The Videogame Style Guide and Reference manual

2nd Edition

The International Game Journalists Association
and
Games Press Present

THE VIDEOGAME STYLE GUIDE AND REFERENCE MANUAL

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DEDICATION

David
For Sam and Linc. Thanks to Becky.

Kyle
For Michelle, the epitome of my love.

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To Karyn, for her patience and support.

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FOREWORD

"Early in the millennium, the gamers were the real winners: The Playstation 2, Gamecube, and XBox provided countless hours of gaming goodness."

Ugh...that was pretty ugly, wasn't it? Besides its generic garbage of a message and two horrendous clichés, that opening sentence has style problems that a blind copyeditor wouldn't tolerate. For the record, it's "PlayStation" (with an internally capitalized "S"), "GameCube" (again, with an internally capitalized letter), and "Xbox" (breaking the pattern with a lowercased "b").

Why does it matter? After all, we're talking about videogames – kids' stuff, right? Little Billy Pokégamer doesn't care whether it's GameCube, Gamecube, or Game Cube. He knows what it is, and isn't that enough?

Except that it's not just Little Billy Pokégamer who's reading about videogames. The average age of my magazine's readers is over 21 years old. Heck, the average age of gamers in the U.S. is over 29 years old. And for videogame writing to be taken seriously by adults, it has to be written for adults. That doesn't just mean correct grammar and spelling (though those are musts, obviously). It also means a level of consistency that shows writers aren't just pulling industry terms out of their asses (or worse, Wikipedia).

That's why I was thrilled when I heard about a style guide designed to help game journalists everywhere. It's not as though I've been clamoring for one myself—my publishing company has its own style guide, which is enforced by a team of copyeditors. But not every magazine, major website, fansite or blogger has access to such resources.

The thing is, for any one publication (including mine) to be treated with respect, all game writing must be held to the same high standards. In other words, who really gives a rat's behind if a few publications or websites are well-written if the general public thinks game journalism as a whole is meant for the 10-and-under crowd?

The kicker being this: Overall, game writing has a great deal of room to mature, and it starts with this style guide.

Now if only we can somehow get everyone to retire the phrase "gaming goodness" once and for all...

Dan "Shoe" Hsu
Editor-in-Chief
EGM: Electronic Gaming Monthly

INTRODUCTION

A Question of Style

When it comes to presenting a consistent vocabulary and style, videogame journalism is sloppy at best. At worst, it's a complete mess.

How much of a mess is it?

Consider the term Xbox. When reproducing this seemingly simple product name in print, a writer is faced with many different stylistic decisions, including:

- Whether or not to capitalize the first "X"
- Whether or not to capitalize the "B"
- Whether or not to capitalize the entire term
- Whether or not to place a hyphen between the "X" and the "B"
- Whether or not to insert a space between the the "X" and the "B"

Considering these quandaries alone, a writer is looking at about 15 different ways of writing the name of Microsoft's first console. This doesn't count totally wacky capitalizations, unnecessary "scare quotes" around the name and the question of whether or not to precede it with the word "Microsoft." (And, if so, whether to do this only on the first reference or each and every time…) Unfortunately, I can assure you all of these different forms have been used by innocent journalists who were either unaware or uninformed.

I've been writing about videogames in one form or another for nearly 10 years now, and reading about them for almost twice as long. However, it took some college journalism courses and exposure to *The Associated Press (AP) Stylebook* to make videogame journalism's inconsistencies come to light for me. *The AP Stylebook*, for those not in the know, is designed to arbitrate the nitpicky arguments about the proper utilization of the written word (such as Presidents Day vs. President's Day vs. Presidents' Day). It was *The AP Stylebook* that made me start to take a more critical look at the words that fill up videogame magazines and websites.

Things that once seemed like minor quibbles (for example, the fact that "console" and "system" were always used interchangeably) started to get under my skin. I began to wince while reading my favorite magazines. I remember finding a review in which "Xbox" was spelled three different ways in the very same paragraph.

