

GAME DEVELOPMENT CONTEST FOR MSX COMPUTERS #RESULTS

THE MSXDEV21 EDITION, RUNNING FROM JANUARY 2021 UNTIL SEPTEMBER 2021, HAS YIELDED 34 REGISTERED GAMES. THAT'S A RECORD IN MSXDEV HISTORY! MOREOVER, THE GAMES HAVE BEEN JUDGED AND SCORED BY THE JURY PANEL, OF WHICH THE RESULTS CAN BE READ IN THIS DOCUMENT.

BEHOLD - THE FINAL REPORT FOR THIS YEAR'S DEV EDITION.

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Preface

For sure, the long running MSXdev compo has reached its peak this edition. With no less than 34 game entries, over 1000 euro of donations, and 20 sponsored items, the MSX scene proves to be just plain AWESOME. We, the organization, wish to express a big thank you to everyone involved. We hope it has been as much fun for you as it has been for us.

For more information about MSXdev21, please visit the dedicated web page <https://www.msxdev.org/msxdev21/>

Signing off, with love:

John Hassink, Róman van der Meulen – organizing party of MSXdev21

Jury Panel

As this is a competition about making the best possible MSX game, once again MSXdev21 put together a competent jury panel to judge all of the entries. Just remember that there are no losers in this contest, but only one game can be the best. Not an easy task for the jurors, as the quality is excellent this year.

Allow us to introduce you to the Jury Team, which consists of veterans among the worldwide MSX community:

Jury member	Expertise
Cas Cremers (Parallax)	Gameplay
Hans Cnossen (Kid Cnoz)	Sound
Richard Cornelisse (trilobyte-MSX)	Graphics
Bart van Velzen (norakomi)	Polishment
Tony Cruise (Electric Adventures)	Originality

Each game got rated on a specific category by the panel, accompanied with a written motivation of the rating by each juror. Each juror scores the game on one of those aspects, for a maximum score of 20 points. With five jurors, this means that judging five different aspects for a maximum score of 5 x 20 points, the highest possible score is 100 points.

In case of a tie (when multiple entries have an equal amount of scored points), the jury panel was required to vote for the better game. The game with the most votes wins and got one extra point awarded. If that leads to another tie, the jurors are again asked to vote. This process continues until there are no more ties.

Let's strap into our seats for the personal notes from some of the panel members...

TONY CRUISE:

I scored originality – max 20 points – like this

- 5 points - graphics - looking for original characters and designs, good use of colour
- 5 points - gameplay - how original is the gameplay concept
- 5 points - sound & music originality - how original are the music and sound effects
- 5 points - technique/story - looking for original technical methods and use of the hardware

All games were tested using BlueMSX and MSX1 machine image.

Thank you to all of the entrants who took the time to produce new games for the system that we all love so much. So many games that exhibited original gameplay ideas, along with lots of original music pieces, characters and some amazing knowledge of pushing the original hardware further.

HANS CNOSSEN:

I'd like to thank all the participants for the time and efforts they put into making these games. To me, MSX is the system that invites developers to push the envelope. When you are creative, a lot is possible. And when you succeed, your audience is left with surprise and wonder. Many of you have succeeded! Judging 30+ games was a lot of work, but it was so much fun to do. It brought back the same feelings of excitement and wonder I felt as a boy, when new games arrived.

The Results

The jury panel has reached its verdict, scoring is done. So, without further delay, here are the results for MSXdev21:

- 1 "Alien Attack" by Marcos Daniel Blanco, Daniel Simon (88/100)
- 2 "S.o.l.o." by Roolandoo (81/100)
- 3 "PAC-01" by ARC8 (80/100)
- 4 "Raven" by Micha Mulder (79/100)
- 5 "Fantastic Football" by Zoran Majcenić, Daniel Simon (76/100)
- 6 "Blockbuster" by Robosoft (73,1/100)
- 7 "No Back Down" by SoCal (73/100)
- 8 "Make Them Jump" by Robosoft (70/100)
- 9 "Make Them Fall" by Robosoft (69/100)
- 10 "Do The Same" by Eric Mendel (Ricco59) (68/100)
- 11 "Tortilla Sunrise (Conexion Tortilla)" by Tortilla Yonkers (67/100)
- 12 "FlyGuy" by Robosoft (65/100)
- 13 "Open Wide!" by Hakogame (63/100)
- 14 "Where Is it? The Quest For the 10th Island" by Eric Mendel (Ricco59) (61/100)
- 15 "Step" by Uninteresting (57/100)
- 16 "Arya" by André Baptista (55/100)
- 17 "Pitman" by Under4Mhz (54,2/100)
- 18 "Mahjong Solitaire" by Under4Mhz (54,1/100)
- 19 "Klondike Solitaire" by Under4Mhz (54/100)
- 20 "XOR2021" by Timmy (52/100)
- 21 "Square Ball" by Ray2Day MSX Software (49/100)
- 22 "Heart Stealer 2" by Timmy (48,2/100)
- 23 "Pippo la scopa ficcanaso" by Gamecast Entertainment (48,1/100)
- 24 "Logic Remastered" by Plattysoft (48/100)
- 25 "PickinX" by Amaury Carvalho (44/100)
- 26 "Monster On The Run" by Paolo Borzini (Neurox66) (39/100)
- 27 "Reflexion" by Jipe (38/100)
- 28 "SD Sniper" by Kirem (37/100)
- 29 "Tool Blocks" by Ray2Day MSX (35/100)
- 30 "Market Master" by Amaury Carvalho (33/100)
- 31 "Arm Wrestler" by SKSOFT (25/100)
- 32 "Bookworm" by Z80 ASMer (24/100)
- 33 "Break Bomb" by Gamecast Entertainment (0/100)
- 34 "Puzzybox" by Gamecast Entertainment (0/100)

Congratulations to all participants!

