Players Making Decisions: Game Design Essentials And The Art Of Understanding Your Players
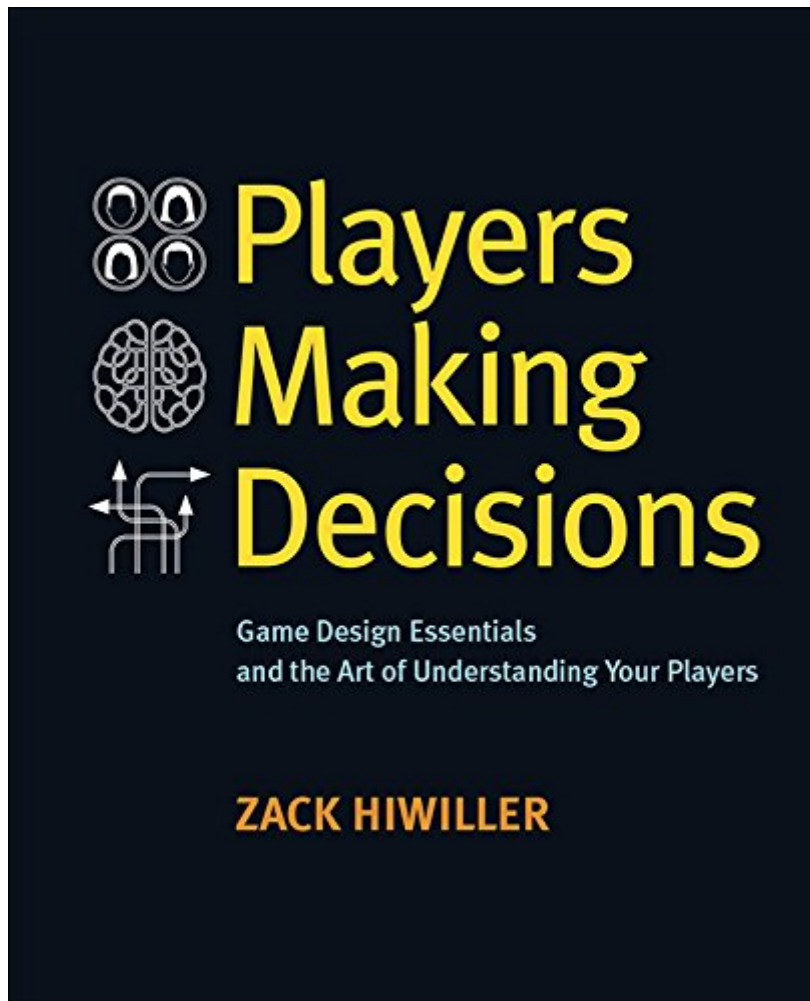
Players
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Game Design Essentials
and the Art of Understanding Your Players

ZACK HIWILLER

Synopsis

Game designers today are expected to have an arsenal of multi-disciplinary skills at their disposal in the fields of art and design, computer programming, psychology, economics, composition, education, mythologyâ "and the list goes on. How do you distill a vast universe down to a few salient points?   Players Making Decisions brings together the wide range of topics that are most often taught in modern game design courses and focuses on the core concepts that will be useful for students for years to come. A common theme to many of these concepts is the art and craft of creating games in which players are engaged by making meaningful decisions. It is the decision to move right or left, to pass versus shoot, or to develop oneâ ™s own strategy that makes the game enjoyable to the player. As a game designer, you are never entirely certain of who your audience will be, but you can enter their world and offer a state of focus and concentration on a task that is intrinsically rewarding. This detailed and easy-to-follow guide to game design is for both digital and analog game designers alike and some of its features include: A clear introduction to the discipline of game design, how game development teams work, and the game development process   Full details on prototyping and playtesting, from paper prototypes to intellectual property protection issues   A detailed discussion of cognitive biases and human decision making as it pertains to games   Thorough coverage of key game elements, with practical discussions of game mechanics, dynamics, and aesthetics   Practical coverage of using simulation tools to decode the magic of game balance   A full section on the game design business, and how to create a sustainable lifestyle within it

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Customer Reviews

First, I would like to thank the author. This is a very well written book. It is informative and I enjoyed reading it. I knew I would be writing a positive review for it very early on. I just finished reading tonight. I haven't written a book review before, but I feel this merited one.I completed my degree in this field in 2014. I wish this book existed then and was required reading for one of my design classes. Yes, there is a lot of ground covered, and for a topic like this, that is necessary. Zack covers that ground skillfully.Game design, psychology, game theory, best practices, even spreadsheets (and more) are topics that are covered to use to make our designs better for our players.This is highly recommended reading for anyone in school for a game career, looking to get into games, or even those just with an interest in games. For those already in our field, I recommend it as well. I picked up new perspectives and new tricks to utilize in my future designs.Since making a game requires many people from many disciplines anyone involved in the game industry can benefit from reading this book.Thanks again Zack Hiwiller, if I had a physical copy of your book, Players Making Decisions: Game Design Essentials and the Art of Understanding Your Players would be right next to Jesse Schell's book The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses, which I did read in school.Sincerely,Mark

Full disclosure: I am friends with the author. That being said, if I didn't actually like the book I would have just pretended I never read the thing, so the following is still an honest perspective.Zack does a great job of teaching the reader instead of telling the reader through use of many specific and clear examples. It's also apparent that there was a lot of research done in writing this book, from behavioral studies to other game design professionals' work. Finally, he has that dry, witty, sarcastic humor that I personally enjoy; the book never reads like a dull list of facts.The book covers a lot of ground. (In fact, if I had a criticism, it would probably be that it tried to cover too much.) In particular though, I found the sections on behaviorism and game theory not only interesting but one of the most clear explanations I've read on the subject. Additionally, the sections on documentation and

presentation should be mandatory reading for anyone who wants to work on a team, not just in games but really any medium+ sized project.Because of the wide gamut of subjects covered in the book, I believe it is an excellent resource for those interested in getting started in game design. However, even for those with background in game design there is certainly insight to be gleaned from Zack's experience and research.

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Making Decisions and Healing The Trauma of Pet Loss (The Pet Bereavement Series Book 2)