These sorts of inconsistencies are all too commonplace in videogame journalism. From the most respected magazines to the most obscure websites, from enthusiast periodicals to consumer publications, these editorial gaffes abound.

So where does a good videogame journalist turn?

The AP Stylebook features separate sections for business, sports and Internet journalism, but is of little use for videogame-specific issues of style. *Wired Style* includes a few videogame terms, but it can't tell you when to use "power-up" and when to use "item" instead.

The bottom line: If we as journalists specializing in computer and videogames ever want to see these questions answered, we're going to have to answer them ourselves.

I imagine some of you are thinking, "Lighten up! It's just videogames. Punctuation and grammar are for squares. Who cares how to capitalize Xbox – the reader will know what you mean! Take two Xanax and call me in the morning!"

So why bother with all of this? I'll tell you why:

A consistent style helps engender trust from readers, and, on a larger scale, lend legitimacy to our industry. Imagine this: An average, well-educated videogame player, one who has never read a game magazine, wants to browse a few

reviews of recent releases. He/she reads one publication that says the game has great "cut scenes," then spies another outlet that claims the disc's "FMVs" are excellent. A third publication praises the title's "cinematics."

Sure, the reader can probably use contextual clues to infer that all three articles are essentially saying the exact same thing. However, this inconsistency makes these stories harder to parse for a non-specialist reader. What's more, the reader might also stop to wonder why it is that three different publications, each supposedly penned by industry experts, can't agree on a name for the short animated movies interspersed throughout most of today's games.

Over the years, avid gamers have developed a sort of organic shorthand that is perfectly clear to them but perfectly incomprehensible to a mainstream audience. This jargon is standing in the way of mainstream understanding and acceptance of videogames, and we've noted it as such in this guide.

However you slice it, having an inconsistent style is embarrassing and detrimental to the cause of our beloved industry. Addressing these issues will inevitably build trust and respect for both our art and the emerging field of gaming as a whole.

It's educational. What was the world's first videogame? If you guessed *PONG,* you guessed wrong. Even those familiar with gaming history tend to accidentally overlook more correct answers such as *Computer Space* or Willy Higinbotham's venerable *Tennis for Two.*

But if those same people were to go on record in a major news publication stating that *PONG* was the industry's true progenitor, the publication would no doubt receive sacks of angry mail from well-read enthusiasts. (Not to mention disapproving glances from the copy desk and angry phone calls from upper management.) This style guide is also a reference manual of industry facts and trivia for the benefit of the busy writer or editor.

It's important to preserving videogame history. In 50 years, if someone looks back at an article that references "SMB," they may well wonder if the author is referring to *Super Mario Bros., Super Monkey Ball,* the fictitious Sega Marketing Board, or countless other terms with the same acronym. Unless properly annotated, another information seeker might potentially confuse 1989 best-seller *Prince of Persia* with its 2003 remake, *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time,* merely because an author forgot to reference the subtitle. A standardized method for referring to definitive games and terms is essential to keeping a clear and comprehensive historical record of this growing medium.

It's a reflection of the industry's current state. Has our industry evolved from its component parts of "video" and "game" to become "videogame," a one-word cultural idiom unto itself? What about "interactive entertainment?" Is the term "man" – as in "eat the mushroom to gain an extra man" – sexist? How are "life" and "death" defined in a videogame? Is "karaoke simulation" its own genre? As the industry evolves, these and other questions about self-perception deserve consideration and meaningful attempts at answers.

Finally, with the proliferation of the Internet, it's more important than ever to hold all videogame writers – yes, even FAQ writers – to a higher standard. With website message boards that drip with egregious violations of the English language and videogame FAQs that practically require a translator, flaunting one's ignorance is dangerously close to becoming fashionable on the Internet. Writing well, even in informal forums like Internet message boards, should be celebrated and valued.

Bearing all of this in mind, we have one more principle to add: **This guide is by no means written in stone.** As the title implies, this volume is simply a suggested

guide to navigating previously uncharted waters. No rule featured here is without exception, and we don't expect readers to agree with all our decisions. The guide will continue to be updated, both online and in print, with regular updates and revisions that reflect the latest trends in this ever-changing industry. We welcome your comments and suggestions at **www.igja.org** and **authors@gamestyleguide.com**.