Jury Reports

For every MSXdev21 published game we have a written report and sub score of each juror printed below in the next section. Games are printed in order of registration. Whenever an extra point is assigned in case of a tie, it is mentioned in the footnotes.

#01 Tool Blocks



Title: Tool Blocks
Genre: Puzzle, platform
Author(s): Ray2Day MSX
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 29

35/100

Gameplay: 11/20

This is a nice game with some clever puzzles, but it is also very hard. If a mistake is made, which easily happens, the only option seems to be to kill the player by F5, and lose a life. If all lives are lost, all previous levels have to be replayed. This can be less fun, and essentially means the player gets to learn the early levels by heart.

Sound: 1/20

Unfortunately, there is no sound at all. The game looks nice, and the playability is okay. Therefore, the absence of sound is regrettable. At least you'd expect some sfx when jumping or collecting an item as feedback for your actions.

Graphics: 9/20

Nice puzzle game. Graphics are good and make it clear what the objectives are.

The player sprite is multi-color and has a cool, strong animation.

Polishment: 5/20

4 points

keyboard interaction has a slight delay.

blocks move in two parts, upper part first then lower part

no way to reset the level

character sprite has no resting pose

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 9/20

An interesting puzzle platformer, with an original main character. Movement is very slow, very easy to make a simple mistake and have to start again.

$4+3+0+2 = 9/20$

#02 Bookworm



Title: Bookworm
Genre: education, reaction, typing
Author(s): Z80 ASMer
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 32

24/100

Gameplay: 7/20

This game has a very interesting concept of speed-typing under stress. However, some of that stress initially comes simply from not knowing what to do. The modes are not so clear, and the function of moving the character or what exactly causes "dying" is quite hard to figure out. This game could have benefited from a clearer explanation at the start, so that the "stress level" that the game wants to establish, starts out low but can be increased as the game progresses. The typing itself worked very well, but the other elements were a bit too confusing from the start. Maybe they could be introduced gradually, for example by first having levels that only requiring typing, and then introducing each new gameplay element in a new level.

Sound: 5/20

The author wants to bring to our attention that - I quote: "the game's music is based off the sounds like those of bugs chirping, bees buzzing, and other insect noises.". Idea: great! Execution: so-so.

I doubt if the idea is feasible. Its intention is, as the author states, to invoke a 'stressful' environment. I'd say: mission accomplished. It's unclear if the sound is just ambient sound. I couldn't distinguish other sfx related to the keys I pressed.

Graphics: 5/20

What a stressful typing game :) There are a lot of things happening on screen. On one side it is impressive but on the other hand the graphics on screen give no clear indication on that they are for as gameplay elements.

Polishment: 1/20

1 point

hard to figure out what to do

the sfx are distracting

the sprites are all over the place even going in the scoreboard

this game leaves me very confused

Originality: 6/20

Definitely an attempt at an original concept, but very difficult to determine what is going on and what the player is intended to do. Sounds effects seem more like random sounds than specific sounds and no music.

3+3+0+0 = 6/20

#03 Reflexion



Title: Reflexion
Genre: Puzzle, action
Author(s): Jipe
ROM size: 128
Ranked: 27

38/100

Gameplay: 11/20

This is a fun game but it is so fast that sometimes just "guessing" the right things to click can work. This combination of puzzle and reflexes is interesting, but also very hard. One could imagine difficulty levels that impact the speed, such that on "easy" the player has more time to move the next mirrors.

Sound: 4/20

No music, just sound effects. They're okay. A little more variety in sound would have been nice.

Graphics: 6/20

The screen is very bright. Perhaps a bit too bright. But the The gfx style of the original is retained. Graphics are intuitive and you can see at first glance what the element can do. The cursor is a bit hard to notice with all the fast gameplay.

Polishment: 6/20

5 points

Cursor moves muxh slower once you press 'S', making it hard to flip the mirrors quickly.

colorful introscreen

+1 point short how-to-play pdf file

Originality: 11/20

A lovely multi-level fixed screen puzzle game. Adds new challenges by having to adjust the mirrors as you work the ball through the puzzle, trying to get all of the MSX symbols and then get to the end. Enjoyed this title a lot.

3+5+1+2 = 11/20

#04 Tortilla Sunrise



Title: Tortilla Sunrise (Conexion Tortilla)

Genre: Adventure, platform

Author(s): Tortilla Yonkers

ROM size: 32

Ranked: 11

67/100

Gameplay: 16/20

This game has smooth controls and is very responsive. That is great, but also desperately needed, since it is extremely hard. It is quite addictive but also unforgiving. The difficulty could have been balanced better: for example, the pixel-perfect jump that is needed to go underground in the first level caused too many deaths for me, and felt a bit like luck, while several screens afterwards were much easier. Still we could make it until the jumping boots by just practicing without using, for example, emulator state save. With the state save we could make it to the next level, but I really think this is too hard to play from the starting point each time for the majority of players. However, for people who like really hard games, it might be a perfect fit.

Sound: 13/20

The opening tune is funny. During the prologue of the game there's a short dreamy tune which fits well. The music of level 1 stays in your head. It's just 4 bars long with percussion. Sound effects of the game are quite basic. I didn't pass level 2, so I don't know if there's more music.

Graphics: 16/20

What an happy impossible game :) This game has a unique style and design. I love the sparkling angry unicorns. Great graphics and absurd enemies design.

Polishment: 11/20

8 points

nice colorful font

graphical artstyle and music are a real nice match

fluent movement of sprites and good fast keyboard responds time

+3 points beautifully colored manual in pdf file in a playful design

Originality: 11/20

A pixel perfect platform adventure game, quite nice intro and in game music. The graphics are bright, but could have used the systems capabilities some more. Bit of a miss to not have the controls default to standard MSX keyboard controls by default. It looks to be a Spectrum conversion, but at least sprites have been used.

