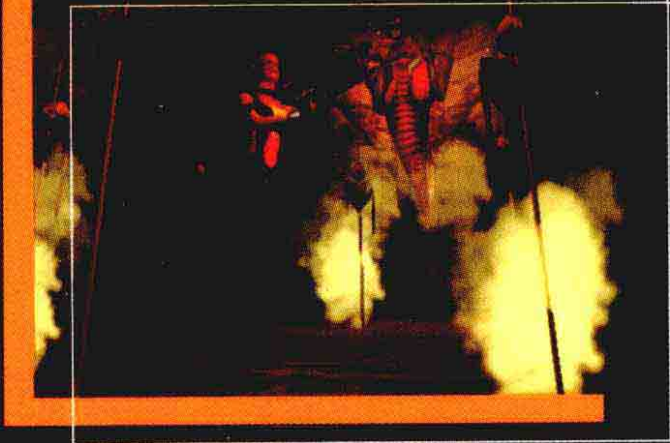
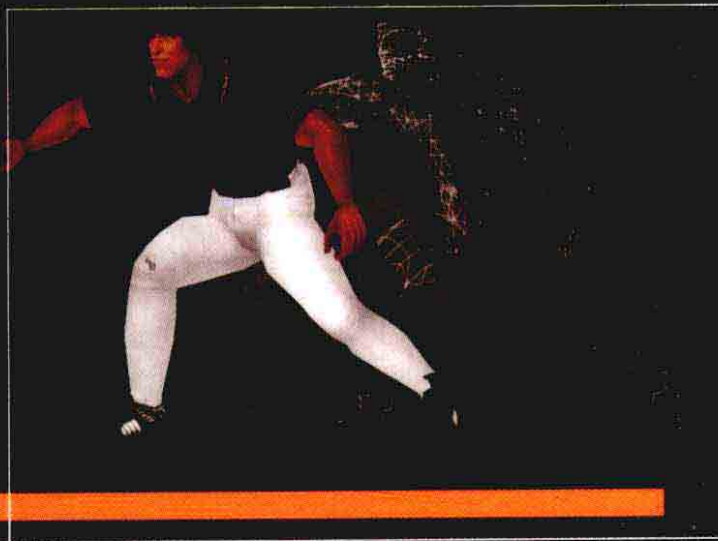


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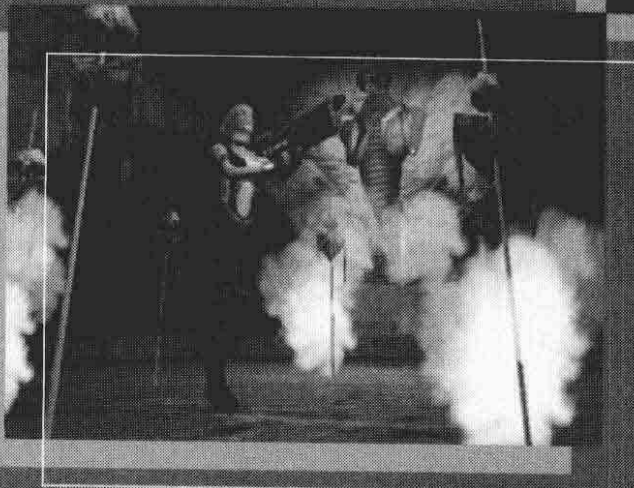


tom meigs

Former game designer and producer for The Walt Disney Company, THQ, and many others

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Tom Meigs

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Illustrators
Lyssa Wald
Kathleen Edwards

Series Design
Lyssa Wald
Peter Hancik

Cover Design
Tree Hines

McGraw-Hill/Osborne
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Ultimate Game Design: Building Game Worlds

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Introduction

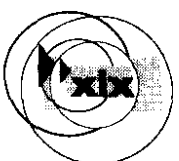
THIS book was written for anyone interested in learning about applied game design. It is skewed somewhat toward new game developers, but it has plenty to say about the design process itself that should be useful to game developers at all levels of familiarity with the process of building games.

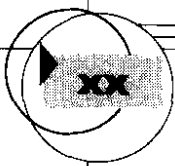
The material is organized chronologically from the roots of the design process right on through to the final or “gold” development phase as a game comes to full fruition and is delivered into the hands of game players.

Each chapter, read in order, will guide you through a basic game development curve and introduce you to many fundamental design areas and challenges. However, you also can jump directly to specific chapters of particular interest to you, or start with the support information located in the associated appendixes, which can be a useful starting point for further exploration into several of the key chapter topics presented here.

My purpose in writing this book is to try to provide new developers and seasoned pros alike with some common ground in their own approaches to game design specifics. Much has been written about game design theory, but far less has been written about what might be called applied game design. Make no mistake: I still believe that game design theory is important. I think it can be safely assumed that theory tends to inform and inspire application. I simply wanted to try to move much closer to a discussion about applied game design for all interested parties, and I have some very practical reasons for doing so.

