**BOOKSHELF**

The *Game Maker’s Apprentice: Game Development for Beginners*, Jacob Habgood and Mark Overmars. This book and its accompanying toolset show how to create nine different games in a range of genres, including action, adventure, and puzzles games—complete with professional-quality sound effects and visuals. It discusses game design theory and features practical examples of how it can be applied to make games more fun to play.

Game Maker lets users create games using a simple drag-and-drop interface, so no prior coding is necessary. It also includes an optional programming language for adding advanced features, with more information available at http://gamemaker.nl. The book includes a CD containing Game Maker software and all the game projects created for the book—plus a host of professional-quality graphics and sound effects for use in the reader's own games.


*Silicon Earth: Introduction to the Microelectronics and Nanotechnology Revolution*, John D. Cressler. We are in the center of the most life-changing technological revolution Earth has known. In just 60 years, a single invention—the silicon transistor—has produced the most sweeping and pervasive set of changes ever, reshaping the core of human existence on a global scale.

Using nonintimidating language, with an intuitive approach and minimal math, the author addresses the scientific and engineering underpinnings of microelectronics and nanotechnology, as well as how this technology transforms many interdisciplinary fields. Special “widget deconstruction” chapters address the inner workings of ubiquitous micro- and nano-enabled technologies, such as cellphones, flash drives, GPS devices, DVDs, and digital cameras.


*Leading the Virtual Workforce: How Great Leaders Transform Organizations in the 21st Century*, Karen Sobel Lojeski. With today’s world markets unsteady, unemployment on the rise, housing foreclosures up, and asset values down, the political landscape is shifting. Under such conditions, people often look to leaders to soothe battered nerves. But in today’s environment, few leaders can be relied upon.

Interviews with representatives of companies such as IBM, Merck, Western Union, Alcatel-Lucent, HP, and AT&T provide detailed case studies that address what’s different about leadership today and how to become a great leader in the Digital Age. Key topics include dispelling common myths and reshaping old leadership models.

Wiley; 978-0-470-42280-9; 155 pp.

*Game Usability: Advancing the Player Experience*, Katherine Isbister and Noah Schaffer. Computers were once the domain of geeks who enjoyed dealing with a difficult interface. But making the interface really intuitive and useful took computers far beyond the geek crowd.

Suddenly, a new factor became crucial to software’s success: the user experience.

Today, developers apply and extend these ideas, while game companies take their creations beyond the hardcore gamer market. People who love challenges are happy to master complicated or highly genre-constrained interfaces. Yet as the market expands in step with the growth of interest in casual games, game companies realize that usability matters, particularly to mainstream audiences. If it’s not seamless, easy to use, and engaging, players will lose interest.

This book gives game designers a better understanding of how player characteristics impact usability strategy, offering specific methods and measures to employ in game usability practice. It also includes practical advice on how to include usability in already tight development timelines, and how to advocate for usability and communicate results to higher-ups effectively.


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