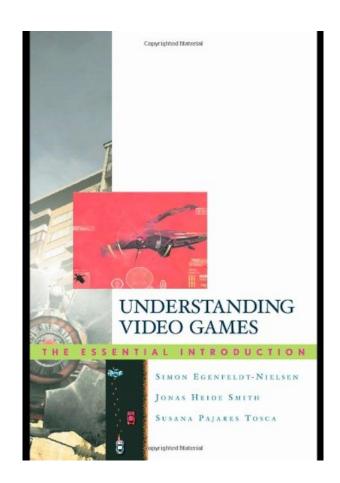
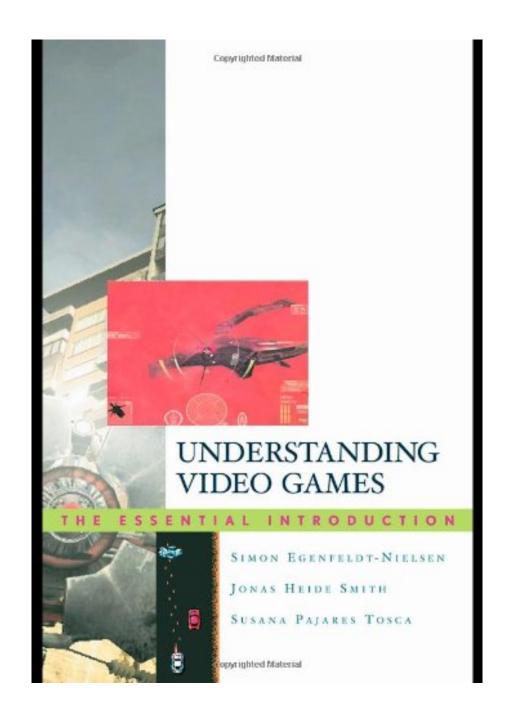
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"Understanding Video Games is required reading for all students of game studies and game design. The text engagingly and comprehensively tackles the exploding field of video game studies, providing the reader with a thorough understanding of the debates, key ideas and history of this fascinating medium."

-Mia Consalvo, author of Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames

### About the Author

Simon Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Jonas Heide Smith, and Susana Pajares Tosca are members of the Center for Computer Games Research at IT University of Copenhagen.

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From Pong to PlayStation 3 and beyond, Understanding Video Games is the first general introduction to the exciting new field of video game studies. This textbook traces the history of video games, introduces the major theories used to analyze games such as ludology and narratology, reviews the economics of the game industry, examines the aesthetics of game design, surveys the broad range of game genres, explores player culture, and addresses the major debates surrounding the medium, from educational benefits to the effects of violence.

Throughout the book, the authors ask readers to consider larger questions about the medium:

- what defines a video game?
- who plays games?
- why do we play games?
- how do games affect the player?

Extensively illustrated, Understanding Video Games is an indispensable and comprehensive resource for those interested in the ways video games are reshaping entertainment and society. A Companion Website (www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415977210) features student resources including discussion questions for each chapter, a glossary of key terms, a video game timeline, and links to other video game studies resources for further study.

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An excellent overview of video game history, critiques, and culture

By Rachel M. Helps

This is by far the best (and maybe the only?) textbook on video games I have encountered. The chapter on history gave a good overview and didn't bore me; the philosophical and literature reviews were thorough without excess meanderings. The chapter on "serious games" and edutainment was one of the most coherent critiques of the educational games that came out of the behaviorist era that I have ever read (though in my opinion the application of theory in games like math blaster is somewhat misguided; the "rewards" for correct answers are too trivial).

Additionally, the authors themselves had opinions on other literature and game theory. One example that stood out to me was how they critiqued James Gee's book as lacking in an awareness of previous research, which I found accurate. The authors read and summarized books that I had dismissed as tangential and hence, saved me the trouble of reading them (i.e., Hamlet on the Holodeck). Through reading the narrative chapter I realized that the approach I took in my thesis toward analyzing "interactive fiction" was somewhat dated.

Sadly, the edition I read is marred by what appears to be a rush to the printers. Parentheses are left unresolved and words misspelled; a few paragraphs seem untouched by an editor. It is my hope that another addition will rectify these errors and also update the analysis to include more recent trends.

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