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100 Principles Of Game Design



Synopsis

Game designers spend their lives solving extraordinary problems and facing mind-bending paradoxes. It's their job to make a meticulous plan for a spontaneous fun • players will want to experience over and over again. Pressure is heaped on with demands for innovation and blockbuster status. So designers find themselves facing an abyss of problems, pressure, and possibilities, armed only with their brains and an assortment of design principles they picked up over years of experience. For the first time, 100 Principles of Game Design gathers some of the best of these big ideas into one toolkit. Seasoned designers will be glad they don't have to hold it all in their heads anymore, and beginning design students can use the book to learn the tools of the trade. When the going gets tough, everyone can turn to this book for guidance, inspiration, or just to remind them of what works. Collected from every popular school of thought in game design, these core principles are organized by theme: innovation, creation, balancing, and troubleshooting. • Includes advances from the world's leading authorities on game design, some explained by the creators themselves • A reference book of finite, individual principles for easy access, providing a jumping off point for further research • Principles originating in fields as diverse as architecture, psychiatry, and economics, but shown here as they apply to game design • Richly designed with illustrations and photos, making each principle easy to understand and memorable • Timeless approach includes feedback loops, game mechanics, prototyping, economies of scale, user-centered design, and much more Professional designers and instructors at one of the world's leading game design institutions lay out the building blocks of diverse knowledge required to design even the simplest of games.

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Customer Reviews

What Wendy Despain and her coauthors have managed here is a much needed survey of important design concerns and techniques. Rather than dive deep into dense paragraphs of jargon, the authors present quick high-level discussions of key design questions and principles, making them accessible and encouraging the reader to pick up, try out, and combine what they have read in generous, accessible fashion. Beautifully designed, the book presents a series of pleasantly illustrated two-page spreads that prevent the reader from being intimidated by a wall of text. This book makes an excellent introduction to the core principles of game design for a beginner, or a good inspiration for brainstorming by an experienced pro.

For an introduction or refresher to game design theory and concept, Wendy Despain's book is excellent. However, for the \$59.99 price tag? There is not enough substance. Half the pages are simply "filler" illustrations which only serve to increase aesthetics and page count. The articles themselves are very short, simple and easy to read. They provide a great summation of important concepts that can then be more precisely researched. The examples used are very broad and cover tabletop and video games most people should be familiar with, but there is no real analysis of how specific design principles help/harm the success of various games, or any sort of look into how a group of design principles interplay in the classic games that are mentioned by name. If the cover price for this book was \$29.99, I would consider it a much better investment. Instead, I can only recommend getting the Kindle version, a used copy, or borrow a copy from your local public library. The actual content just doesn't justify the price tag otherwise. This is a soft-covered book of 100ish 1/2-1 page introductory articles fluffed up with pretty (but not very relevant) pictures.

I suspect I've dated myself with this review's title. (Do people use Cliff Notes anymore?) Still, the title is apt. This is a very usable, high-level guide of the main principles game designers use day to day. One page per principle provides a good level of granularity, resulting in a reference that will get more use than the other tomes that go deeper on each of the principles. This book serves a wide range of design experience as well. Beginners can use it to survey the basics before diving into those deeper tomes. But it also appeals to the experienced designer. Even after 15 years of designing games, I can't always recall each of these principles at a moment's notice. Thankfully, I

have this book to help with that now.

This book is a fantastic reference guide and great as a "skimmer." I've been a professional game designer for about 4 years now, and I found it really useful for refreshing my memory on concepts I'd heard, read about, or used from other contexts (other books, articles, GDC presentations, best practices passed on through oral tradition, etc). Though none of the principles go too much in depth, the one-page-per-principle format makes it really easy to flip through and serve as a springboard for deeper research or just a refresher to apply something to what I'm doing. Aspiring game designers may find it more useful in the "springboard for deeper research" sense, since I found I got the most out of the principles triggering practical contexts that I had already experienced and the convenience of having a reference for all the concepts in one place.

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