$3+3+3+2 = 11/20$

#05 Break Bomb



Title: Break Bomb
Genre: Puzzle, action
Author(s): Gamecast Entertainment
ROM size: 64
Ranked: Disqualified

-/100

Gameplay: -/20

<Not judged>

Sound: 6/20

Sfx are very basic. Do I hear Boulderdash? The tune for completing a stage is a bit long for a tune you typically hear when completing a stage.

Graphics: -/20

<Not judged>

Polishment: 8/20

7 points

controls are a bit slow and slowdown briefly after defusing a bomb

real nice usage of repeating tiles to make the maze look much bigger than it is

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: -/20

Could not get the Rom to work?

Notes

This entry was disqualified since it requires more RAM than the maximum of 16KB RAM allowed.

#06 Puzzybox



Title: Puzzybox
Genre: Puzzle, action
Author(s): Gamecast Entertainment
ROM size: 64
Ranked: Disqualified

-/100

Gameplay: -/20

<Not judged>

Sound: 7/20

Sfx are okay. Tunes are short and simple.

Graphics: -/20

<Not judged>

Polishment: 8/20

7 points

controls sometimes not cooperating

nice colorful font

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: -/20

Could not get the Rom to work?

Notes

This entry was disqualified since it requires more RAM than the maximum of 16KB RAM allowed.

#07 Klondike Solitaire



Title: Klondike Solitaire
Genre: Puzzle, card
Author(s): Under4Mhz
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 19

54/100

Gameplay: 13/20

Hard for newcomers such as my children, who don't know the rules. The description on the MSXDev webpage is fairly brief and assumes the player knows such games.

Otherwise it is well done, and a fun classic, but the controls are not super smooth.

Sound: 10/20

The game starts with "The Entertainer" by Scott Joplin. Unfortunately it's not an original song. It's nicely performed though, with plain PSG-tones. I suppose "The Entertainer" is a suitable tune for a game of solitaire. Sound effects are basic.

Graphics: 9/20

Solitaire with nice controls! The card graphics look good and easy to read.

Respects to the original Solitaire. Was kind of hoping for a nice gfx effect when winning. But it froze on me.

Polishment: 9/20

8 points

controls feel good

sfx are subtle

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 13/20

A very well implemented version of the classic early Windows game solitaire but on our beloved MSX. Controls are very logical, and just like the original, it has compelling addictive gameplay.

$4+3+2+4 = 13/20$

#08 Market Master



Title: Market Master
Genre: Action
Author(s): Amaury Carvalho
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 30

33/100

Gameplay: 6/20

The combination of ideas is really interesting, but the actual gameplay is not as fun yet. Very complicated and hard to understand what to do. This game would have really benefited from an introduction or an explanation. Ultimately, it involves pressing the diagonal and bashing buttons a lot. Maybe it would have been easier for keyboard players to line the five elements up in a "+" cross layout (instead of "x"), such that the double keys (for diagonal) would not be needed?

Sound: 7/20

The music is monophonic. The opening tune is simple bass loop, but it suits well. The melody you hear when starting a level is simple. Game Over tune is weird and not consistent with the rest of the sound.

Graphics: 6/20

The game has MSX2 improved graphics. But other to that is a bit simple/monochromatic. A little bit more color and or animation would have made it much better.

Polishment: 7/20

6 points

overall good look, but it's not easy to understand exactly what's happening

difficulty goes up a bit too fast after the first year

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 7/20

Interesting concept for a game, the gameplay is not immediately obvious as to what the player is supposed to do. Graphics and music seem quite simple.

$1+3+2+1 = 7/20$

#09 Make Them Jump



Title: Make Them Jump
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Robosoft
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 8

70/100

Gameplay: 12/20

Fun concept and so hard to coordinate the players! Clearly, practice is needed, but a very fun and simple game that is great to spend some time with.

This feels like the easier and more conventional version of "make them fall".

Nice game but not much variety.

Sound: 16/20

Nice chiptune music by Mr. Lou. Arpeggio chords. Pleasant variations on an continuous bass loop and chord progression. There are plenty of variations before it loops, so it doesn't get boring. It's up tempo, continuously without any interruptions (e.g. game over). That's a good decision. The band plays on, like the band on the Titanic. The music evokes a feeling of being in a rush, and that's exactly what the game is about.

Graphics: 12/20

Cool coordination/reaction game. The ingame graphics are really cool and stylish. The animations are very smooth and there is a nice parallax effect.

Polishment: 14/20

13 points

all aspects of the game look, sound and feel very good

smooth scroll, nice soundtrack and smooth controls

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 16/20

A game with a simple but fun concept, that presents with well-done clear and smooth graphics and excellent music. A fun title, that demonstrates good use of the machines capabilities.

4+4+4+4 = 16/20

#10 Make Them Fall



Title: Make Them Fall
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Robosoft
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 9

69/100

Gameplay: 13/20

Fun concept and so hard to coordinate the players! Clearly, practice is needed, but a very fun and simple game that is great to spend some time with.

This game is very similar to "make them jump", but vertical and "switch sides" instead of the jumping, so it feels a bit more creative. Also, the way the players die is more exciting, making this the more interesting game of the two. It is also slightly harder.

Nice game but not much variety.

Sound: 16/20

A recognizable style by Mr. Lou: variations on a basic theme. Typical chiptune sound with arpeggio chords. I like the percussion! Lower tempo, though. The song is long enough before it loops. Also in this game the music plays without any stop, which seems to me a good decision.

Graphics: 12/20

Same coordination/reaction game as Make then Jump but different ;) I like the colors used in this game.

Polishment: 13/20

12 points

yet another well polished game by Robosoft.

slightly less colorful than Make Them Jump

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 15/20

Another game with simple but fun concept (a bit harder than it's partner game), that has well-done clear and smooth graphics and excellent music. A fun title (although a little hard to begin with), that demonstrates good use of the machines capabilities.