As you begin to understand the development conditions under which most games are made today, it should become very clear that there is a great need to consider applied game design. After all, there is always a demand for compelling game content in many genres, yet even for the most successful developers, it is regularly extremely difficult to deliver. This stands in direct opposition to the idea that commercial viability for game makers often depends on repeatable results in game design quality.





There are many reasons why the development of great gameplay frequently faces many obstacles—as we’ll soon discuss. In order to succeed, game developers need to be able to build up fun and addictive play into their games quicker and more surely than ever before. Yet prototyping play mechanics and experimenting with many aspects surrounding gameplay still poses several layers of challenge for many game developers. It is still not very easy to prototype and experiment with game dynamics while keeping costs under control.

With this firmly in mind, one of the most important questions this book tries to address is: What might be required to make applied game design more feasible for game developers in general? I try to offer up several answers.

I think that looking into applied game design in the way I’ve tried to for the purposes of this book gives all budding game developers a chance to learn first hand about design challenges, while asking established developers to think about solutions that might help to ease some of the same challenges. I see this as a dialogue that might help make more interesting kinds of gameplay possible.

Of course, as we’ll soon see in detail, it often comes down to the brute development specifics: tools, smooth tool-to-engine interface, adequate ability to prototype and experiment, beginning your development cycle with solid concepts that can be altered and adjusted on-the-fly for improvement and refinement toward the fun zone, and so forth.

Those game developers or middleware providers that succeed in supporting game content construction in the most powerful and dynamic ways, thereby enabling developers to build-in the best kinds of gameplay possible, will probably find themselves on the top of the game sales charts. It isn’t a secret anymore that several of today’s top-selling games are based on technologies like RenderWare that conceivably allow game makers more time to flesh out exciting content details and worry less about jumping over gargantuan technology hurdles. My point can be summed up here: if content is king, it’s time to build the throne.

It’s in this spirit that the book was created. It’s time to ask tough questions and find solid answers in the area of applied game design. It’s time to move away from having to learn an entirely new design tool every 20 minutes. I know that if you use the material assembled here as a starting point, you’ll soon find many ways to quickly build or reinforce your understanding of the many forces that help to shape game design.