In the grand scheme of things, the correct spelling of *Xevious* won't permanently change anyone's life. However, good, sound writing with simple, sturdy sentences, no "l33t speak" and proper punctuation is the quickest and easiest way to communicate ideas, find the widest possible audience and become successful in this business.

— Kyle Orland

Editorial Principles

"Videogame" or "video game" – one word or two? It all depends on whom you ask, which continent you live on, and which media outlet you work for. And it's not the kind of debate that anyone will resolve soon.

But someone had to make a choice and draw a proverbial line in the sand. So that's what we did, because that's what journalists and editors have to do every day – make tough decisions. We hope this guide will save you the trouble of agonizing over minutiae and let you spend more time actually writing.

Whether or not you agree with our choices, you should know that we were guided by one general principle: Journalism is about clear, concise communication. More specifically, we tried to consider the following criteria in making our decisions, listed below in order of importance:

1) Ease of comprehension for a general audience.

2) Common usage and accuracy.

3) Convenience, with respect to writer use/remembrance.

4) Official styling, as preferred by game developers and publishers.

Note that this guide was designed with mainstream readers in mind. Publications that specialize in videogames and/or technical matters will likely want to append it with individual in-house rules that suit their more specialized audiences. Terms that might be familiar to an avid gaming audience but not to a mainstream, non-enthusiast readership are labeled as jargon.

How To Use The Guide

Background

This style guide is a suggested approach to videogame journalism. It is, and always will be, a work in progress. Future generations of media experts, journalists, teachers and editors will amend the guide as they see fit. We recognize that many publications will have their own in-house standards. As such, *The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual* may function best as an appendix to your publication's own editorial guidelines.

The definitions and direction provided herein are meant to help the working journalist and editor accurately and consistently report on the videogame industry. All definitions and rules are meant to clarify usage and increase reader understanding. We therefore encourage you to think of the book as an all-purpose map that was written to guide you through the forever-growing tangle of game-related terms and jargon.

Terms

The preferred usage of a term, including correct capitalization, spelling and punctuation, is found in the bold title for each entry. Interchangeable terms, related terms or abbreviations that might potentially be used in certain situations are also noted in the entry text in bold.

Jargon and Technical Terms

Terms marked as "Jargon" will be familiar to an avid gaming audience but unfamiliar to a general mainstream readership. Terms marked as "Technical" won't be familiar to those without extensive experience in computers and games. Use of jargon and technical terms in mainstream contexts is discouraged. If use of such a term is absolutely required, writers should explain the term after the first use with a supporting parenthetical or definition.

Definitions

Most terms have a short definition included in their entries. All definitions are intended to clarify the meaning of the term for writers and editors unfamiliar with gaming or game-specific rhetoric. These definitions are by no means comprehensive, but are provided to focus on and illuminate core meanings of terms. They are intended to help writers employ the correct word in the correct context routinely and consistently.

Writers and editors should always keep in mind that certain terms can have very different connotations depending on the context in which the term is employed. For example, the term "background" would likely have a very different meaning for a game developer than it would have for a traditional gamer.

Examples

Many entries have examples of correct usage listed after any usage rules and definitions. Some entries also have further examples listed in italics within the text of the entry.

On Incorrect Usage

Where common mistakes are anticipated, examples of incorrect usage have also been provided under the heading "Wrong." Always refer to the term's title and text for the correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation and usage.

On "Also See"

Terms listed under the "Also See" heading provide additional context or guidance for a particular usage question. These secondary references aren't crucial to comprehending the primary term's proper usage, but may offer additional insight.

Errors, Omissions and Suggestions

Just as the videogame business continues to grow exponentially each and every year, so too does the body of terms used to describe, critique and catalog the medium.

We have made every attempt to include in this volume what we consider the most important terms and concepts, especially those we feel are most likely to cause reader confusion or unnecessary ambiguity due to frequent inconsistency or incorrect usage.