4+4+4+3 = 15/20

#11 Where Is it? The Quest For the 10th Island



Title: Where Is it? The Quest For the 10th Island

Genre: Puzzle

Author(s): Eric Mendel (Ricco59)

ROM size: 32

Ranked: 14

61/100

Gameplay: 18/20

This is a very polished game port, with extensive options: modes, password, hi-scores, the whole works. Nice touch in the pause mode (esc) to hide the target pattern. The challenge stages add some nice variety. Overall this was one of the most addictive games of MSXDEV 21.

Sound: 5/20

No music, only sound effects. Effort has been made.

Graphics: 14/20

Addictive pattern finding game. Nice arcade-ish graphics. Feels like extra attention is put into the graphics. Animations, Nice palette use.

Polishment: 11/20

9 points

lovely spectrum of colors in game

fun and playful overall

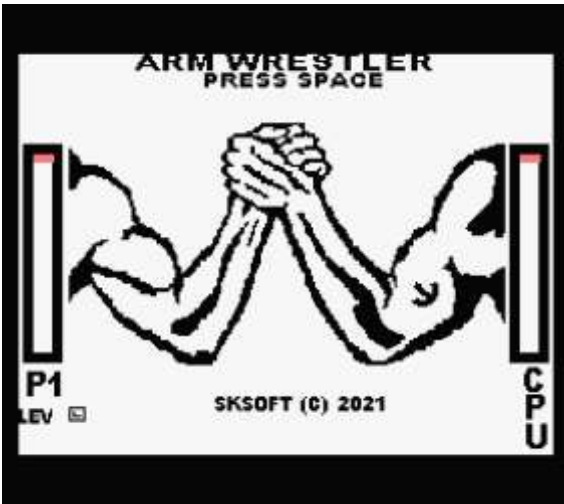
+2 points beautifully colored manual in pdf file

Originality: 13/20

Quite an original timed fixed screen puzzle game, with graphics that use the machines capabilities well. No intro or in game music, but sound effects are suitable.

$3+5+2+3 = 13/20$

#12 Arm Wrestler



Title: Arm Wrestler
Genre: Sport Simulator
Author(s): SKSOFT
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 31

25/100

Gameplay: 4/20

This game puts an interesting flavour around a game where essentially, you are asked to respond to appearing "icons" (in the form of the color) representing "z" or "x". You then have to press the right key quickly. Your "opponent" is essentially a random time, since you can't really observe their progress if you are focussing on your bar.

However, for the first few tries, I found myself essentially only fighting the graphical interface: the player first needs to train themselves to map the colors to the keys. I'm not sure if this is a "fun" part of it: the game could have been easier if instead of a color, the line would have been a left or right arrow, corresponding to the key that needs to be pressed. Alternatively, it could have been "two lights", and the player needs to press the light for the key that it is on. I think after some training, the player gets to this point, but it mostly feels making it harder on newcomers.

Sound: 1/20

No music, no sound effects. The right sound effects could have contributed to how the game should be played by giving audible cues.

Graphics: 5/20

The graphics are sufficient but simple. A little movement on the arms/fists would have been nice.

Polishment: 5/20

4 points

lack of colors and sound

controls are not very intuitive

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 10/20

Simple game, good for a quick play. Clear graphics if a bit monochromatic. No sound or music.

$4+4+0+2 = 10/20$

#13 Pitman



Title: Pitman
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Under4Mhz
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 17

54²/100

Gameplay: 15/20

This is a quite nice version of Boulderdash. The controls are nice and responsive, and the level select is nice. For new players (my children) it takes a bit of time to understand what is going on. The gameplay, well, is Boulderdash -- so your opinion of that will determine what you think of this one.

Sound: 6/20

The game is a variation on Boulderdash. The same applies to the sfx.

The melody of the intro is a bit hard to follow. Sometimes I hear two identical tones at the same time, which sounds unpleasant. Sfx are satisfying, e.g. the falling boulders and the collection of diamonds. The sfx during walking could have been better.

Graphics: 10/20

Boulderdash platformer! the graphics have nice boulderdash vibe but look better and it's clear what the objectives are. Would have been nice if the player was a sprite. This would make it a smoother game.

Polishment: 11/20

10 points

lovely colorful game with a great puzzle aspect

difficulty goes up too fast at round 4

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 12/20

A Boulderdash inspired game, but with it's own original puzzle elements.

3+5+2+2 = 12/20

Notes

Extra points as tie breaker

#14 Blockbuster



Title: Blockbuster
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Robosoft
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 6

73¹/100

Gameplay: 16/20	This is a very fun puzzle game that is very addictive. I enjoyed it a lot. There are not a lot of bells and whistles, but it does what it sets out to do very well.
Sound: 14/20	Very nice tune! Variations on a theme. The song is quite long before it loops, and there's plenty variety. The style of the song fits the game well. Sfx are simple but effective.
Graphics: 11/20	Addictive game. No idea why but I kept playing this game. The graphics are colourfull and effective. The color interleaving usage is always a cool thing.
Polishment: 13/20	12 points great overall look and feel, fun and addictive easy to play, hard to master +1 point short how-to-play readme file
Originality: 19/20	Quite a fun, compelling and original puzzle action game, with colourful graphics and very well done music and sound effects $5+5+5+4 = 19/20$
Notes	Extra point as tie breaker

#15 PickinX



Title: PickinX
Genre: Labyrinth,maze
Author(s): Amaury Carvalho
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 25

44/100

Gameplay: 9/20

This is a very interesting premise and set of enemies. However, the controls are needlessly complicated, and even just picking boxes can feel like a chore. Diagonal movement does not work, thereby making turning a corner more complicated than needed. This is especially frustrating since a lot of boxes need to be moved, sometimes under pressure from the enemies, and then it is not nice to die because you tried to turn a corner a pixel too early. With more player-friendly controls this could have been quite interesting.

