Historical Note:

The first puzzle to be introduced as SpinOut by Binary Arts in 1987 was the fourth puzzle we ever produced and the first that was commercially successful. All four of these early puzzles—SpinOut, The ExaDecimal Puzzle, The Cat, and The Horse puzzles, were created by William Keister (1907-1997), a Bell Labs engineer and dear family friend.

The Inventor:

William Keister was a pioneer in switching theory and design at Bell Labs. When he retired in 1972, he was director of Bell Labs’ Computing Technology Center at Holmdel, New Jersey.

Mr. Keister’s interest in puzzles began as a boy in Montgomery, Alabama, where he designed puzzles when he wasn’t busy building crystal radio sets and writing poetry. In the late 1930s and 1940s, when engineers were only beginning to appreciate the logic that would later form the basis of computers, Mr. Keister began to look at logic puzzles and how they could be solved through formal design methods. “At the time,” he says, “we knew that computing machines could add, multiply, and divide, but it was not so apparent that they could be programmed to perform logic.”

Mr. Keister began working in his spare time to prove that puzzles could be solved through logic design. One day he idled Bell Labs’ stock room, gathering up pushbuttons, electronic relays, and light bulbs to build an electronic version of the Chinese Ring Puzzle. After a few hours work, he realized he had wired it up wrong, but studying what he had done he also realized that he had stumbled onto a whole series of binary code sequence puzzles, of which the famous Chinese Ring Puzzle was just one variation. He went on to sketch out a whole series of logic puzzles and show how they could be solved mathematically with Boolean algebra, a precursor to today’s computer languages.

SpinOut, now themed for fun with elephants, is the most direct descendant of Mr. Keister’s original work with the Chinese Rings.

About Binary Arts:

Binary Arts was created in 1985 and it was SpinOut that put us on the map. Since then, our puzzles and games have won dozens of awards for their originality, quality, creativity, and enrichment value. Parents, teachers, children, and puzzle purists have become devoted fans.

Our promise to you—We Put the Smart in Fun!™ We are always on the hunt for fresh, unique concepts that create wonderful learning opportunities and offer rich play value—the kind of enjoyment that makes people return to these games again and again.

As simple as that sounds, you’re going to need a few pointers on how to spin these pesky pachyderms so they’re facing in the right direction. Ready for your elephant handler training? First, there is only one spot where you can spin an elephant and only one elephant can spin at a time.

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Second, the puzzle is designed so that once you spin an elephant to the "march out" position, it locks the neighboring pachyderm to the left. You must plan your moves carefully, shifting these bruts left and right, to position an elephant for a spin. How tricky!

Third, the elephants may only march out forward, not backward. The disk underneath the lead elephant has a flat section, preventing the second-in-line mammoth from moving if the leader is turned to face the pack.

Finally, when all the elephants are lined up head to tail, march them out! Congratulations! You're one smart elephant trainer!

What's that? Want more hints? Imagine your Elephant SpinOut has just four elephants (instead of seven). Below we've illustrated the sequence of moves to solve this puzzle. Once you get the concept shown here, the rest will be easy. Try it!

Still stuck? Don't give up! It's not unusual for this to happen. Elephant SpinOut is a modern variant of the ancient Chinese Ring Puzzle—a favorite since 200AD. They might not have known it back then, but it uses sequential movement based on binary code logic, which means (in our puzzle), each elephant can be in only one of two positions at any given time. Getting all the elephants to line up takes a good bit of sequential binary code breaking. Yikes!

So...if you really get stuck visit our website, check out the entire solution sequence, and see what's new at Binary Arts www.puzzles.com.

Easy Reset Feature
Once you've solved Elephant SpinOut, you'll need to reset it for the next player (you may also use this feature if you get stuck and want to start over). To accomplish this we've designed a hinged section at the closed end of the puzzle base. To reset, gently pop the hinged end down, adjust the elephants on the puzzle slide so they are all facing parallel to each other*, slide them back into the puzzle base, and pop the hinged section back into place. You're ready to play again.

*Elephant orientation: To properly orient the puzzle during reset, you'll need to follow two rules. First, the elephant with the flat edge on its base is in the lead; this animal needs to be the first one to enter the base if sliding in from the hinged end. Second, the lead elephant's flat end should face toward the scalloped "turnaround" area in the base.