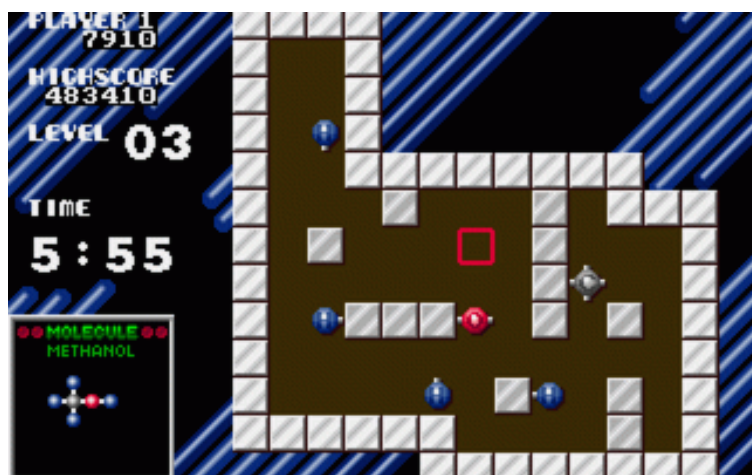
Closing Statements:

Atomix is a molecular chemistry themed puzzle game where the players aim is to complete a molecule moving atoms via the help of environment or other atoms. The game is a very fun game to try with some quirks yet there can be one large change that will improve the games enjoyability which is time and the need for its reversal and elimination of the out of time case. With an educational aspect the game is fun to play and should definitely be given a go.