Sound: 4/20

I hear two channels playing the same melody. It's not really a song. Sfx are very basic.

Graphics: 8/20

Sokoban in space! The graphics are simple but very effective.

The graphics style make it feel like an actual old-school game.

Polishment: 8/20

7 points

fun and challenging play

it can get a bit difficult to navigate quickly around corners

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 15/20

A reasonably fun action puzzle game, starts out fairly easy so you can get into the game, then ramps up the difficulty nicely. Graphics are fairly good, music and sound effects could use a bit more work.

4+5+3+3 = 15/20

#16 Square Ball



Title: Square Ball
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Ray2Day MSX
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 21

49/100

Gameplay: 16/20

This is a fun puzzle game that I enjoyed, with very good controls. The art style with consistent colors is nice, but makes it a bit hard sometimes to tell which object is selected. I think the gameplay would have benefited by making the selected object stand out more.

However, it is annoying to do all of it again upon mistake, and it therefore needs memorizing puzzles. This game could really have used some form of level select, either directly or by for example passwords.

Sound: 3/20

Very basic sfx

Graphics: 7/20

Nice arcade style graphics. The inverted font is really nice.

Polishment: 9/20

8 points

a real original concept and a great overall puzzle game

addictive, challenging and fun to play

at stage 3 the difficulty goes up a bit too fast

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 14/20

Another quite well done action puzzle game, simple sound effects, but no music.

3+5+3+3 = 14/20

#17 Mahjong Solitaire



Title: Mahjong Solitaire
Genre: Board game
Author(s): Under4Mhz
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 18

54¹/100

Gameplay: 14/20

A good version of a classic game, but no surprises either.

For new players, it would have been nice to have the rules.

It is sometimes hard to read hidden blocks' faces, and the controls could be a bit more responsive.

It would also be nice to have more feedback on selecting. Visually or aurally, select/deselect are very similar at the moment.

Sound: 8/20

There's only music during introduction screen. The melody is easy to follow and it suits the game. It's a bit choppy like a music box. Sfx are basic but they suit the game.

Graphics: 8/20

Mahjong is too hard for me ;) The graphics are good but due to the stacking it is very hard to recognize the matching tiles when they only partly visible.

Polishment: 10/20

9 points

classic Mahjong, always a joy to play

game could do with a little hint system every now and then when players get stuck

overall look and feel is very good !

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 14/20

Very well done version of the classic Mahjong game that was one of the early Windows games, and is still popular on mobile platforms. The tiles are quite clear, with only some minor issues seeing tiles to the right of others due to the aspect ratio chosen.

4+3+3+4 = 14/20

Notes

Extra point as tie breaker

#18 Raven



Title: Raven
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Micha Mulder
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 4

79/100

Gameplay: 16/20

Easy to understand game, and it is both hard and fun. Really well done! The game over is a bit macabre, but creates a funny (depending on your sense of humor) contrast with the rest of the game, which is actually quite cheerful in its character design. While the game is much more fun to restart than some of the "remember level by heart" entries this year, it is still depressing to have to start from scratch. I found the time-bound levels especially hard!

Sound: 11/20

Unfortunately the music is a bit below average. Especially when you compare them to the other aspects of the game, which are above average! This game really deserves good music! The tune during gameplay is almost annoying. The sfx are great though.

Graphics: 17/20

Pure arcade game. This game has some great, arcade style, graphics. It is noticeable that there has been worked around the MSX1 limitations impressively. Feels like this could be MSX2.

Polishment: 15/20

13 points

super fun

playful graphics

difficulty is well balanced as you progress

beautiful title screen graphics

+2 points beautifully colored manual in pdf file

Originality: 20/20

Quite fun and original concept (channelling a little bit of Q-bert), with very suitable graphics that use the systems capabilities, nice characters, accompanied with some nice sound effects and music. The gameplay evolves as you work through the levels. Outstanding entry!

5+5+5+5 = 20/20

#19 S.o.l.o.



Title: S.o.l.o.
Genre: Adventure, platform, action, puzzle
Author(s): Roolandoo
ROM size: 48
Ranked: 2

81/100

Gameplay: 17/20

This is a very nice game, but very hard, and it doesn't give a lot of hints. Hence the player will die a lot at the beginning, just to figure out how things work. I am not sure if it can be easily played outside of an emulator, it might just be too hard. I enjoyed playing it, but it was definitely unforgiving. The items are fun and controlling the robot is nice for flying, walking, jumping, and ducking. However, firing the gun was a bit awkward and slow. It seems there can only be one bullet on screen at once, and it wasn't always clear if the enemies were hit. Only the "noise" sound was an indication. Jumping on the "outside" was fun. I had no idea what the password should be, so I used trial and error...

Sound: 14/20

Nice music. The song is a bit melancholic. At least that's how I experience it. It suits the game. Nice bass and the drums are very expressive. The music doesn't stop when you're dead.

Graphics: 14/20

MSX2 color pallete enhanced! Great graphics style. But it is a bit difficult to see what gfx are safe to touch and which not.

Polishment: 17/20

15 points

all aspects of this game are great.

music, gameplay, graphics, atmosphere, scoreboard, sound effects...

an absolute joy to play. very fun and challenging !

+2 points beautifully colored manual in pdf file. The manual is very artistic and really matches the feeling ingame.

Originality: 19/20

Quite an indepth game with lots to learn and work through, in the vain of pixel perfect platformers, with nice detailed original characters and tricky game play elements and puzzles to work out. Nice background music and sound effects

5+5+5+4 = 19/20

#20 Logic Remastered



Title: Logic Remastered
Genre: Platform, puzzle
Author(s): Plattysoft
ROM size: 128
Ranked: 24

48/100

Gameplay: 13/20

This is a nice game with some relatively responsive controls, though the gravity on falling is weirdly slow. There is a strange delay at the start of each level and I am not sure why.