That said, it would be foolish to think every issue has been addressed: Please send us your comments and suggestions at **www.igja.org** and **authors@gamestyleguide.com.**

OTHER RESOURCES

Websites

A+E Interactive
http://blogs.mercurynews.com/aei/category/gaming
Breaking news and commentary from the *San Jose Mercury News*.

Buzzcut
http://www.buzzcut.com
Critical videogame theory by *Videogame Style Guide* author Dave Thomas.

Digital Games Research Association
http://www.digra.org
Academic resources and articles.

Embassy Multimedia Consultants
http://www.embassymulti.com
Copywriting and industry consulting from *Videogame Style Guide* and *Videogame Marketing and PR* author Scott Steinberg.

GameDaily Media Coverage
http://biz.gamedaily.com/industry/media
Criticism and commentary on game journalism by *Videogame Style Guide* author Kyle Orland.

GameDev
http://www.gamedev.net
Technical information and articles.

GamePolitics
http://www.gamepolitics.com
Political and social news related to games.

GameSetWatch
http://www.gamesetwatch.com
Breaking news and commentary.

GameStats
http://www.gamestats.com
Real-time tracking of game popularity.

Games * Design * Art * Culture
http://www.costik.com/weblog
Insight from industry insider and Manifesto Games head Greg Costikyan.

Games Press
http://www.gamespress.com
Press releases and game images for working members of the media.

Grumpy Gamer
http://www.grumpygamer.com
Wit and commentary from Ron Gilbert, creator of *The Secret of Monkey Island* and other landmark games.

International Game Developers Association
http://www.igda.org
The primary membership organization for game developers.

Joystiq
http://www.joystiq.com
News, commentary and witty attitude.

Kotaku
http://www.kotaku.com
News, commentary and witty attitude.

Reality Panic
http://www.realitypanic.com
Industry commentary from the director of the International Game Developers Association.

Slashdot Games
http://games.slashdot.org
News for nerds. Stuff that matters.

Terra Nova
http://terranova.blogs.com/terra_nova
Academic game blog focused on virtual worlds. Indispensable news and insight.

Videogame Media Watch
http://www.vgmwatch.com
Game media criticism and commentary.

VG Charts
http://www.vgcharts.org
Global hardware and software sales estimates.

Water Cooler Games
http://www.watercoolergames.org
Serious discussion of serious games.

Articles

Straight to the Source
http://biz.gamedaily.com/industry/media/?id=15267
Videogame Style Guide author Kyle Orland explains how to properly source your articles.

The New Game Journalism
http://gillen.blogspot.com/2004/03/new-games-journalism-this-may-turn.html
Follow up: http://gillen.blogspot.com/2005/03/new-games-journalism-year-one.html
Journalist and raconteur Kieron Gillen attempts to define a progressive form of game journalism and criticism inspired by the school of "New Journalists" such as Tom Wolfe.

10 Unmissable Examples of New Games Journalism
http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/games/archives/game_culture/2005/03/ten_unmissable_examples_of_new_games_journalism.html
The UK's *Guardian* newspaper gives a supportive nod to Gillen's notion and some of the best examples of the form.

New Game Journalism, An Update
http://mbf.blogs.com/mbf/2005/02/new_games_journ.html
Matteo Bittanti offers some direction for post-NGJ game journalism.

Why Videogame Journalism Sucks
http://biz.gamedaily.com/industry/feature/?id=13240
Follow up: http://biz.gamedaily.com/industry/feature/?id=13290&page=1
Chris Buffa takes a crack at the eternal question.

The Lester Bangs of Videogames
http://www.esquire.com/features/articles/2006/060610_mfe_July_06_Klosterman.html
Media critic Chuck Klosterman wants to know why game journalism doesn't have a Lester Bangs. So do we.

Editorial Integrity
http://www.1up.com/do/blogEntry?bId=6228583&publicUserId=5379799
Electronic Gaming Monthly Editor-in-Chief Dan "Shoe" Hsu's editorial on game journalism ethics remains relevant.

