Sidewise
An Interactive Fiction by C. Scott Davis
Release 1.0 / Serial number 240218 / Inform 7 v10.1.1
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Thanks to Mark Davis for beta testing!

And much thanks to everyone at the Interactive Fiction Community Forum for helping me work out how to do all of the things I couldn't figure out by myself.

Introduction

If you're familiar with Interactive Fiction or Text Adventure Games, you can probably skip the basics, but there is some game-specific information further down, so I recommend at least reading the rest of the manual.

I have attempted to keep this manual as spoiler-free as possible.

The Basics

Interactive Fiction (or a Text Adventure Game) is just what it says on the tin. It's a mostly text-based game/story, where the settings are described and the player types simple text commands in order to move and interact with the various places, people, and things they encounter.

There are a few images (and some sounds, *see "Sounds" below*) in **Sidewise**, where needed, but it is mostly text.

Commands

Commands are given by typing the command, sometimes followed by one or two things that you're interacting with. Commands are only sent when you press the ENTER key.

Moving Around

Moving is accomplished by typing GO, followed by the direction you want to go, such as GO NORTH, GO SOUTH, GO NORTHEAST, GO UP, etc. You can also leave out the GO and even abbreviate them to just one or two letters, such as N, S, NE, etc.

LOOKing, READing, and SEARCHing

You can LOOK AT almost anything in the game and this will usually give you important information. To LOOK AT something, type LOOK AT *thing*, but if you leave the AT out, it is implied. So, LOOK *thing* is also valid. You can also abbreviate LOOK as L.

Things with text on them can also be READ and this will sometimes provide additional information, beyond simply LOOKing. For example, LOOK magazine might tell you the name of the magazine, while READ magazine might tell you what the magazine is about. Some things can only be read if you're holding them, in which case, typing READ *thing*, will pick it up and then read it.

In addition to simply LOOKing AT something, you can also LOOK IN, LOOK ON, and LOOK UNDER things, which may reveal items that aren't immediately visible. You can also SEARCH things, which will sometimes reveal other secrets and/or hidden things.

INVENTORY, GETting, WEARing, and DROPping

Another useful command is INVENTORY, which can be abbreviated as INV or just I. It shows you everything you are carrying, including items that you are wearing.

If an item can be picked up, you can type GET *thing* and it will be added to your inventory. Some things can also be worn, in which case you can type WEAR *thing* to wear the item. If you no longer want to wear something that you're wearing, you can type TAKE OFF *thing* and you'll no longer be wearing it.

To drop an item, type DROP *thing* and the item will be dropped at the current location and will no longer appear in your inventory.

Other Commands

There are many other commands than the ones I've listed above. Feel free to try doing pretty much anything you want. There will, of course, be commands that **Sidewise** doesn't understand, but you won't know until you try. Most commands are useful in some way, but a few are just to add flavour.

Some commands only work when you're carrying a certain item. For example, if the wooden door requires a silver key, you will only be able to unlock the door, if you have that key. In most cases, you don't have to specify the item you're using. For example, if you have the silver key, you can type UNLOCK wooden door WITH silver key or you can just type UNLOCK wooden door and **Sidewise** will assume that you mean WITH silver key (since that's the only thing that can be used to unlock that door).

Synonyms

I have tried to define synonyms for as many commands and things as I could think of, in order to prevent you from having to word things a very exact way. For example, BREAK, SMASH, CRUSH, and SHATTER (just to name a few) all do the same thing. Likewise, you can refer to the telephone as telephone, phone, landline, or land line (to name a few).

Items with Similar Names

Items with similar names, such as wooden door and iron door, must be referred to in a unique way. For example, you can type LOOK wooden door or even just LOOK wooden, but if you just type LOOK door and both doors are there, **Sidewise** will ask you which door you mean and you will need to reply with a unique name for the door you're wanting to LOOK AT.

Items with Readable Pages

Items with readable pages can be read by typing READ PAGE *number* in *book*. You can also READ FIRST PAGE IN *book*, READ LAST PAGE IN *book*, READ NEXT PAGE IN *book*, and READ LAST PAGE in *book*. If you're only carrying one item with readable pages, you don't have to specify the name of the item. You can just type READ PAGE *number* or just PAGE *number*. You can also just type FIRST, LAST, NEXT, and PREVIOUS to read that page in the item you're carrying.

