

# Software Showcase

by John Haley

This Issue's Software Showcase featured program is Chiral 1.0.0. (click on the above picture for correct pronunciation). Released this last April, this puzzle game is still relatively new. The development of Chiral was a joint effort between independent developer Trevor Powell and Ambrosia Software's Andrew Welch. On and off, development took over two years.

Chiral can best be described as a combination of the atomic bonding, domino concept and Tetris game play. Points are scored by assembling a puzzle in the form of a molecule. Different atoms appear and have to be fitted into the forming molecule according to number of bonds. Satisfying all of the bonds of all of the atoms of a given molecule will clear that molecule from the screen and score points.

This is the basic playing screen for Chiral 1.0.0. The test tube on the right holds the atoms that have to be placed on the screen. The higher the level, the faster this test tube fills up. Atoms are placed with a simple point and click of the mouse. The number of bonds each atom needs is symbolized by a dot pattern and color. Four dots means that atom needs four bonds. By color the atoms need the following number of bonds:

	Color of atom	Number of bonds
1	Blue	
2	Red	
	Green	3
4	Purple	

The red patterns are “walls” that severely limit your creativity in laying out new molecules. Luckily these restrictions do not appear on the early boards.

The greater the number of bonds, the more difficult an atom is to place. Never place the purple atoms near walls or the edge of the screen. You will not be able to connect to all four bonds.

Notice that once an atom has achieved all of the required bonds, the dot pattern disappears. This makes unfulfilled atoms easy to spot. The grey atom with the red question mark is a mystery atom. These atoms can have from one to four bonds required, but they are not telling.

Atoms with a marble finish, such as the top right green one, are heavy atoms and can not be moved once placed. Swapping atoms is a powerful strategy, and these heavy atoms spoil many a grand plan.

Chiral has a steep initial learning curve. To get the hang of placing atoms and fulfilling bonds, start with the practice level. Time is not as much of a factor and you can develop your initial strategy. As ones ability develops,

new strategies become apparent. But time, and the lack of it, is always a factor.

If you have achieved success at the higher levels, be sure to write in with your Hints & Tricks so they can be included in a future issue. The registration fee for Chiral is \$15 and the download time at 9600 Baud is approximately 30 minutes. If the download time is intimidating, we will be happy to send you the disks for a \$5 shipping and handling fee.

If you currently have Chiral on your computer, the above Go To Icon will bring you directly to Chiral for game play.