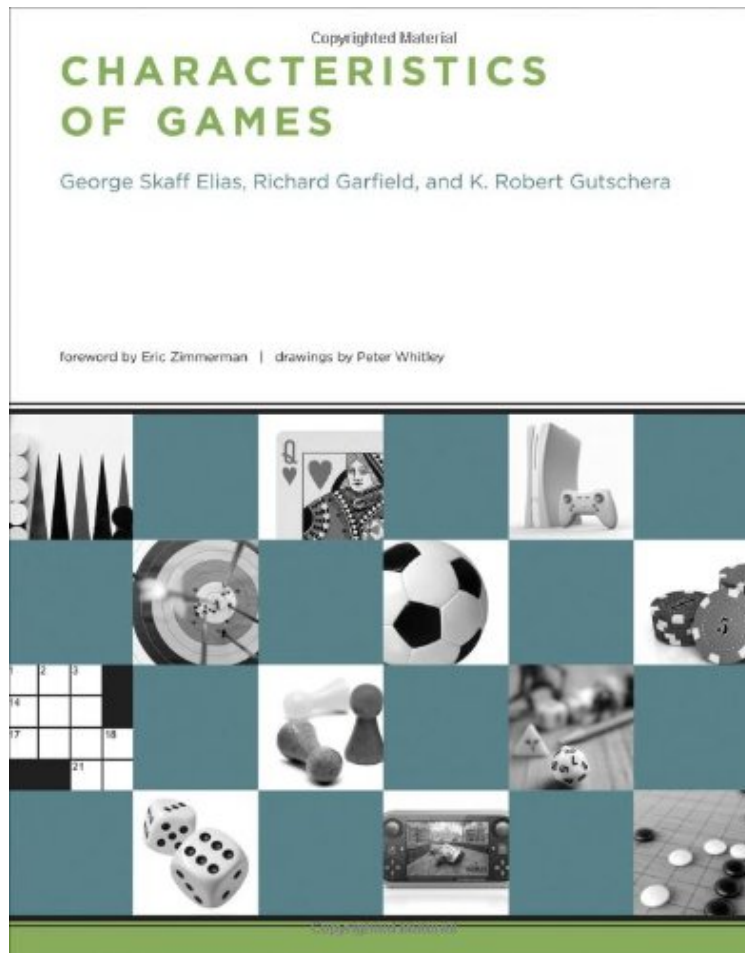


[Download free ebook] Characteristics of Games (MIT Press)

Characteristics of Games (MIT Press)

George Skaff Elias, Richard Garfield, K. Robert Gutschera
*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#471602 in Books The MIT Press 2012-08-24 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .75 x 7.00l, 1.75
#File Name: 026201713X336 pages | File size: 19.Mb

George Skaff Elias, Richard Garfield, K. Robert Gutschera : Characteristics of Games (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Characteristics of Games (MIT Press):

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Groundbreaking theoretical analysis of games By Timothy Chow Most of the academic literature on games is either mathematical, focusing on finding optimal strategies, or sociological, focusing on the role that games play in human society. Characteristics of Games is neither. Its intended audience is the community of game critics and game designers people who have studied hundreds of games closely and are faced with the task of evaluating them and determining what would make them better. Even though games have existed throughout human history, our vocabulary for discussing games is surprisingly primitive. Characteristics of Games plugs this gap by introducing a powerful set of concepts for thinking about, analyzing, and discussing games. As an example, consider the common misconception that a game is simply a set of rules. Though it is undeniable that the rules of a game are absolutely fundamental, they do not by themselves determine everything about

