

of imperfect conditions. It is not thick, so it could have easily had an increase in the font to something reasonable. I know it sounds like something too small to mention (ha), but not being able to read a book is sort of a stumbling point. I am still making my way through it, but it is not the enjoyable book I was hoping for. To the author.... reprint this book on your own if you have to, but by god, get a sample before you publish. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Inspiring words and useful toolbox for designing socially responsible and effective games

By AeiaGame developers who want to own responsibility for how they influence players, especially children, should read this book. Not only is *Values at Play in Digital Games* inspiring as a call-to-action, but it provides case examples (super useful when getting buy-in from coworkers and superiors) as well as a design framework, the Values at Play heuristic, which one can use during the design process. You want tools? Read this book. I've been going through a social good kick lately, reading game (design? theory? not sure what to call them) books like *Persuasive Games*, *Reality is Broken*, *The Game Believes in You*, etc. as well as non-game books like *The One World Schoolhouse*. These are all good books, but *Values at Play* is best to read first; its approachable and provides a proper overview of socially responsible games. It makes sense that the authors Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum are professors (at Dartmouth and NYU, respectively), plus Mary heads the game studio Tiltfactor -- the content provides academic reflection as well as an insider look. My favorite parts are the examples from games, both the ones I've played and ones I've never heard of. Seeing how *Portal*, *Journey*, *Ico*, *Mirrors Edge*, *Limbo*, *Call of Duty*, *Angry Birds*, *Starcraft*, *Farmville*, *Mass Effect*, *WoW* are fulfilling (or in some cases, destroying) values at play prodded me to revisit these games and mindfully play my current games with an eye for any values promoted. Then there were games that weren't even on my horizon, like *Layoff*, *September 12th*, *Pox*, *Waking Mars*, and oh my goodness *Hush*. Even what can seem like a simple mechanic can transform into an experience that will emotionally blow you away. As a game designer, whether commercial or indie, you develop your craft by exposing yourself to all games, by engaging in dialogue internally and externally about these games, and of course by making your own games: check out *Grow-A-Game* (a Tiltfactor card game)! What a cool concept; fun to riff on game concepts that prioritize human values with these cards. Everyone -- students, new game designers, game industry veterans -- should read this book and take action. For me, it took having a kid and realizing I should leave the world in a better state than I came into. For you, maybe this review?

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. An important book written at a critical moment in the history of games. By Zachary Wilson

Written to be accessible to the hardcore game theorist and the general reader alike, *Values at Play in Digital Games* is on the cutting edge of video game development. It's not some guide to the latest shading techniques, or a tome of coding optimizations - it's a book that's exploring the next frontier in games - how games express and shape our values both directly and indirectly and how we as game developers can be proactive and aware of the values our games project. As games grow from power fantasies and idle time wasters into a true art form, game designers are going to need critical-practical works like this to help themselves direct their design choices to make games that express the values they intend them to express.

A theoretical and practical guide to integrating human values into the conception and design of digital games. All games express and embody human values, providing a compelling arena in which we play out beliefs and ideas. "Big ideas" such as justice, equity, honesty, and cooperation -- as well as other kinds of ideas, including violence, exploitation, and greed -- may emerge in games whether designers intend them or not. In this book, Mary Flanagan and Helen Nissenbaum present *Values at Play*, a theoretical and practical framework for identifying socially recognized moral and political values in digital games. *Values at Play* can also serve as a guide to designers who seek to implement values in the conception and design of their games. After developing a theoretical foundation for their proposal, Flanagan and Nissenbaum provide detailed examinations of selected games, demonstrating the many ways in which values are embedded in them. They introduce the Values at Play heuristic, a systematic approach for incorporating values into the game design process. Interspersed among the book's chapters are texts by designers who have put *Values at Play* into practice by accepting values as a design constraint like any other, offering a real-world perspective on the design challenges involved.

Values at Play in Digital Games gives the reader a powerful set of tools for examining the cultural, ethical, and political meanings of video games, and reminds us that a consideration of the values embodied in digital play is an integral part of the game design process. (Richard Lemarchand, Associate Professor, University of Southern California; Lead Designer, *Uncharted*) *Values at Play in Digital Games* is an invaluable toolbox for understanding the values embedded in existing games and for making new games that express the values we believe in. (Jesper Juul, video game theorist; author of *Half-Real* and *The Art of Failure*) Flanagan and Nissenbaum boldly step into the deep and turbulent waters of aesthetics and values in games. An essential read for designers who believe in the power of games to change minds. (Asi Burak, President, Games for Change; faculty at the School of Visual Arts)

About the Author Mary Flanagan is Sherman Fairchild Distinguished Professor in Digital Humanities, Director of the Tiltfactor game research laboratory, and Professor in the Department of Film and Media Studies at Dartmouth College. She is the author of *Critical Play: Radical Game Design* (MIT Press). Helen Nissenbaum is Professor of Media, Culture, and

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