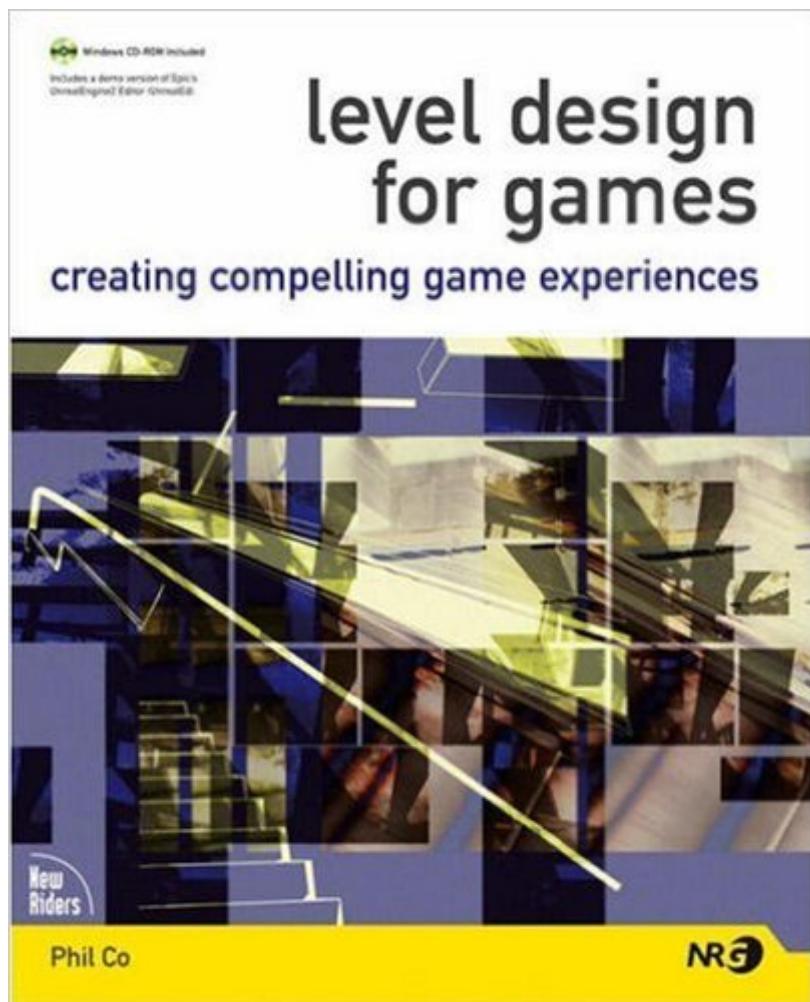


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# Level Design For Games: Creating Compelling Game Experiences



## Synopsis

At the heart of any great computer game are expertly designed levels: the locales and stages that define gameplay. And at the core of any strong game development team are the level designers: the people who create the spaces and environments that you move through while playing the game. And because level design doesn't require a fine arts or programming degree, it's one of the best avenues into a career in game development. *Level Design for Games: Creating Compelling Game Experiences* is the definitive guide to level design, both for aspiring game developers, and for industry pros looking for practical, best-practice tips and advice. With over ten years of experience with some of the industry's top developers, Phil Co starts the reader at the very beginning of the game development process, explaining the level designer's role in the all-important preproduction phase. Co then moves into the production phase, using a fictional level to demonstrate how to create and refine your level. Packed with screenshots, diagrams, and real-world examples, this book gives you all the tools you need to build your own professional-grade level, including level narratives, descriptions, diagrams, and templates. Chapter assignments help you practice what you've learned, and the demo of Epic's UnrealEngine2 Editor (UnrealEd), included on the companion CD-ROM, gives you hands-on experience with an industry-standard tool. Phil Co has a degree in architecture from the University of Virginia but opted instead for a career in video games. Starting out as a tester at SEGA, he's been a level designer since 1996 for some of the best-regarded game developers in the industry, including Cyclone Studios, Blizzard, and Valve Software, makers of the hugely popular "Half-Life" series. Phil lives in Seattle with his wife and son. "Anyone interested in a level design career should read this book. Phil does an excellent job covering all the aspects of level design across several game genres." Rob Pardo, Vice President of Game Design, Blizzard Entertainment "An indispensable guide to the theory, process, and practice of level design." Robin Walker, Designer, Valve Software "This book contains a wealth of valuable information for anyone interested in Level Design. It is one of the few books I would recommend to my gaming students." Todd Robinson, Game Design Instructor, Academy of Art University, San Francisco

## Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: New Riders; 1 edition (February 18, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0321375971

ISBN-13: 978-0321375971

Product Dimensions: 7.4 x 0.8 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars See all reviews (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #730,501 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #105 in Books > Computers & Technology > Games & Strategy Guides > Game Design #540 in Books > Computers & Technology > Games & Strategy Guides > Game Programming #877 in Books > Textbooks > Computer Science > Graphics & Visualization

## Customer Reviews

I was expecting a high level of thinking for puzzles and level designs from this book. Instead it took the reader through game production as a whole to highlight where level design fit in to all of it, touching on common sense level design. He also emphasizes the basics of the artist process, purpose in design, reference material, and the general to specific strategy. The last half of the book Co takes readers through the actual building of levels in the unreal engine, in essence writing an unreal engine tutorial of sorts. Making the books actually topic - A basic overview on game production and an Unreal Engine tutorial. Level design is an important field of study for games and I wished this book could have focused on that. I would recommend this book to beginners of game production that will be using the unreal engine, but for everyone else seeking the topic, which is the title of this book, look else where.

This is an excellent book. It is straightforward and delivers very useful information. This book is devoid of the fluff, generalizations and pseudo-intellectual chatter so many books in the game development/design genre contain. This author speaks from experience, which is evident from his bio, but more so from the flow and genuine voice of his writing. I am particularly cynical and harsh on books in this genre so I didn't write this review lightly.

As an experienced game developer, I found "Level Design for Games" to be a refreshing change, focusing as it does on real world level documentation, from brainstorming, to paper maps, to prototyping and final development. The processes provided are very similar to what you find in professional game development, with an eye to asset reuse and testing designs as early on as possible. It's not perfect however, the text has a few inaccuracies, and some of the content has dated. The last third of the book is very focused on Unreal, so skip it if you're using another engine,

but everything else is applicable to level design in general. Regardless, I believe there to be no better introduction to level design, go buy it if you're interested in making level design your career, or if you're going to be involved in the level design process in any way (system designers, environment artists and producers take note).

Older book but very knowledgeable on the subject. There are lots of clear explanations and example images. I have bought several books on the same subject much newer and more expensive and this book trumps them all.

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