Power PR
http://biz.gamedaily.com/industry/feature/?id=15160
Videogame Style Guide author Scott Steinberg reveals how public relations representatives and journalists can better relate.

The Good, the Blogged and the Ugly
http://vgmwatch.com/?p=1026
Videogame Style Guide author Kyle Orland explores the brave new world of videogame blogging.

So You Want to Make a Fansite?
http://www.escapistmagazine.com/issue/71/25
Videogame Style Guide author Kyle Orland tells you everything you need to know to get started.

Books

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Sheff, David, and Andy Eddy. *Game Over: Press Start to Continue*. New York: Cyberactive Publishing, 1999.

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Takahashi, Dean. *Opening the Xbox : Inside Microsoft's Plan to Unleash an Entertainment Revolution*. 1st ed. Roseville, Calif.: Prima, 2002.

Takahashi, Dean. *The Xbox 360 Uncloaked:: The Real Story Behind Microsoft's Next-Generation Video Game Console*. Lulu Press, 2006.

AFTERWORD

Game Criticism Redefined: "Is This Game Any Good?"

Because the videogame business is, at heart, a product-driven business, journalists covering the industry constantly face this question time and time again. In fact, videogame reviews and criticism often overshadow other forms of game journalism, from news to investigative reporting and commentary. Oddly, while reviewing turns a quick critical eye toward games, the art of reviewing games receives little critical attention of its own. So turning the tables of game criticism for a moment, we can ask the question: "Is this review any good?"

A final answer to this question will always depend on the basic skills of the writer, the needs of the reader and the style, tone and editorial direction of the publication running the review. Still, a basic framework for game reviews and criticism can help a writer judge the quality of their criticism as well as improve upon it.

First off, it helps to separate the ideas of "reviews" from "criticism." In a very simple sense, reviews work at the level of explaining what something is while criticism seeks to explain what something means. A review might encourage players to check out *World of Warcraft* by describing what it is, championing this feature or that and giving it a place in the world of massively multiplayer online games. A critical piece might explore what it means when so many adults spend so much of their leisure time pretending to be winsome elves.

In this way, reviews and criticism form two ends of a spectrum of game evaluation. Reviews provide the basic descriptive material of the subject at hand while criticism looks to answer bigger questions around meaning.

In between these two poles sits a form of critical reviewing that borrows from each end and asks the question: What does this mean to me?

The urge to evaluate or produce criticism begins with some form of the statement "I liked" or "I didn't like." It's a natural starting point. From an early age teachers instill this idea. "Why did you like the book?" "What did you see in that film?" "What makes this story more compelling to you than other stories?" Introspection starts the process of discovery and articulation brings out those ideas for others to see and consider.

But really, this sort of criticism is just the theater of taste. If you tell me what you like and don't like, then I am left to unravel whether your taste means anything to me. How do I turn what you like into the raw material for the judgments I want to make about what I like? In a sea of uncertainty dotted with isolated islands of ego, everyone gets to be their own critic and no bigger picture emerges.

For this reason, the notion of "criticism" has become associated with reviewers and wags who simply stand on the sidelines and nitpick. Even when the people are smart and articulate, if they simply spit out taste, then the quality of delivery remains a fancy wrapper on a fairly empty package. When you hear a run-of-the-mill movie critic cry, "I loved it!" you only care to the degree that you might agree with them taste-wise. You don't have any information to form more sophisticated judgments.

And for many critics, this is as far as criticism goes. Some critics make a career out of broadcasting their personality and opinion in this manner. Readers become familiar with what a critic likes and doesn't like, so they become a sort of standard measure through consistency, rather than depth of critical insight. Whether you agree with the critic or not, you at least know where they stand. You might actually buy a game or watch a movie simply because a critic you regularly disagree with trashes something.

You figure if they hated it that much, then there must be something there.

