

License

Pysnakes 1 or 2 player snake game
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Pysnakes Documentation

So open source apps are famously badly documented, especially when like this one they were written as one man's project.

Here's some stuff you might want to know about the game.

Pre-requisites

To run PySnakes you need a copy of Python, and the corresponding pygame package. On Linux, check out your package manager as there will almost certainly be versions of these packages available for your distribution.

On Windows you need to go to <http://www.python.org/> to get a version of python and <http://pygame.org/> to get a corresponding pygame version.

Once those are installed, on Windows simply click the pysnakes.py script, on Linux you'll need to type "python pysnakes.py" into a command line in the directory that you unpacked the game into.

Key Bindings

There are no mouse controls at all in this game. Most of the menu type options are up and down cursor keys with enter to pick the highlighted option. The "Controls" option in the main menu has more details on key presses to set options, and also gives access to customise the keyboard controls for directing your snake in game.

Additionally Escape will usually drop you back to the main menu (from highscores or controls options), and Pause/Break will pause the game (this reduces frequency of refresh so the processor usage drops, and also pauses the game time counter.)

Aim of the Game

Your aim is to gain as many points in as little time as possible. The high scores table is ranked on score, then on time, so if you have a higher score you will be at the top, if you have an equal score but a faster time you will be at the top etc.

To gain points you need to grab the fruit (looks a bit like an apple). This gives you points but also makes you grow. There are 10 fruit per level, and later fruit are worth more points, but make you grow more.

You can loose points if you die, this also costs you a life, of which you have only 3 so avoid getting killed.

You will die if you crash into a wall, or your own tail, or in the two player version into your opponents tail.

In two player mode the aim is to get the most points, you can do this by getting to fruit first and by forcing your opponent into situations where they will crash (like Tron style games).

Customising Game Play

There are a few things you can do to customise play. As stated previously you can go to the Controls section on the main menu which lets you set the key-bindings, it also allows you to pick a custom game speed (default is 125 mS per frame, but other options are available) and to set the level set. The default level set is in the plain text file called "default" in the pysnakes installation directory. To create your own custom levels I advise copying this file. Probably best not to edit it directly.

There is almost no error checking on the level files when they're read in so if you do something wrong in your custom level set then expect the program to crash when you start a game. The good news is that you can change the level in the Controls menu without the program trying to load a level. This means if it does crash you can always go back to default and play.

Take a look in the default level set for some notes on the level file format. Basically it's based on an old snakes game (nibbles for MS QuickBasic if you're interested) which was an ascii based interface so it's 40 columns by 29 lines of blocks to make a level. Anything shorter than 40 lines is discarded by the loading routine so you can leave as many blank lines in the level set as you like and any comments less than 40 characters long will also be ignored. A 1 is a wall and a 0 is not. In fact a 1 is a wall and anything else is not, but I'd advise you not to rely on this in case there are more features added in later versions (perhaps??).

Once you've made your masterpiece level set, you need to copy it to the level set folder. This is placed with all of the other config info for pysnakes in your home folder (/home/<username> on Linux) in a

hidden folder called “.pysnakes” (For those of you new to Linux files starting with a dot are hidden files). In here you'll find the settings file that contains your personal settings in a plain text file, the high scores file and a folder called “levelsets” (if it isn't there either make it yourself or start pysnakes and go into the controls menu, this makes the folder if it isn't already there). All your custom level sets need to go in this folder and be called something other than default. Once that's done run pysnakes again and you should find in the Controls menu that your custom level is now in the list of available level sets, select it choose Save and Exit and then play away.

Reason for writing this game

This game was written for a Linux Format (<http://www.linuxformat.co.uk>) reader competition. There is an acknowledgement to this fact in level 10 if you ever get that far (you can always make a custom level set with less of the preceding levels if you really want to see it but where's the fun in that?) It was written in about 2 weeks of spare evenings with minimal effort, which shows how good the PyGame SDL bindings really are.

Any thoughts or comments?

Please inform the author if you have any thoughts or comments at:

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Source

All of the game source is in the file “pysnakes.py” source for this document is in the src directory as an odt file for Open Document compliant word processors (e.g. OpenOffice.org). There are also SVG sources for logos and titles used in the game in the src folder. These were created with Inkscape and are best viewed and edited in Inkscape.

Updates

It may be the case that I have time to code some of the extra features that I've thought of. It's more likely to be the case that I'll be inundated with bugs in need of fixing. Either way, take a look at <http://www.pysnakes.net/> to see what the current state of the game is.