Ramp Rage

By Jason Kendall © Kendallsoft 2014 [v1.2 Released 12th June 2015]
For the Atari 8-bit Home Computer (48K) and all Atarians
Loading Instructions: Boot disk (automatically disables BASIC)
PAL or NTSC systems: emulator users may prefer the NTSC video setting
as the playfield is taller and the game looks nicer. The game will
only be playable using a joystick!

Ramp Rage is a fun, classic, vertical scrolling arcade game that
requires an element of skill.

Quick Summary: Shoot stuff, collect stuff, go over the ramps, collect
targets, dock and level up! If you want to know more then read on…

Aboard the Rampanator, a powerful new speedboat, you set out to
survive level after level of the deadly waters of River
Illusion. Your challenge is to steer over the ramps where your
craft becomes airborne and somehow transforms into a plane; then
all you have to do is collect the targets… if only it was so simple!
When you have collected the required number of targets, dock with the
mother-ship to complete the level.

Why are you doing this? You may ask… *"Ours is not to reason why, Ours
is but to do or die, Move the joystick, Learn to fly, Collect the
targets, And score high".*

Your goal is to become High Score Club champion. Your HSC rivals have
taken to their weird and wonderful craft, and armed to the teeth aim
to stop you reaching this ultimate target!

Title Screen:
Press Select or move the joystick to
set the difficulty: Easy, Normal
(default), or Expert. Press Start or
Fire to begin your mission.

Controls:
Space bar to pause; move joystick or press a key to resume play
Joystick to move. Keep held in one direction to gain momentum.
Start to abort.
Option "The last resort"; exchange a spare ship plus any extra
letters and power-ups you have collected for a full tank of fuel.
Only once per go.

Firing
Press fire to launch missiles, hold fire in for autofire. Hold Up
before firing to lock the missile direction to up, handy when you
have a bad guy approaching from above!

Status Display

The display at the top of the screen shows your score (white), number
of targets left to collect (pink), EXTRA letters (grey), when
collected they turn pink, and lives (yellow). Along with the speed
gauge (middle) and fuel gauge (top). The small F icon indicates the
emergency fuel tank is unused.

Shields

The Rampanator's built in Reflex Shield can absorb minor damage from obstacles, the craft changes to orange and then red when your shield becomes critical, luckily this recharges when you are on open water. This does not protect you from the baddies but the PMG shield which can be collected as a power-up does. Shield damage also drains fuel.

Ramps, Jumps, Targets, Landing

As you move the speedboat down the screen, your speed and potential jump distance increase. When you go over a ramp you are launched into the air. You now have only one control: push up on the joystick to shorten your jump if you wish, however, slow down too much too soon and you may not transform...

After this 'take-off' period your craft spouts a pair of wings, clever people eh?. (Unfortunately the budget was getting low and the planned high powered jet plane had to be downgraded into a single engine prop job).

When the plane turns grey you assume manual control and can hunt down the targets. Hold down to fly quickly to each target (gauge brightens) then push up to slow down as you approach the target. Collect as many targets as you can by hovering over them, pushing up to maintain your position. The screen changes colour when you have engaged a target.

Air-turbulence may turn the plane orange then red if things become critical. Fly over open water to recover if things get too hairy.
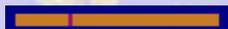
When it's time to land the plane flashes purple three times, get back over clear water to complete the landing. You can score points for long jumps and for collecting targets.

Fuel Stations

River Illusion mysteriously loops around so you can re-try missed targets; however, you have a limited number of re-fuelling stations on each level.

When fuel runs low your craft turns green, yes I know it's already green, but it turns even greener and the warning siren is activated so you have no excuses.

WARNING: If you run out of fuel it's bad news as any spare craft will also start with minimal fuel! If you are low on fuel you cannot transform into the plane but may still make the jumps, but be careful when landing. Stay over the refuelling stations for as long as you can for maximum benefit.

Completing a Level & Docking

After collecting the required number of targets the mother-ship is activated. Dock using the runway at the back of the craft. Stay aboard and move fully into the craft to secure the docking. If you fail, you are expelled and may try again. If the mother-ship has gone off screen, you are set an additional target. You can repeat this until you run out of fuel or targets... eek!

The mother-ship may be opened or closed by shooting the side sections. When she's open for business her colour changes to match the Rampanator's fetching green and orange livery. When the mother-ship is red and pink it is not safe to dock. WARNING: Excessive shooting of the mother-ship may cause her to become unstable!

Bad Guys

Various craft and strange creatures (told you it was the High Score Club guys!) patrol the waters of River Illusion, they approach from the top, bottom or sides of the screen. They have individual characteristics, some are much tougher than others to destroy.

