Moon Patrol

Moon Patrol released by Atarisoft in 1983. The game is a shoot 'em up type of game. The game, unlike most other games of this era, a horizontal scroller. The main point of the game is to finish all sections with the highest score. As the game is a turn based multiplayer game it can be enjoyed with friends as well but maximum number of players on one instance of a game are two.

Environment:

The games name is Moon Patrol yet the background does not look like the moon that we reference in popular culture. There exist hills yet they are green topped with white snow dwarfed by bigger mountains in grey with snowy tops. The ground is brick red with brown boulders which create a great contrast with the player vehicle which is blue. Yet to be noted, the player vehicle will turn red after completion of all sections and continuing the game.

Sections:

An important game element is that the game world, the moon, is divided into 26 sections signified from A to Z in English alphabet. This naming scheme although not universal can be read quickly, this allows for quick information exchange when the gameplay is fast. To make this more universal a number system can be used but this will not give the player the total length of the playthrough only using one information block. One thing the player can catch quite quickly is that the at the start of every section the section letter is displayed in the dirt.

Challenge Increase:

The Challenge increases as the game goes on and more sections are passed. One way is that the player is introduced to different types of enemies each with their own abilities and also the game speeds up increasing the challenge. After all the sections are passed and game continued, player vehicle turns red, the enemies are reintroduced at random sections with new enemy types introduced increasing the challenge even more for an end game plus.

Enemies and Environmental Challenges:

The game hosts a large variety of enemies which all serve a different purpose. There are rocket enemies, tank enemies, two types of UFO's, boulders, ditches, etc. As each enemy serves its own purpose, as a creative game design a distinction can be made with UFO's; the one type is attacking the player directly and other type is attacking the player not only directly but also by creating ditches in front of the player where the player has to jump over them to jump. These can be distinguished their shapes as triangles with circles at edges and coloured blue while UFO's that directly attack the player are more detailed and look more like the popular culture image.

The tank enemy, can fire bullets towards the player and is on the path of the player which the player is not allowed to collide with. Boulders roll towards the player when player is climbing a hill. The enemy types do not stop there as player can encounter more as the sections are passed. As the player finished all the sections and continues the game enemies can appear and come at random sections as opposed to normal game where the enemies are introduced at specific sections.

Vehicle Abilities:

Movement:

Player vehicle can jump and also control the speed of horizontal scroll to a certain degree. As a noteworthy detail, when jumping the vehicle retracts its wheels as to show the player that they have jumped. Also, based on terrain the wheels are moving, the vehicle has a suspension mechanic but it does not have a direct effect on movement.

Attacking:

Firing in game consists of two axes, one is forward of the vehicle and the other is upwards, the guns can be located upward firing gun is directly pointed upwards yet forward firing gun is elevated over the front wheel. Enemy bombs and bullets can be hit as well.

Music:

Although not much to say the music is very catchy and energetic. On a personal note, I enjoy it a lot.

UI:

UI is very clean, fast to read and all of the UI is placed on the top fifth of the screen. High score is on the top right and section designator is to right left of it. The health is indicated by red colored player vehicle silhouette where it is just below the player number and their respective highest score, this is placed on the top left of the screen.