The "danger" (yellow/black) block at the start of one of the early rooms is really annoying, and I am not sure how the player needs to deal with this except for learning it by heart and jumping at the previous screen. Especially with the weird delay at room entry, this was strange.

This was also one of those games that I wouldn't really know how to play without an emulator with load/save game states, as it is very hard indeed.

It took me until an "impossible" room to figure out that "down" triggers a small jump!

Sound: 3/20

Fun game. It deserves better sfx. Sfx are a bit monotonous. Some music would have been nice.

Graphics: 12/20

Nice but simple graphics which make it very clear what the objectives are. The style of color use makes it look very trendy.

Polishment: 9/20

7 points

fun game with simple game mechanics

nice usage of down button for low jumps

the game really makes you want to continue exploring and you just get an urge to keep going for the next screen

dying immediately when entering a new screen is a bit disturbing

+2 points beautifully colored manual in pdf file with excellent cover art.

Originality: 11/20

An interesting take on a puzzle platformer, with simple but interesting graphics and sound effects. Why up is chosen for jump is beyond me though.

$$3+4+2+2 = 11/20$$

#21 Step



Title: Step
Genre: Text adventure
Author(s): Uninteresting
ROM size: 128
Ranked: 15

57/100

Gameplay: 17/20

This is a more classical adventure game and it is really well done. I appreciated the chapter select on the title screen! The puzzles are nice and usually the player can figure out where to go next after a bit of exploring. I do think it could have use some sort of mini-map to simplify navigating, although the structure is sometimes too complex for a flat map.

All in all, nice gameplay that focuses on the story, which is great for lovers of this type of game.

Sound: 2/20

There's only one sound effect in this game. You hear it when the view changes. It's a genre that doesn't necessarily need sfx, but a few more would have been better. Ambient music could contribute greatly to the atmosphere of this game.

Graphics: 14/20

Due to the amount of images present in the game, not the most detailed but they represent the mood very good. I really like them. Kind of hope to see more like this.

Polishment: 8/20

7 points

fun exploratory game.. great storyline

easy to navigate around

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 16/20

A point and click graphical adventure game, with an interesting story, nice interface and compelling puzzles.

5+5+1+5 = 16/20

#22 Do The Same



Title: Do The Same
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Eric Mendel (Ricco59)
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 10

68/100

Gameplay: 17/20

This is another very addictive game! I was frustrated after having to restart once I got a bit further, especially once the timer gets a bit tight. Nevertheless, very polished, good controls, and overall a great game. There could have been more variety, but some levels "felt" more like puzzles with a very simple solution, where others felt more like they needed very many steps. This helped to generate some diversity, but I guess some more variants would have made the game even better.

Sound: 7/20

No music, but very nice sfx. Effort has been made.

Graphics: 13/20

Rubiks puzzle game. Another great arcade/puzzle game. The graphics are great. Good use of the MSX1 color limit and nice pattern update effects like on the title screen.

Polishment: 13/20

11 points

very well polished graphically, beautiful backgrounds, challenging and fun gameplay

+2 points beautifully colored manual in pdf file

Originality: 18/20

Very nicely done spin puzzle concept with very nicely done graphics, and sound effects.

5+5+3+5 = 18/20

#23 Monster On The Run



Title: Monster On The Run
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Paolo 'Neurox66' Borzini
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 26

39/100

Gameplay: 15/20

This is a classical puzzle game, and the controls work very well. Possibly, the monster could have moved a bit faster on long stretches, making the solving a bit faster once you know it.

Another game that would have benefited from save/load or a password once every few levels.

Sound: 2/20

This game is missing some sfx. You hear a couple of tones when completing a level.

Graphics: 6/20

Path finding puzzle game. The graphics are basic but sufficient for its purpose. It is always clear what objectives are. A little animation of the monster would have been nice.

Polishment: 6/20

points 5

fun and simple to play, yet challenging puzzles !

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 10/20

Nice puzzle elements, with simple graphics, fun to play for a while. Not much in the way of sound effects or music.

3+4+1+2 = 10/20

#24 XOR2021



Title: XOR2021
Genre: Puzzle, maze
Author(s): Timmy
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 20

52/100

Gameplay: 17/20

This is a strange Boulderdash-like game with some nice mechanics. I found it hard to control sometimes, since the controls could have been smoother, but the puzzles were interesting and addictive. Especially the "switching" between different player tokens was an interesting dynamic. MSXTAPEBLOCKZEN?

Sound: 2/20

Very basic sfx. No music.

Graphics: 10/20

Boulderdash puzzler. The graphics are improved over the ZX version. The player graphics and some of the items feel a bit off to me. Why am I a shield walking around?

Polishment: 8/20

points 7

fun puzzlegame, good balance in difficulty as you go to the next maps

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 15/20

Another quite fun scrolling puzzle exploration game, simple sound effects with reasonable graphics.

$4+5+3+3 = 15/20$

#25 Fantastic Football



Title: Fantastic Football
Genre: Sports
Author(s): Zoran Majcenić, Daniel Simon
ROM size: 48
Ranked: 5

76/100

Gameplay: 15/20

This is a well done football game with some cool options. It has the usual shoot/pass and select player dynamic, although I found it very hard to figure out to select the next optimal player when I didn't have the ball. The controls are otherwise good. The field is big and doesn't have a lot of texture or markers, I think some more markers would have helped the player to orient themselves. I think two player is by far the best for this type of game. I have to say the CPU players worked quite well, but still, it is way more fun with two.

I didn't think the controls with z/x were intuitive, and I struggled a bit with the world cup selection screen. I think this part could have been much clearer on which buttons to press in which order to progress.

Playing in the world cup, I didn't really feel any difference between the teams, which makes it harder to feel engaged in this part. I think putting the team names constantly on the screen would have helped here.

