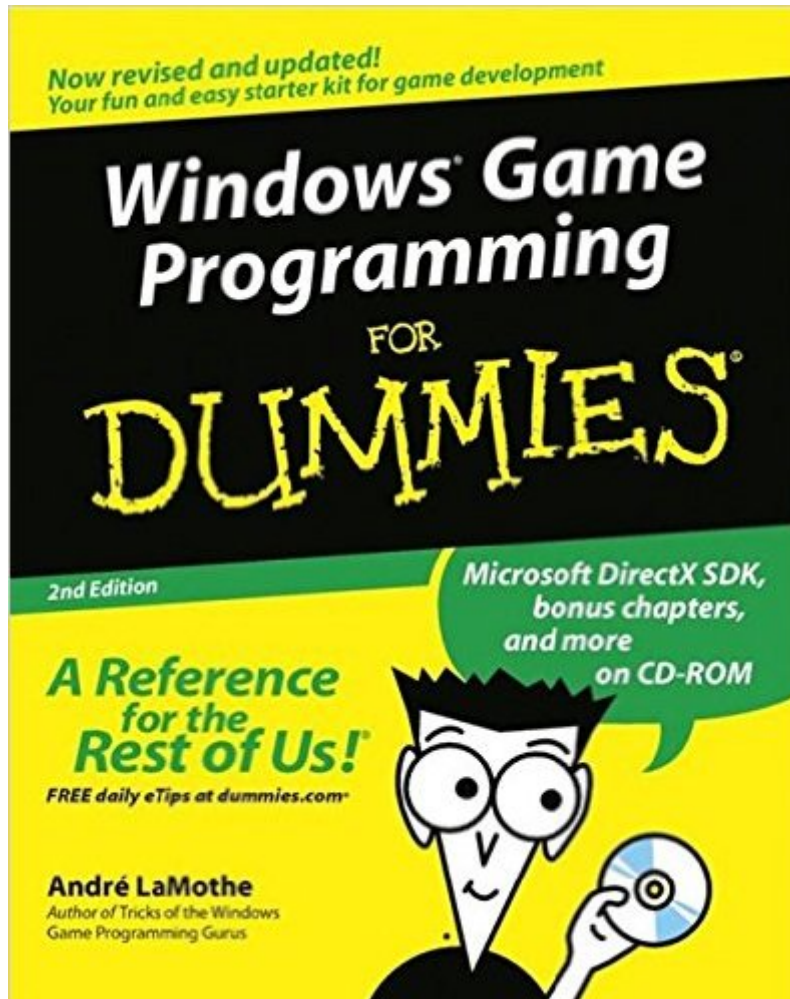


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Windows Game Programming For Dummies



Synopsis

The multimedia and computer-games industry has exploded in recent years. Games have gotten incredibly sophisticated and incredibly entertaining. The programs used to create them have improved also, to the point that you don't necessarily have to be a nerd deluxe to do it yourself. Even so, game programming can be challenging even if you're a veteran C/C++ programmer and licensed technogeek. Challenging, sure, but also incredibly cool. Using DirectX, the latest and greatest technology for making games on PCs, Windows Game Programming For Dummies will help you write just about any 2D game you can conjure. Now updated to cover new DirectX and Windows releases, your friendly yellow-and-black companion will show you: The basics of video game design The nuts and bolts of Windows programming How to work with DirectX and play with DirectDraw How to make a real game, with an actual, step-by-step example How to market your mind-blowing new creation The ten biggest mistakes made by game programmers and how to avoid them From graphics to sound to input and installation, legendary game developer and Xtreme Games CEO André LaMothe takes you right into the guts of the game in an entertaining style that won't send you retreating to the nearest joystick. André's witty, he's tons of fun, and before you know it he'll have you up to speed on: Setting up your game programming workstation Getting into DirectDraw: animation techniques, bitmaps, color keying, and more Adding Direct X subsystems such as DirectSound, DirectInput, and AutoPlay Getting your hands dirty by making a real game The physics of asteroids and other flying objects: time, velocity, force, and all that Game programming websites, downloads, 3D engines, usenet groups, and more!