the game. How seriously the players attempt to win, how much work it takes to become an expert, and even how quickly the game is played depend more on the community of players of the game than on the rules themselves. *Characteristics of Games* provides the vocabulary for this distinction by introducing the adjective "agential" for the aspects that are player-dependent and the adjective "systemic" for the aspects that are not and depend only on the structure and rules of the game itself. Armed with this distinction, we are immediately better equipped to analyze a question such as, "Is poker a game of skill?" Naively, most people assume that the answer to this question depends only on the rules of poker; i.e., they assume that skill is a systemic characteristic of a game. However, the authors argue that skill is largely agential. Whether or not you agree, it is clear that having the right concepts to work with automatically raises the level of the discussion. The authors identify a large number of important characteristics of games: downtime, spectatorship, kingmaking, standards, metagame, and many more. These concepts are not arbitrary but have been carefully selected based on the authors' long experience with, and profound thinking about, the key features of games of all types, from classic board games to sports to computer games. Whether you are a professional game designer or have a leadership role in a community that plays games or are someone who simply enjoys thinking deeply about games, *Characteristics of Games* will provide you with the cognitive tools to take your thinking to the next level.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Raising Awareness of All Sorts of Game Characteristics By J. M. Davis Imagine a book titled "Characteristics of Art (paintings)" that touched on everything from paint type, perspective, color, shadow, canvas type, frame type, use of brush, etc... and further imagine that this book was written NOW when we've had 100s of years and 1000s of paintings that have been created using these characteristics without mentioning them by name or even acknowledging that they exist. That's how ground breaking this book is. It's an amazing book that makes me go "ah-ha" with regard to previously unvoiced but subconsciously aware features of games. It's great to bring these concepts from the subconscious into the conscious and open them up for further study and discussion.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's a good textbook. By T. Crawford I'm enjoying the book a lot, but it is written as a textbook. There are specific exercises to complete, which I ignore. It took me about 50 pages to see if there was an appendix describing the different games they talk about. When I did, I think that they skimmed on the descriptions, as if it was an after-thought. Honestly, there are probably a million people in the US that have an interest in games and a quarter of that number that think they could write one if they developed the skills. The information is in this book that they need, but it's not written in the format that as easily accessible as it could be. It's written to one market - college professors teaching to computer science students. It is still well written and understandable, but it doesn't tell a story in a way that could hold you reading.

Understanding games -- whether computer games, card games, board games, or sports -- by analyzing certain common traits. *Characteristics of Games* offers a new way to understand games: by focusing on certain traits -- including number of players, rules, degrees of luck and skill needed, and reward/effort ratio -- and using these characteristics as basic points of comparison and analysis. These issues are often discussed by game players and designers but seldom written about in any formal way. This book fills that gap. By emphasizing these player-centric basic concepts, the book provides a framework for game analysis from the viewpoint of a game designer. The book shows what all genres of games -- board games, card games, computer games, and sports -- have to teach each other. Today's game designers may find solutions to design problems when they look at classic games that have evolved over years of playing. *Characteristics of Games* -- written by three of the most prominent game designers working today -- will serve as an essential reference for game designers and game players curious about the inner workings of games. It includes exercises (which can also serve as the basis for discussions) and examples chosen from a wide variety of games. There are occasional mathematical digressions, but these can be skipped with no loss of continuity. Appendixes offer supplementary material, including a brief survey of the two main branches of mathematical game theory and a descriptive listing of each game referred to in the text.

This book is a key step forward in the effort to develop game design from art to craft and thence to science. (Raphael "Raph" Koster, Vice President of Creative Design, Playdom/Disney Interactive) *Characteristics of Games* is great fun to read, but thorough and rigorous enough to use as a classroom textbook. If you want to understand the social and mathematical dynamics of multiplayer games, this book is a must have. (Walker M. White, Director, Game Design Initiative at Cornell, Cornell University) *Characteristics of Games* is a meaningful contribution to the literature of games. It presents a system and dozens of examples of how to break out and analyze game mechanics. This book is an excellent step towards a fuller understanding of how and why games work. (Jesse Schell, Carnegie Mellon University; CEO, Schell Games) Many books have been written on the subject of game design over the years, but *Characteristics of Games* is one of the few that forgoes breadth for depth and takes readers to the next logical step in game design thinking and study. (CHOICE) About the Author Skaff Elias is Vice President of Three Donkeys LLC, a game design, development, and consulting company. Richard Garfield, mathematics professor and game designer, is the creator of many card games, including *Magic: The Gathering*, as well as the board game *RoboRally*. K. Robert Gutschera is

Lead Designer at Secret Identity Studios.