Sound: 16/20

Great introduction music! It has a nice groove and great freestyle melody. The sfx are quite well. The referee's whistle is very realistic. Unfortunately, the audience's repertoire is limited to "Ole ole ole". Points for variety, completeness, and performance.

Graphics: 14/20

Finally a soccer action game! The title/menu graphics background looks great. The game matches have very nice scrolling and players have strong and nice animations. Color choice for the players is good. I really like to play this game.

Polishment: 14/20

points 11

real fun to play. well balanced AI levels.

sfx in game tend to become disturbing over time.

+3 points colored manual in pdf file with very elaborate explanations on how to play the game

Originality: 17/20

Nice smooth scrolling playfield, and fairly fast moving gameplay, does take a bit to work out the controls. CPU player gives a decent challenge. A lot of effort put into this game.

$4+5+4+4 = 17/20$

#26 Alien Attack



Title: Alien Attack
Genre: Shoot'em up
Author(s): Marcos Daniel Blanco, Daniel Simon
ROM size: 256
Ranked: 1

88/100

Gameplay: 18/20

This is a very polished Zanac style game, and nice and smooth to play. It is really fully featured, and there are some nice cameos from Dr. Who.

I do have some minor nitpicking: First, there is weapon imbalance: the big blast weapon is not so useful (nearly too slow to even select it to upgrade with the weapon pods). Second, the dangerous ground objects are a bit illogical with respect to the fact that you are flying a fighter plane (instead of, say, an amphibious tank).

The game was hard but still manageable, and I enjoyed it. Looking forward to the full game!

Sound: 18/20

Very nice music. There's a great variety of tunes, including 2 covers. On one hand that's a pity, but the covers are well chosen and well performed. The game starts with the famous opening tune of Dr. Who. The demo music is simple but exciting. Level 1's music is a cover of "Magic Fly" by Space. The rest of the game music, level 2, game over and ending sound good. Points for completeness, variety, and performance.

Graphics: 17/20

The graphics in this game are really good. Impressive loading screen and even better cut-scene graphics. The levels are long and sometimes a bit repetitive. But when the repetition is broken it is beautiful.

Polishment: 16/20

points 13

fun to play, challenging

real nice sprite designs and beautiful backgrounds

a few more checkpoints would be handy, not having to start all over again after dying.

+3 points colored manual in pdf file with very elaborate explanations on how to play the game

Originality: 19/20

Very nice vertically scrolling shoot-em up, with very clear and detailed graphics, nice variety of weapon powerups. Excellent music, with variety and suitable sound effects.

5+4+5+5 = 19/20

#27 SD Sniper



Title: SD Sniper
Genre: action, reaction
Author(s): Kirem
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 28

37/100

Gameplay: 14/20

Fun but short, 10 levels. I enjoyed it! Logical game with scanning, could have easily imagined more levels and features.

Sound: 3/20

There are 2 sfx in this game. The first one is quite a good sound of a gunshot. The second sound is a sound you hear when getting a clue. The latter doesn't sound very 'clue-ish' to me.

Graphics: 6/20

Nice who dun it game. The graphic are simple and effective. And has charm but some animation would make it much better.

Polishment: 6/20

points 4

controls are a bit choppy, but overall a fun experience sniping baddies.

+2 points beautifully colored manual in pdf file

Originality: 8/20

An interesting concept, fairly simple graphics and sound effects.

2+3+1+2 = 8/20

#28 FlyGuy



Title: FlyGuy
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Robosoft
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 12

65/100

Gameplay: 12/20	This is a simple but fun game, with a very nice "start" with locating the fly. Sometimes the seemingly random movement of enemies is a bit challenging, but overall it was enjoyable.
Sound: 15/20	Nice music again by Mr Lou. Variations on a chord progression. Looking at the graphics and the theme of the game, I'd expected a more cheerful and playful style though. Sfx are okay.
Graphics: 10/20	I think Robosoft never needs any sleep. Robosoft games keep coming ;) The graphics are simple and very effective. As the player and enemies are only 8*8 pixels but it is easy to understand what they represent.
Polishment: 11/20	points 10 real fun to play, the music really pulls you in and creates a very exciting and tense atmosphere +1 point short how-to-play readme file
Originality: 17/20	An original concept for a game, really nice intro and in game music. $4+5+5+3 = 17/20$

#29 Pippo la scopa ficcanaso



Title: Pippo la scopa ficcanaso
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): Gamecast Entertainment
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 23

48¹/100

Gameplay: 9/20

This was one of the oddest games in the contest, where the aim seems to be to clean up dirt. Sometimes it wasn't clear to me when the round ended; it seems as if a certain amount of dirt needs to be cleared, and the round can end even if there is still dirt on the street?

I found the controls a bit tricky, and I could imagine improving these to be more responsive. Additionally, the game could use a bit more variety.

Sound: 6/20

The opening tune is a bit sloppy. It somewhere reminds me of Circus Charly. The Game over tune is okay. The tune of completing a stage is weird and not consistent with the other tunes. The sound effect of an enemy vacuum cleaner entering the arena is spot on. It scared the hell outta me! Unfortunately, it abruptly stops when another sound effect is being played. Other sfx are harder to understand. What's the constant boing sound supposed to represent?

Graphics: 9/20

Nice looking graphics. I like the sweeping animation of the player sprite. Would have been cool to have other garbage to clean up to have some diversity in the graphics.

Polishment: 7/20

points 5

Overall a bit confusing to make out what's going on. Controls are not very smooth, reducing the overall game experience slightly

+2 points colored manual in pdf file in English and Italian

Originality: 17/20

A game where you have to sweep the streets clean, avoiding vacuum cleaners! Looks fairly good, with some slightly annoying sound effects and the controls are a little slow. Interesting concept though.