Red coloured adversaries are equipped with proximity gravitational weapons. These pull or push you, damage you and drain your fuel, nice eh? As you inflict damage on the baddies they turn brighter and eventually start to disintegrate before setting on fire. Avoid the burning wrecks!

Power-Ups

Collect any power-ups that appear from destroyed enemies: "p" increases your fire power, collect 100/200/500 for bonus points, the PMG shield or "flying underpants" (you flash blue & yellow) allows you to destroy the baddies by crashing into them. You can chase escaping power-ups by scrolling fast and you can destroy them too! "p" Power-ups are kept on each level, even if you crash.

Boosts

Increase your speed for a short while, useful for reaching distant targets if collected before taking a ramp, but also likely to crash you into a rock at high speed! The plane can also collect the boosts, handy for extending your flight and this may be the only way to reach distant targets.

Some of the other items and features

Electrified Gates:

They open and they close… now what did you expect?! They also damage the plane.

Logs:

They float! made of wood don't you know… some of the logs can be controlled! The log patterns indicate which direction the logs can be moved.

Spikes & Barriers:

Descend and rise from the water, luckily they are tipped with rotting vegetation so they may not destroy you unless you take a direct hit.

Turbulence and Waterfalls:

Rock now, rock your boat! May slow you down, drain fuel, and cause moderate damage. Delays automatic reflex shield repair.

Rocks and scenery:

Ok so that's more rocks! Some crumble and re-appear giving you a chance to pass.

Bridges, Tunnels and Pylons:

Go under/through them as the boat, watch out for the baddies as they can too. Will cause damage to the plane.
WARNING: Taking a hit when entering a tunnel may cause serious fuel loss / damage.

Volcanoes:

Also cause damage to the plane, watch out for eruptions!

Flak:

Appears when you are airborne. Guess what? Yes, it causes damage to the plane! It's almost like someone's out to get you!

Ramps:

Two types; regular and trickier ones that appear and disappear. Align the boat with the arrows and pull down as you jump for extra distance WARNING: Crashing into the side of a ramp causes *instant* destruction to boat or plane.

Extras

Collect the letters EXTRA for an extra speedboat. The letters turn from Grey to Pink. When you are in the air uncollected letters become obstacles to the plane.

Difficulty:

There are three difficulty settings. Play on Easy first to get the hang of the basics, then play on Normal; tough at first but you should be able to make progress. If you're a former (or potential) abbuc Bundesliga or High Score Club Champion try Expert ;)

Easy

You start with 2 extra lives. Slower game speed, longer jumps, more targets and easier to collect. Stronger reflex shield, often damage instead of crashing. Less baddies and weaker types which do not instantly destroy you upon contact and do not launch missiles at you.

Fuels stations remain open and your tank is filled at the start of each level. Turbulence is weak.

EXTRA collect any 5 letters for an extra life.
Docking is automatic, so relax and enjoy the ride!

Normal

Faster scrolling and movement, less on-board shield. More baddies, some are tougher, contact destroys your boat, they can fire missiles and use gravitational weapons. Targets are harder to collect.

Fuels stations are cleared when used and your tank is not refilled between levels. Stronger Turbulence.

EXTRA each of the 5 individual letters must be collected.
Manual Docking.

Expert

Only one target can be collected on each jump until you collect the first 'p'ower-up and yes, they're harder to collect too. Weak reflex shield so contact with anything solid may cause your destruction!

Baddies are tougher, contact destroys your boat and they can heal themselves and fire missiles and use gravitational weapons. Turbulence is more extreme and drains more fuel.

Fuel stations are cleared when used and your tank is not refilled between levels.

EXTRA each letter must be collected, plus the letters toggle off if you collect the same one twice!
Manual Docking but harder.

Levels

Each level has a set number of obstacles and items but their positions vary each game. Generally reflex shields get weaker and target collection gets trickier as you progress. Fuel and EXTRA letters also become more scarce too. Docking becomes more difficult.

The speeds and strengths of your adversaries increase and the numbers of obstacles and target collection periods vary. There are 20 set levels then the game goes into dynamic mode so they may not be quite so varied; let's be honest you'll never make it this far!!

Scoring

First target collected on each jump 200pts; for a 2nd target 400pts, 3rd 600pts, then from the 4th onwards 800pts each. 10-250 pts for long jump distances. Collecting a boost 10pts, EXTRA letters 100pts each. Destroying a bad guy 100 points, plus any power-ups collected. Docking 10-500pts depending on how soon you complete the docking. Post your Ramp Rage High Scores at www.atariage.com/

Hints Sometimes pull through an obstacle if you can't avoid it to minimise contact time.

Look out for the 'ramp ahead arrows', the ramps are not always present but if they are they will be directly in line with the arrow and not too far away.