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Customer Reviews

This book is for programmers with a fair grasp of C; you should understand macros, pre-compiler directives and a little bit of Windows programming (IMHO). This book is NOT for people who do not have some programming knowledge (basic understanding of C is REQUIRED) Also this book does NOT use MFC or C++ for a very good reason. MFC adds too much overhead to game programming and since MOST games using DirectX run in fullscreen mode - MFC is USELESS for DirectX programming. C++ can also add a large amount of complexity for someone trying to LEARN game programming. While I prefer C++ myself the author chose the right language to write the samples in (why worry about inheritance relationships/polymorphism/templates etc when you dont have to :). Many 'evil' reviewers (heh how COULD you give this book a bad rating) stated that this book focuses on Windows programming too much. Believe me that is a GOOD thing. It is amazing how much code is required just to print the text "Hello, World!" in Windows. The book gives a great overview of the NECESSARY and FUNDAMENTAL workings of the Windows API. You MUST read those sections if you have never programmed in Windows. It does help. What Andre Lamothe does with the Windows API is build a game shell that handles all the Windows implementation details (messages etc), freeing you to work on game specific details and DirectX. He explains the characteristics of fonts, bitmaps and how Windows handles output using GDI (which leads to why DirectX is faster for games...read the book you'll get it :) Some people have given this book bad reviews because the code samples are not done in C++ or by using the VC++ 6.0 APP wizard etc.

Based on the reviews, I purchased both this book and Andre's more recent tricks of the 3d programming gurus. His newer and much more detailed book covers everything in this book in more detail. Both books are definitely excellent tools for learning the basics of game design. Game programming can be extremely difficult due to the real-time nature of the application. Because of this, a good game programmer knows how to write efficient code. My suggestion to ANY aspiring game programmers is to learn C or C++. C++ is MUCH more difficult to learn due to the added complexities of Object Oriented Design. Get comfortable with dealing with data structures (such as arrays, linked lists, binary trees) because many times efficient code requires efficient management of data. Once you have a grasp of the language, then move on to Andre's gurus book. The learning curve will be fairly steep at first as you try to understand windows programming, although you really only need to know how to design a basic shell to create a window and handle messages. Andre's

DirectX explanations are usefull, but VERY outdated. DirectX 8.0 marks a vast change in many areas as it seems to be becoming more OpenGL-like. I would not suggest that anyone writing a game today use the older direct draw 2D methodology. Instead, you can utilize the added functionality of direct3D and get access to the 3D accelerator and still create a top-view or side-view game that appears 2D. What this means is that you're working in a 3D space (x,y and z coordinates) but placing all of your 3D objects on the x-y or x-z or y-z plane and using the third axis to view this 2D plane. Get a hold of the DirectX 8.0 SDK from the msn website.

I'm not going to bother writing another review and include all the different things that are in this book. There are enough reviews about that. As the description says, he covers the Windows basics, sound, input, graphics manipulation, AI, physics, and much more. One thing I would like to make absolutely clear. I own all of Andre's other books, and whenever I read reviews of them, they all seem to have several people saying one thing in common. Simply put, these people say "I knew NOTHING AT ALL about programming, and I read 4 pages of his book and was not able to write my own DOOM game. This book sucks!!!" COME ON PEOPLE!!! That is like expecting your FIRST EVER driving lesson to make you an expert. Or taking ONE class on auto mechanics and expecting to be an ASE certified tech. It isn't going to happen. Get real. He openly says you MUST have some basic knowledge of C. The book does not suck because some people refuse to learn. I own SEVERAL assembly language books, beginner to advanced. Most of the advanced makes no sense. Did I write reviews and say it sucks? No. It doesn't suck because I refuse to learn and expect everything to be given to me like some of these reviewers. Windows Game Programming for Dummies is an excellent book for ANYBODY new to programming. Put it this way: I have NEVER, EVER written anything for Windows. I used an old Borland C++ 3.1 for Windows compiler, took Andre's first example, changed one variable, and made it work. If it hadn't been for Andre, I wouldn't have ever tried to program in Windows. This book makes it so easy. If you have read his previous books, but gave them a bad review (for whatever reason), give this one a shot.

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