Blackout Changes Log

This file documents the changes to *Blackout* with each version number.

Version 1.0, Released 1/10/91

Original version.

Version 2.0, Released 3/17/91

1) Added Game/Setup Game choice with Parameters dialog box, to allow game-play configuration by players.
2) Added true *Windows* online-help, modeled after the *Windows Entertainment Pack* online help.
3) Added "Target" bitmaps, to replace version 1.0's simple white blocks, to solve the problem where some of the randomly-colored blocks looked too much like a white block.
4) Added "Bonus" rectangles, which allow player to get multiples of a regular target score.
5) Added status line, to allow monitoring of the game's progress.
6) Added the "New" and "Pause" buttons on the status line, as shortcuts to use of the menu functions.
7) Added intelligent background behavior, so the program automatically pauses when in the background or iconized.
8) Added intelligent resize logic. *Blackout*''s window is now always a precise multiple of the game grid, instead of having "slack space" at the bottom and right sides of the window. The window size is also forced to a large-enough size to prevent clipping of the game's status line fields.

Version 2.1, Released 3/20/91

Released a "bug fix" version to fix problems where extremely high scores were not being saved in the High Scores entries correctly, and where the game score could suddenly become very high (a simple value-wrapping problem with the scoring variable).

Version 2.2, Released 3/31/91

This version introduced permanent fixes to the bugs from version 2.0, and added the following features:

1) Scoring and game-state counts are now kept up-to-date continuously, instead of being calculated by counting the whole game grid once per second. This should result in faster play on AT machines and slower 386's.
2) Added "Replay Arrow" feature - if you're fast enough, you can click on the traveling "Replay Arrow" to clear all black rectangles on the current level. This allows you to increase your score by continuing to play the level's bonus rectangles, or to get more time to complete the level.
3) In order to encourage registration, *Blackout* now has one of the dreaded "pester screens" which seem to be more and more common with shareware, lately. This screen is simply a modified "about" dialog box, with a button to allow you to continue and a button to allow you to enter a registration number. If you enter a valid registration number, the "pester screen" feature is disabled. Otherwise, it will be displayed each time you start a new game or move to a new level. Your registration number will work on any newer version of *Blackout* that you download, as well.
4) A much nicer 3-D *Blackout* icon.

Version 2.3, Released 4/15/91

1) Enhanced "Replay Arrow" feature to include arrows in all four directions.
2) Added "Boogeyman" block that appears at times, preventing you from scoring points until you click on it - boogeyman can also turn found targets back into unfound ones.
3) Fixed bugs with level 10 play.
4) Fixed bugs with level-end detection. The completion of any level should always be correctly detected.
5) Enhanced playability by tweaking internal loops and percentage values.
6) Modified Parameters dialog box to include a game switch to enable/disable "Boogeyman" block.

Version 2.4, Released 6/10/91

1) Added logic to speed up detection of level-end. Level-end detection should be instantaneous now.
2) Improved playability by further tuning of the percentage chances for Replay Arrows & Boogeymen.
3) Added support for Windows 3.0 background sound routines. All sounds now play in the background, and do not slow *Blackout* play, as happened in previous Blackout versions.
4) Added support for use of sound hardware. If found, a multi-voice sound board will be used, and all *Blackout* sounds will use different instruments (or "envelopes"). In order to use a sound board, Windows must be installed with a multi-voice sound driver that supports the installed sound board. One such driver is FM.DRV for the Adlib and Soundblaster boards, a shareware Windows sound driver by David Giller and Monty Schmidt, available from Compuserve and a number of BBS's. Mr Schmidt can be reached at:

    Monty Schmidt
    1020 E. Johnson #1
    Madison, WI 53703

5) Added dialog-box and menu-choice to support customized selection of sound-board voices for the different *Blackout* sounds.   The dialog box allows testing & assignment of different instruments for each of the eight *Blackout* sound events. There is a "Save" button to save your choices for future games.
6) Modified the way Target, Bonus, Replay Arrow, and Boogeyman rectangles are displayed, increasing the speed of the game.

Special note for version 2.4 - This version is significantly faster than previous versions. You may have to modify your game configuration to slow the game down - especially on faster machines. Game configuration rules are discussed in the User's Guide (for registered users), and also in the Online Help, under the topic "Configuring Blackout". Call or write for help if you have trouble getting a playable configuration.

That's all, folks!

Thanks to everyone who has registered. I appreciate your honesty. If you have any comments or suggestions for or about *Blackout*, please feel free to write, call, or leave Email on Exec-PC (Pat Mills) or Compuserve (71211,1250) or Bix (pmills). I'll try to answer all questions and respond to all comments. In my spare time, I'm working on adding more features, including 256-color support (with palette cycling) and a 3-D look for the playing surface.