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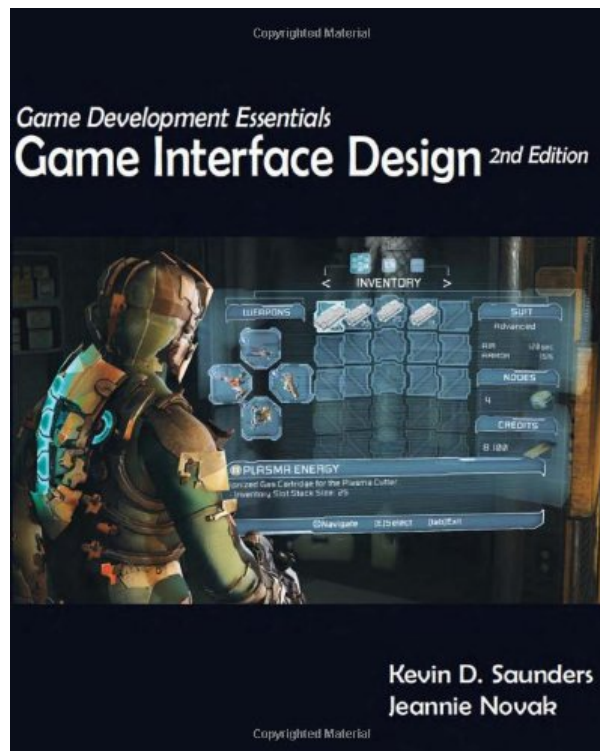

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Game Development Essentials
Game Interface Design 2nd Edition

INVENTORY

Kevin D. Saunders
Jeannie Novak

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Review
1. History of Game Interface Design: how did we get here? 2. Goals and Considerations: what are we trying to accomplish? 3. Platforms: consoles, mobile devices, PCs. 4. Genres: game styles and interface conventions. 5. Control Schemes: empowering the player. 6. Feedback Schemes: informing the player. 7. Process of Interface Design: how interfaces are created. 8. Prototype Interface Design: putting it all together. 9. Future of Interface Design: where are we heading?

About the Author
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Covering the complex topic of game interface design, GAME DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIALS: GAME INTERFACE DESIGN, is back with an all new Second Edition. This comprehensive introductory text immerses readers in the foundation, theory, and practice of interface creation, while including interviews with working professionals, examples from every gaming era and many genres, and hundreds of screenshots from contemporary games. Also featured are an expanded practice section with a wide variety of real world design examples, coverage of interface design for mobile and motion-sensing devices, multiplayer games, and much more. Readers will explore everything from the history of game interface design and basic design theories to practical strategies for creating winning, interactive interfaces and user experiences.

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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.
An Overview of Interface Design
By Benjamin J. Parrish
I cannot be as generous as the other reviewers. What I ordered was a book I hoped would break down the process of interface design. What I got was a lot of fluff. There are a few areas where some useful information can be gleaned, in particular regarding usability for disabled persons, and several developer sidebars where they discuss -- over the course of a few paragraphs -- the process they use to create an interface. But that process is never expanded upon by the author.

This book would have been a lot better if they had attempted, from inception to implementation, to create a mock-up user interface of one or more popular games. Then explained the pro's and con's of various approaches. Instead, what you get is a lot of pretty screen shots from existing games, a LOT of quotes from developers in the industry, and that is it.

Not a bad book, but not worth $60. Maybe $20-30, tops.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.
Well-written and informative
By Alan
An in depth guide to the current state of video games. The book's primary focus is to show how user experience plays a critical role in game design and the author provides several examples illustrating how interface decisions are incorporated throughout the design processes of many modern games.
This version of the textbook is up to date and provides outlook on several new technologies including the Wii U and Playstation Move. Furthermore, the book makes an effort to refer to modern games such as Diablo 3 and League of Legends to make itself accessible to present day designers.
Overall "Game Interface Design" succinctly covers a large range of material that game designers should be aware of during their development process; some of the topics covered include: the history of games, the importance of feedback, and where the game industry is headed. Because of the wide variety of topics covered, I believe that everyone has something to learn from this book.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.
An Invaluable Guide for Independent Game Developers!

By Eric Daily

As an independent game developer, you wear many hats and perform many jobs that are usually delegated over an large team of people. Thus, you never have the time to actually sit down and really learn new techniques and concepts. For our most recent game, we really struggled with UI design to make something that felt original yet was intuitive to the player. Not having an art background and unable to completely divorce ourselves from the fact that, as developers, we play the game differently than the casual user, progress was frustrating and slow. We were about ready to cut our losses and move on when I came across this book. SO glad that I did!

By breaking down the complex art and science of UI design in videogames, it suddenly made that mythical beast not so intimidating and a few chapters in I was already feeling confident to tackle our UI problems. Even the first chapter about the history of game interface was helpful in understanding how these components of UI emerged, and why they became the dominant strategies for engaging and enabling players to actually play the game. While I can't speak from a seasoned UI designer's perspective, every paragraph I felt like I was learning something new that I had never before considered.

It was surprising how difficult it was to convert a mouse and keyboard game to a mobile touch-based app. We figured it'd be as simple as 'convert mouse input to touch input.' Boy were we wrong! It changed everything! The menus, the graphics, the pacing and gameplay, all of it had to be adjusted. If I had not had this book on hand, especially the section on control interface design, we would have made some huge fumbles. It's amazing how much you think you know about something, and how much you actually don't!

If you don't think you need this book, you probably do.

Later on, when we were adding polish to our game to finish it, we figured it would be a simple as making things 'more pretty.' After reading the chapter on feedback, it was clear that we had almost zero feedback on in-game events and progress. That chapter was our guidebook for weeks after. After applying lessons learned from that chapter, there was a marked increase in user engagement and the overall playability of the game. Watching people groan or celebrate as they played the game was the direct, fulfilling, and entertaining result!

The author writes in a very clear and concise way so that you never feel like you missed something or didn't read it closely enough. Even though our team is small, it was useful to learn how UI design usually breaks down across bigger teams and it cued us into aspects of game design that we had not fully appreciated before. The high resolution photos really help to bring home a lot of the lessons, especially if you've played those games. In other words, it's not like those other design books where the pictures are all grayed out and referencing games you stopped playing 5 years ago. This book feels relevant and modern, I never got that 'old news' feel from it.

This book was current, informative, engaging, and down-right vital for our two-man team. Whether you're an indie developer or someone in the industry looking to understand game design on a much deeper level, this book is a fantastic place to start. Your games will be better for it.

See all 3 customer reviews...

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