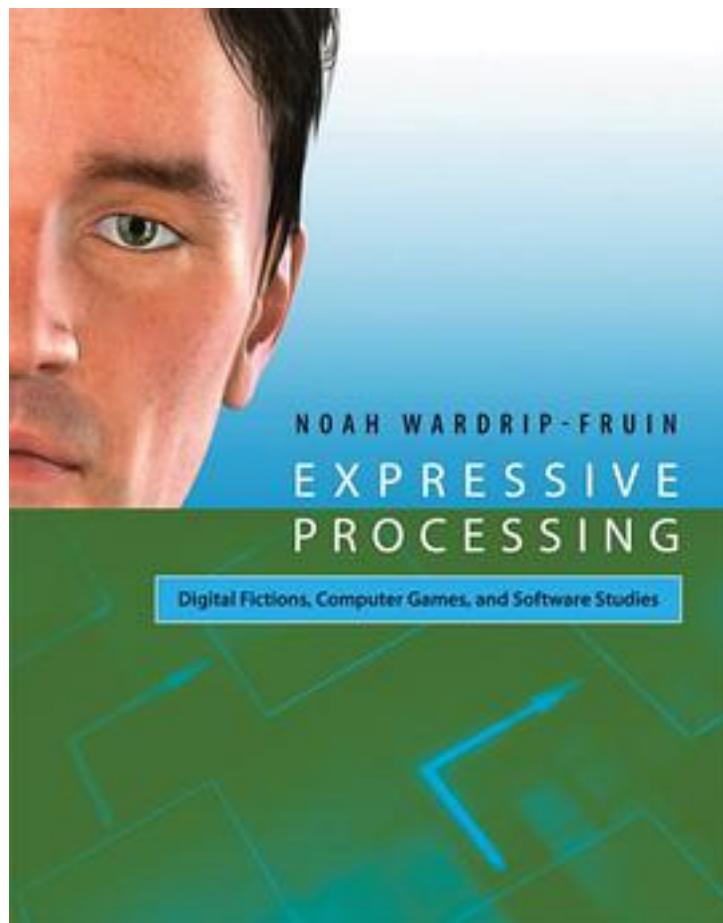


Expressive Processing



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出版者:

出版时间:2009-9

装帧:

isbn:9780262013437

What matters in understanding digital media? Is looking at the external appearance and audience experience of software enough—or should we look further? In Expressive Processing, Noah Wardrip-Fruin argues that understanding what goes on beneath the surface, the computational processes that make digital media function, is essential.

Wardrip-Fruin suggests that it is the authors and artists with knowledge of these processes who will use the expressive potential of computation to define the future of fiction and games. He also explores how computational processes themselves express meanings through distinctive designs, histories, and intellectual kinships that may not be visible to audiences.

Wardrip-Fruin looks at "expressive processing" by examining specific works of digital media ranging from the simulated therapist Eliza and the first major story-generation system Tale-Spin to the complex city-planning game SimCity. Digital media, he contends, offer particularly intelligible examples of things we need to understand about software in general; if we understand, for instance, the capabilities and histories of artificial intelligence techniques in the context of a computer game, we can use that understanding to judge the use of similar techniques in such higher-stakes social contexts as surveillance.

Most books on digital media focus on what the machines of digital media look like from the outside but ignore the computational machines that make digital media possible. With this book--the first to approach computational processes from the perspective of media, games, and fiction--Wardrip-Fruin examines both the outside and the inside of digital media's machines.

Software Studies series

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