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Game Programming For Teens (Premier Press Game Development)



Synopsis

"Game Programming for Teens" takes young readers on a journey from ignorance to proverbial wisdom in the art of game programming. Truly starting at the beginning, the reader will learn the nuances of the Blitz Basic Language. The first part includes instructions on basic coding such as operators and statements. It provides an introduction to the language in general. After teaching loops and the like, the reader is trained in the art of style. During part two, the reader begins to learn how to work with graphics to create an exciting experience. Page flipping and collision detection are explained in detail, as is basic image programming. Parallaxing effects are also included. Translations are looked into, as well as other items required in a graphical program. The final part of the book brings it all to a close--it consists of everything else the reader will need. This section teaches the skills of sounds and music and Artificial Intelligence. Input, including that from the keyboard, mouse, and joystick, will also be covered.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In my opinion, there are three groups of enthusiasts in the "gamer" market: Game players who want to make their own games for fun; Programmers who take up game dev as a hobby or a diversion; and those aspiring to become professional game developers. I believe this book excels at catering to the first group, is intriguing to the second, and at least mildly interesting for the third. Reviewers in all three groups will therefore vary in their opinion of this book. I co-authored "Beginner's Guide to

DarkBasic...". In early 2002, we considered using BlitzBasic along with DarkBasic, but decided to focus on DarkBasic only, and tailored our book for the "extreme beginner," where it would be useful as a textbook in a "first programming course." I am glad because now there is this excellent BlitzBasic book too, and it nails the subject! Blitz and DBPro seem to be strong competitors. What you should realize when considering this book is, do you have a compiler? Visual C++ and Visual Basic and other compilers are expensive! But tools like BlitzBasic give you a DirectX game engine AND a compiler in one package. While this could easily cost hundreds of dollars for something like Visual C++ and Torque, you get it all in one package, with an easy-to-use script language. With this book, you get a trial version of the compiler, so you won't need any additional software to get started. A final point. It's the CONCEPTS that are important, not the language. Anyone who whines about a book not using C or C++ is immature and a novice in the extreme. Because any competent programmer can glean new knowledge from a book of any language and apply it to his/her own. Shoot, I have used Petzold as a reference when writing about Visual Basic. Maneesh should be congratulated for having written a very accessible book for new programmers and anyone who wants to write their own games without a huge investment of time.

I am a software engineer and a parent of an 11-year-old, and I have been looking for a way to teach my son computer programming in a way that would be fun for him. I read this book cover-to-cover, and it's almost perfect for this purpose. I have no doubt that the book would be excellent for a self-starting teen to read on his or her own. But as a parent, this book is invaluable for the parent seeking short, fun, educational programming activities that will be a lot of fun for the learner (and the parent as well). Every kid loves games, and this book does a great job. I would also recommend this book to an adult who wants to learn the basics of game programming. It's a pretty fast read, very easy to follow. I personally learned a lot from this book. I've been programming computers for 30 years, but I've never written a graphics-based game before, and this book efficiently and easily goes through all the techniques for creating good games very quickly. I think it would also be fairly easily followed by a teen or adult who has never programmed before. The book uses Blitz Basic, which is optimized for writing computer games and seems to be much easier to use than Visual Basic (the computer language I first tried when teaching my child). A trial version of Blitz Basic is on the CD-ROM included with the book, and the full version (called BlitzPlus) can be purchased online if desired (but is not required). The CD-ROM also includes excellent example artwork, animations, and sounds for the games described in the book, which is a great way to get a teen or pre-teen into programming without getting bogged down with creating art and sounds from the start. By the way,

this book covers creating 2D games (like Pong, Space Invaders, that sort of thing). 3D games are (I am told) much more challenging, and are covered in other books. (Blitz Basic is for 2D games; for 3D games, there is a related programming language called Blitz3D.) I have one important complaint about this book, which is why I gave it 4 stars rather than 5 stars. There are many errors in this book. It could have used more careful technical editing. For example, in the section on arrays, the author carefully explains how the indexes for a 30-element array range from 0 to 29, and cautions the reader not to try accessing element 30 (which is one past the end of the array), and then proceeds to give a sample program that makes exactly this mistake. There are several errors of this magnitude in the book, and at least a minor mistake every 3 or 4 pages. It's unfortunate, because these mistakes can be very confusing to a beginning programmer. But having said that, I still very much recommend this book. It's a good one. Congratulations to the teenage author who wrote it, excellent job!

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