

Free Flash Games Part I: Intro and Dinorun

Part I: Introduction and DinoRun

Introduction

Flash is a browser plug-in available for free from Adobe. Somewhat oversimplified, it is a mini operating system that runs in your web browser, be it Firefox, Opera, Safari, Chrome, or Internet Explorer. It allows you to run programs written for Flash. These programs range from simple slide-shows, to videos with sound. One thing Flash is used for is games, a large number of them free.

Although there are a large number of free games available, some are better than others. There are many different categories of games, and which ones will appeal to you depends on your tastes. In this series, I will introduce you a few of the better ones I've found, IMHO. However, this list is far from complete. Don't be afraid to try some other ones. Just don't blame me for all the time you waste playing them.

Getting Flash

Chances are you already have Flash installed in your web browser. However, even if you do, you should make sure you have the latest version. One of several criticisms of Flash is that vulnerabilities have allowed the compromise of the user's computer simply by viewing a specially crafted web page. There is no reason to think such vulnerabilities will not be found in the future.

In order to check you Flash version, simply visit <http://www.adobe.com/software/flash/about/> . It will tell you your installed version, and, a little further down the page, will tell the latest version. There is a link on that page to the download page if your version is out of date, or you lack Flash altogether. You may have to restart your browser after, or during, the Flash installation.

Now that you've got Flash, on to the games!

Dino Run

Journey back to an earlier time, at time so far back, even the graphics are pixelated. You are a small, but really tough, dinosaur. A meteor has just struck the Earth. A shock wave wall of doom is headed your way, killing everything in it's path. You must run for your life and reach a place of safety.

Dino Run is an real-time action/sports racing game, although quick reflexes are not necessary to win. In Dino Run, you are racing the clock so speak. It's G rated and suitable

for all ages. Along the way, you will encounter smaller, edible creatures and eggs. Eat the small creatures and save the eggs to gain points to upgrade your dinosaur. Upgrades include enhanced speed, acceleration, jumping, and strength.



Figure 1: See Dino run, for its life!

You will need all of these as there are many obstacles along the way to overcome to reach safety. There are pits to jump over, mountains to climb, canyons to cross, lakes to swim and more. In addition to the landscape obstacles, there are also larger dinosaurs too. Some of the larger creatures can help you reach safety, while some will hinder you.

The standard challenge is a series of runs. Each run has a start and a finish. Reach the finish line before the wall of doom catches you to get to move on to the next run. The number of runs in the standard challenge varies depending on the difficulty level. The easy level has the fewest, while medium and hard have one more than easy, while impossible features a final run that has the Bronto superegg, and is the only place to find that egg.

Even within a given difficulty level, the individual runs have some randomness to them, so while certain features will appear in a particular run, the exact place it appears, if at all, will vary. You must complete a run for any achievements and points, called DNA, to be saved. If the wall of doom catches you, everything you've done since starting that particular run is lost. Achievements and DNA from previous runs are not lost, and you can always try again.

In addition to the standard challenge, there are 21 speed runs to unlock. The first 20 of these runs are special mixes of one of the challenge runs, but with a twist. For instance, the ptero storm speed run features lots of pterodactyls. This is a great run for trying to get the dactyl chain award. If you complete all of the speed runs, except for Planet 0, at a difficulty level of medium or higher, you will get a crown for your dinosaur. Complete all runs at medium or higher and get a bronze crown, hard or higher gets you a silver crown, and finish all the runs at impossible level and you get a gold crown.

In order to unlock a speed run, except for Planet 0, you must spend some bones, the currency of Dino Run. You get bones by eating small critters or by bumping off larger

dinosaurs. You do not get bones from normal eggs, but save a super egg and you will. You also get bones, and sometimes DNA from achieving certain milestones. The in game instructions lists the milestones.

The many flash games have no memory. When you close your browser, or the tab the game is running in, all progress is lost. Dino Run is an exception. It saves your progress after every successful run. It will take many sessions to get a gold crown, and all the gold awards. Dino Run can be found at several places around the web, including <http://www.pixeljam.com/dinorun/> or the more reliable <http://www.clockworkmonster.com/32-Dino-Run.html> . Remember that your progress saving is site specific, so if you switch sites, you start over.

To help you achieve the gold awards, here are some tips;

- The only thing that can kill you is the wall of doom. Lots of other things can slow you down so the wall catches up with you, but nothing else can otherwise harm you. So go ahead, jump off that cliff! You never know what you will find at the bottom.
- There are lots of little hidden areas, so don't be afraid to explore a little. A few places actually require you to turn around to find things. Just don't take too long. The wall of doom is still coming.
- Until you get a few advancements, keep the level at easy. This has the slowest wall of doom. While there are fewer opportunities to gain DNA at the easy level, any you do gain still counts just as much as the DNA you get at the impossible level. Super Eggs and milestones give the exact same rewards at easy levels as they do at impossible. However, some Super Eggs are not available in the easy challenge.
- The brown dactyls can climb faster than you can. Hitch a ride whenever you can, especially when climbing mountains. In fact, you can not beat the twin peaks at hard and impossible without a ride. Lots of them actually.
- You can not harm the red dactyls, nor can you hitch a ride with them. All you can do is dodge them. If you have super strength, they can not bother you.
- You can ride the yellow duckbills, even make them jump, but they will buck you off after a short ride. You can not bump them off, even with super strength.
- Of all the upgrades, strength is the least important. Even at level 5, you do not have the strength to bump off the stegos and triceratops, although you can make them turn around. A high strength will help you with boulders, so it's still useful.
- At medium or higher difficulty levels, the challenge apocalypse run has 3 places of safety. One requires a high strength to reach. However, you should skip the first two places at the impossible level.

Conclusion

Flash games can be lots of fun, and with so many of them available for free, you have little excuse to be bored. So far, you've met only two of the many free ones out there on the Internet, just waiting to be played. In part 2 of this series, you be introduced to a game that'll really bug you. See you then!