Targets that seem too near a ramp might be collected by making a shorter jump so go slower or push up after take-off; or you might need to use an earlier ramp and make a long flight using the boosts. Often the next ramp can indicate targets ahead. The plane travels slowly from side to side so work down the river one side at a time. If you can't avoid them, fly through the *middle* of a ramp, taking minor damage rather being destroyed by crashing into the ramp edges. Avoid landing before tunnels. Try landing before ramps!

Fuels and extra life letters are usually found in the trickier side sections. Bag extra lives on the early levels where fuel is plentiful by making a run down each side before going for the targets. Fuel burns at a constant rate.

Get a couple of "p" power-ups to boost your firepower on the later levels; this is a must on expert so you can collect multiple targets. Big Hint: The planes always release a "p" power up when destroyed!

When docking, chance it and dive onboard over the rocks, relying on your reflex shield to protect you.
Have fun and PLAY ATARI ☺
Screenshots from real Atari (PAL system):
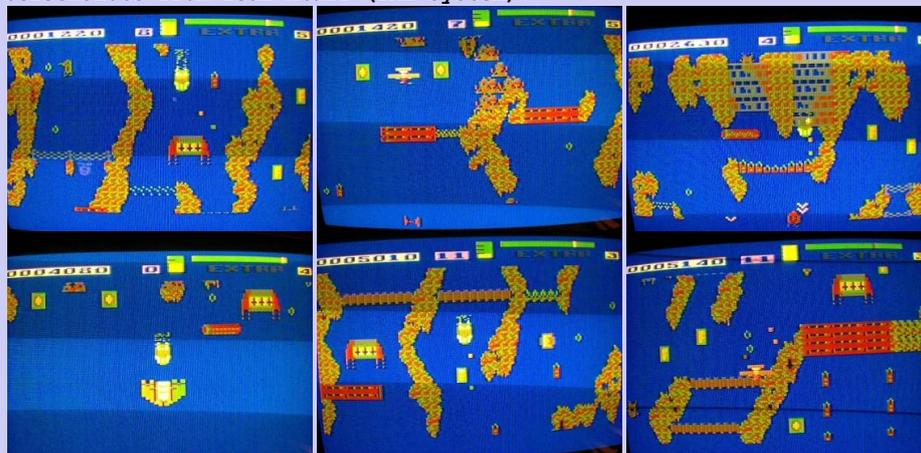
Supplemental:

Yes I finally swapped the READY prompt for the EDIT prompt!
Ramp Rage is my first assembler game developed on my beloved 130XE
using a MAC/65 cartridge along with Envision and Genesis utilities.

I have been working on the game periodically for the last three
years, and intended to enter the game in the 2013 abbuc software
contest but couldn't get the game working so I held it back for more
development and entered it in the 2014 contest where... it did
superbly well and... came last! Robbed (again) but to be fair there
were some excellent games and Ramp Rage needed more months to fine
tune to become the Atari 8-bit gaming masterpiece it is now ;)

Do you want to help with a sequel?
At some point I may create Ramp Rage **2** with improved sound and
graphics and hopefully more playfields and features. If anyone wants
to help with improving the sound and graphics please get in touch.

ABBUC

Thanks to abbuc for supporting our favourite little
computers, consider joining if you haven't already
done so; the yearly software competition has some
excellent games (and utilities of course) and the
modest prize money might encourage more programmers
to participate too.

Members get to vote and receive the entries a month
or more before they are released and get a quarterly
disk through the post along with the abbuc
magazine (German text). The small fee is
worth it for the competition games alone.

ABBUC - Atari Bit Byter User Club
http://www.abbuc.de/

Glitches, Bugs and Special Features
Despite my efforts there remain a few glitches, mainly with the
accuracy of the wiping collected items but they shouldn't affect your
enjoyment too much; and will probably make it easier as you then
collect multiple items. There are few surprises too but I'll let you
discover them!

License to Play!
If you like my
game all I ask in

8-bit High Score Club - AtariAge Forums - Internet Explorer
http://atariage.com/forums/forum/60-8-bit-high-score-club/

return is P**L**AYMENT, yes with an L, so take part even if it's for the
odd game in the Atari 8-bit High Score Club on atariage.com. It's fun
and it's free. The new season starts each January and it would be
great to see you then, but join in at *any* time. Everyone welcome.

Contact

Contact me on atariage.com as user therealbountybob. I
welcome *all* feedback I want Ramp Rage to offer lasting
playability so whatever level of player you are please let
me know what you think of the game. And be sure to check
out Gwobby and friends at www.gwobby.webs.com

All the best fellow Atari fans and thanks again to everyone who has
helped with my programming questions.

Jason