4+5+4+4 = 17/20

Notes

Extra point as tie breaker

#30 PAC-01



Title: PAC-01
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): ARC8
ROM size: 32
Ranked: 3

80/100

Gameplay: 13/20

This is a fun game, but it doesn't have a lot of variety. The clever 2P mode is more fun. In 2P mode, seems as if only invincible when not being able to move, would have been nice if the player would have been able to move a bit during the invincible time, as currently a ghost can still kill a player immediately when the flashing stops, and it doesn't seem the player can do anything about that.

The faster speeds are nice, but more gimmicky than useful for the gameplay.

Sound: 13/20

The introduction theme is short but spot on for Pacman! It takes me back to the arcade hall. Sfx are good. During the game you hear some mumbling low tones. But it's not annoying and it fits a game of Pacman. Music and sfx are congruent with the game.

Graphics: 18/20

Great arcade-like graphics with a lot of trickery. This looks almost like an MSX 2 game. It was nice to find all the tricks used. Also: Great reference to the Pac-Man glitch and nice cut scenes.

Polishment: 16/20

points 15

absolute awesome twist on the classic Pac-Man game

super well polished. amazing vertical scroll, great fun to play

very challenging and the increase in difficulty as the game advances is just about perfect

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 20/20

An very original take on a popular character and gameplay style, with very well done graphics, music, sound effects and amazing technical ability to push the hardware.

5+5+5+5 = 20/20

#31 Open Wide!



Title: Open Wide!
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): Hakogame
ROM size: 128
Ranked: 13

63/100

Gameplay: 15/20

Cool concept and gets harder after the first few levels. Ultimately, it feels like a combination of luck, but the relative probabilities of each of the tools make it quite interesting. The controls work well, and the visual indications and explanations are clear.

Sound: 8/20

Simple two-part tune. I really have no idea what to expect from music for a dentist game. My dentist always turns on Radio 10 Gold. The sfx could be better and could even be the gimmick of this game. I would have loved a satisfying crunchy noise when pulling out a tooth. That is a missed opportunity. There's room for a sequel with a drill!

Graphics: 14/20

The graphics and presentation of this game make me happy. The graphics are stylish and are great. I would have liked some more animation tho.

Polishment: 10/20

points 9

fun to play. controls are a bit choppy.

colorful graphics

+1 point short how-to-play readme file and a nice png file with the cover art

Originality: 16/20

Nice original concept and gameplay, suitable graphics, sound effects but with simple music.

4+5+3+4 = 16/20

#32 No Back Down



Title: No Back Down
Genre: Arcade
Author(s): SoCal
ROM size: 64
Ranked: 7

73/100

Gameplay: 14/20

Fun, but a bit slow. Unclear how collision/danger detection exactly works between objects and the player, but as a general strategy probably "move between windows" is the best. Minimap on the side is useful to see how far you are. Not so clear what happens with the opening windows sometimes. And nice to get on a helicopter!

Sound: 12/20

The Opening tune and stage clear tune bring back Konami memories of their 80's games: Hypersports and Athletic Land. While the "game over" music somehow reminds me of Metal Gear's game over tune. During gameplay in level 1 you hear a bluesy song, which fits well. Level 2 contains a plain tune. I miss sfx during gameplay for all the events: the people throwing stuff out of their windows, stuff falling on top of your head. The sound of the flowing bra would have been interesting.

Graphics: 15/20

Great looking arcade game. A lot of interesting things are going on screen but the objectives are always good distinguishable. The interesting color combinations are something nice.

Polishment: 15/20

points 13

great titlescreen

really fun gameplay and very challenging

great usage of colors and music

+2 points colored manual in pdf file

Originality: 17/20

A quite well done take on the arcade game Crazy Climber, with colourful graphics, and in game music and simple sound effects.

5+4+4+4 = 17/20

#33 Heart Stealer 2



Title: Heart Stealer 2
Genre: Action
Author(s): Timmy
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 22

48²/100

Gameplay: 15/20

Quite hard, but nicely responsive. I found it surprisingly addictive, but I wasn't sure if I could play this on a real MSX without emulator saves -- it would be far too hard for me. I think if it could be more forgiving, it could be really nice.

Sound: 1/20

No sound to judge.

Graphics: 12/20

VVVVVV! Updated/improved GFX from the original ZX version. The mood is good but I was hoping for a little more animation in the backgrounds.

Polishment: 11/20

points 10

Very original idea. The game is difficult and confusing at times, but super fun at the same time

lack of music and sfx makes this very cool game feel incomplete

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 9/20

Multi-screen, puzzle platformer, fairly monochrome graphics, no sound or music.

3+4+0+2 = 9/20

Notes

Extra points as tie breaker

#34 Arya



Title: Arya
Genre: Puzzle
Author(s): André Baptista
ROM size: 16
Ranked: 16

55/100

Gameplay: 17/20

Very nice columns variant. There are some really good bonus markers and explanation, and helps the player to understand and optimize their approach. I also love the starting countdown.

Sound: 2/20

Just one sound effect.

Graphics: 15/20

Graphics are fitting for this type of game and look really good. Block are detailed and easy to recognize. There is quite some polish in the graphics presentation that could be missed on first glance.

Polishment: 10/20

points 9

great gameplay, very fun to play

the sides of the screen feel a bit empty

a cool soundtrack would have been amazing

+1 point short how-to-play readme file

Originality: 11/20

Columns/Tetris like game, reasonably fun gameplay, graphics nicely done. No music and sound effects are very simple.

$4+4+1+2 = 11/20$

End note

And with that, it's a wrap! MSXdev21 is over. It's been a fantastic year with lots of new MSX games as a result.

We would like to thank everyone that has been involved in this year's dev compo – together we made it happen. All participants, all donators, all sponsors, the jurors and all who helped out to make it work: thank you!

Hope to see you all on the next edition, as MSXdev22 is free style!

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THANK YOU FOR PLAYING