Security Doors

Security doors are colour-coded and require a security card of the matching colour or higher. A green security card can open green security doors. A yellow security card can open green and yellow security doors. A red security card can open green, yellow, and red security doors. Private security doors can only be opened with a special security card. Your employee ID is also a green security card and can open green security doors.

Security doors only stay open for a short amount of time and then close automatically.

If a security door is broken or has no power, it will be unable to open or close.

People and/or Animals

At some point, you may encounter other people and/or possibly animals. If so, there are several ways you can try to interact with them.

You can say things, such as SAY hello TO guard or SAY nice kitty TO cat. You can also leave out who you're saying things to, if there's only one person/animal there. For example, if you SAY hello and the guard is there, it will SAY hello TO guard. If however, the cat is there instead, it will SAY hello TO cat.

You can also SHOW things and GIVE things TO people and animals. Of course, they may not be interested, but the best way to find out what things they are interested in is to SHOW (or GIVE) things TO them.

With people, you can also ASK them ABOUT something. For example, you can ASK guard ABOUT theft. If the guard knows anything about theft, they will respond accordingly. You can often learn a *lot*, by asking people about various topics. Unlike some other commands, the ABOUT is required with ASK. If you try to ASK guard theft, the game won't understand what you're trying to do.

HINTS

Sidewise has a fairly robust hint system. By default, HINTS are OFF, which means that typing HINT will provide only very general hints (mostly from the information contained in this manual). If you type HINTS ON, it will provide hints that are more specific to the situation and in most cases, will contain spoilers. You can turn HINTS ON or OFF whenever you want, but if you turn them ON once, you are considered "spoiled", even if you later turn them OFF (*see "Endings", below*).

If HINTS are ON, a hint which ends with the phrase "might not have been a good idea" usually means that you've done something that makes it impossible to finish the game (*see "Losing", below*).

SOUNDS

As mentioned above, there are a few significant events in the game that are accompanied by sounds. If you don't want to hear them, just type SOUNDS OFF. You can type SOUNDS ON, at any time, to turn them back on.

SAVE, RESTORE, and RESTART

If you SAVE your game, you can later RESTORE it, to continue playing at the point where you SAVEd it. You can also RESTART, if you want to start the game over from the beginning.

Endings

There are multiple possible endings, both for success and failure. Successful endings are rated from 0/5 to 5/5, depending on certain criteria. Failures are always rated 0/5. Turning HINTS ON, at any point in the game (even if you later turn HINTS OFF) will prevent the end ratings from being shown.

Winning

In order to win, you must survive, accomplish an important task (that you will discover later), and get back where you belong. You will only get a successful ending, if you do *all* of those things, although there are other things you can do (or *avoid* doing) that will affect your end rating.

Losing

There are even more ways to lose. If you die, you lose; if you fail to accomplish the important task you lose; and if you get stranded and can't get back where you belong, you lose. Because of the nature of **Sidewise**, it is also possible to do something that makes it impossible to finish the game. For example, if you find a birthday cake that you need later to bribe a guard and you eat it, you won't be able to get past the guard later and therefore you won't be able to finish the game. If you ever find yourself in this situation, you can type RESTART and you will start over from the beginning.

Language and Spelling

Sidewise is written using British English terms and spelling, but I have tried to clarify some terms that might be confusing for those who aren't familiar with British English. For example, a torch in British English refers to what is called a flashlight in American English, however, since a torch can have a very different meaning in American English, I have referred to it as an electric torch in the game. In addition, I have tried to allow for players to also refer to items using the American English names, where possible. So, if you type GET flashlight, it will GET the torch and if you type LOOK parking lot, it will LOOK AT the car park.

Conclusion

I think that's about as much information as I can provide, without spoilers. If you find any bugs; try something that you think should work, but doesn't; or just have questions; please feel free to email me at *sidewise@seriouscybernetics.net*.

I hope you enjoy **Sidewise**!