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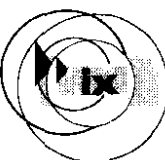
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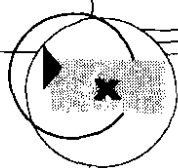
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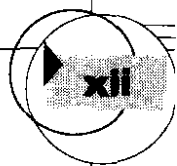
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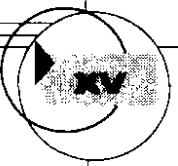
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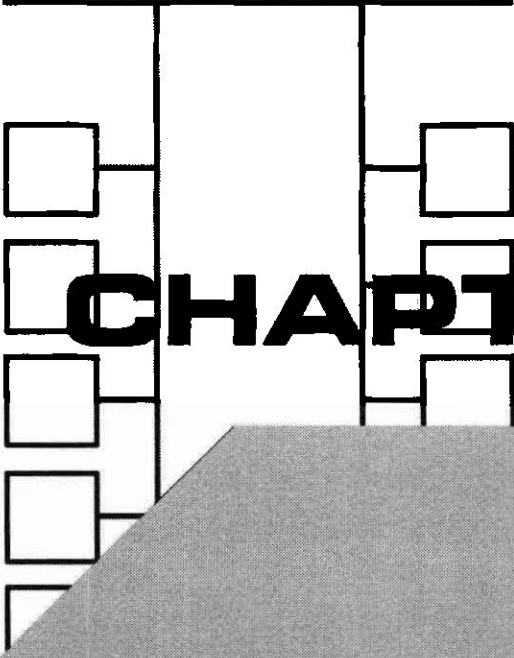
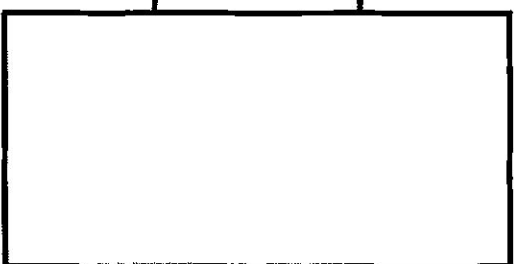
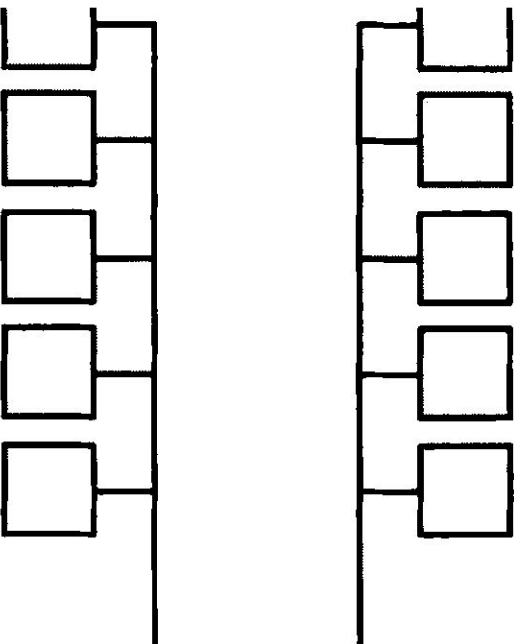
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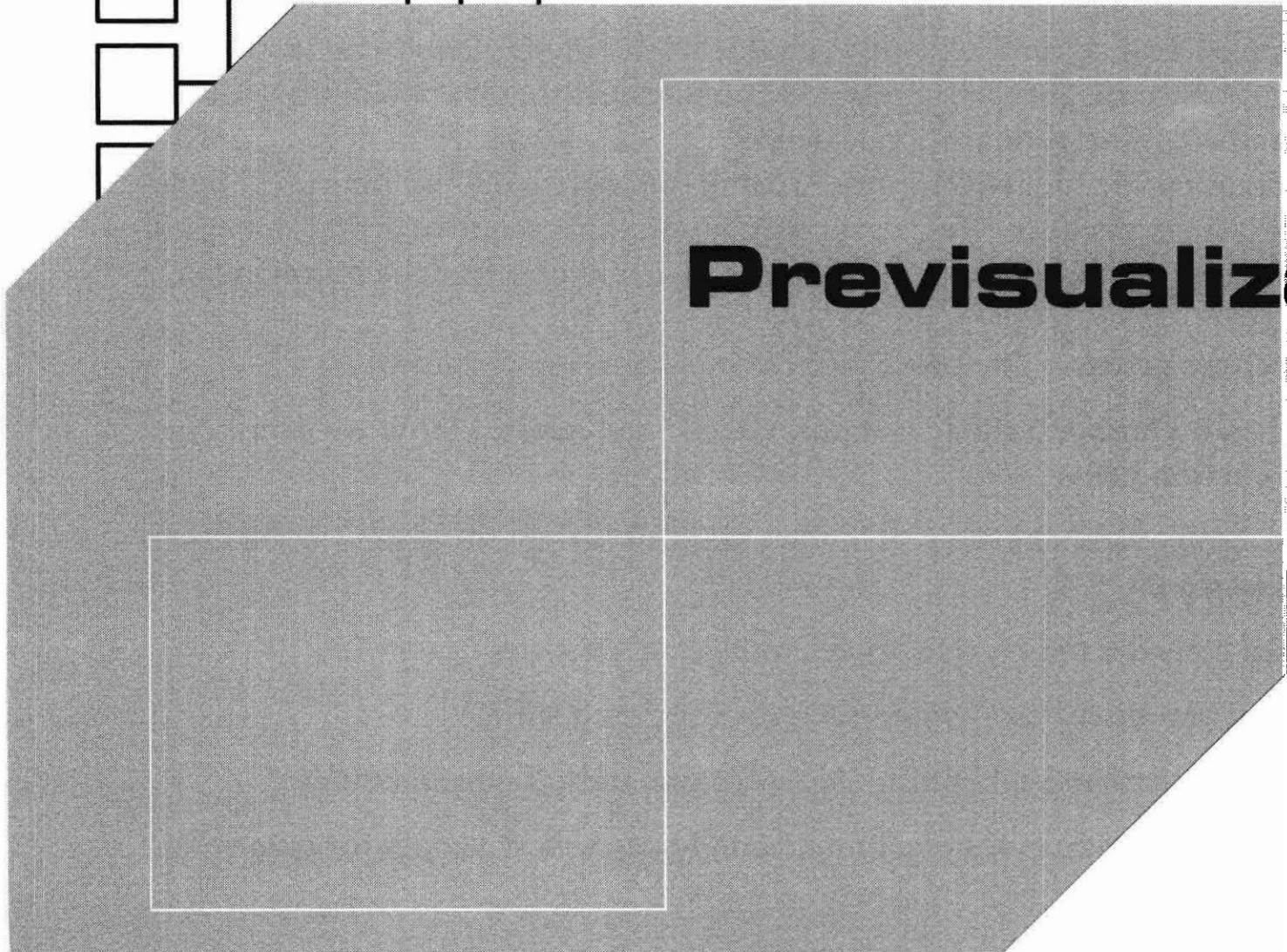


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CHAPTER

1



Previsualization