Outside of games, we generally split our reviewers from our critics… and in some cases very vigorously. Pauline Kael wrote criticism; Harry Knowles spouts opinions. Roland Barthes wrote literary criticism; the book editor in your local paper writes reviews. Lester Bangs wrote rock criticism; Dick Clark only asked "Does it have a beat? Can you dance to it?" And so on.

From this background, we can put together a model with reviewing as the "tip of the iceberg," basic criticism reflecting a bit on the subject and popular criticism providing a more fundamental kind of analysis that digs deeper than the review. And, at the base, a form of developed criticism that searches for more fundamental answers to the bigger question of "is this game any good?"

GAME CRITICISM MODEL

• Review – What is it? •
•• Basic criticism – Do I like it? ••
••• Popular criticism – Would other people like it? •••
•••••• Developed criticism – What does it mean? ••••••

Of course, a useful critical perspective can blossom from a review culture. Over the years, many videogame critics have realized that timeless criticism is about more than the opinions of the reviewer. These critics try to place a title in the context of other games. They compare features and player reception between games and try to make more universal judgments about the title. In reviewing *Grand Theft Auto*, for example, they will talk about the arch of the game series, and compare *GTA* to other mission-based driving games. They will emphasize what the game does that is new and what it does better than games in the past. They try to answer the question of "Where does this game fit with regards to other videogames?" And, at times, they tackle the question of what the game means to other gamers. "Do you like driving and shooting games?" they ask, "Then *GTA III* is for you!" No longer is the review simply about the reviewer. It is about anyone who might play the game.

Much of professional game criticism today is of this type. Dedicated journalists try to steer their fellow gamers toward quality product. And along the way, they attempt to define what quality is. Unfortunately, many critics stop at this point. They never move fully into the next phase of criticism. They never ask the big question, "What does this mean?"

Many writers shy away from these big questions because they feel that bringing up these kinds of issues is pretentious or making a big deal out of a little thing — a videogame. Really, this is more an issue of style than of substance. Blowhard academics can make simple things sound complex and great writers can make the sublime sensible. Rock and roll and film are mediums filled with critics that manage to entertain, incite and explore their subjects without dipping into self-serving postulation and pondering. Critics such as Lester Bangs and Robert Christgau made sense out of rock and roll without sterilizing it. Pauline Kael turned film criticism into a popular art form without dumbing it down. Roger Ebert carries on that tradition today by striving for meaning in his reviews without resorting to specialized academic vocabularies. Chuck Klosterman may not get videogames, but he manages to render cheap pop culture into a meaningful reflection on modern society.

Rather than threatening to turn game reviewing into an esoteric art, the desire to plumb the critical depths really comes from the basis of reviewing and popular criti-

cism. Each level of criticism relies on the previous. A critic starts asking about the meanings the game has to themselves, whether or not they like it. Next, they may generalize their tastes into whether others might like the game. Finally, they try to figure out what truths might be contained within that mean something in a more universal context.

If you reviewed *GTA III*, for example, and really liked it, you could look at it mechanically and wonder why it was enjoyable. You could abstract those reasons to come up with reasons why other gamers might like the game. And, as you reached the next level of criticism, you might start to ask questions like:

- Why is it fun to be bad?
- Does playing a criminal make me want to do bad things in real life?
- If the character I play is a thieving, murdering ex-con, why do I feel such sympathy for him?
- Do we live in an age where media violence has become so normal that we can only laugh about it?
- What is happening in society where behaving badly in a virtual world is so satisfying?
- What is it like to live in a world where a game like this is a best-seller?

Of course, these are only examples. Still, these questions lead far from the sort of review that is concerned with graphics, voice acting, particle effects, control set-ups or cut scenes alone. Certainly, these elements matter, but they are most compelling when looked at in the context of bigger questions that matter not only to the game and the player, but also outside that closed and isolated loop.

Over time, expect to see the evolution of criticism in videogames continue as academics bring their philosophical and structural tools to bear in creating conceptual criticism that will surely disturb gamers accustomed to simpler forms. Look for game reviewers tired of simple recitations of product features to mature into critics. These writers will most likely form the lead column in an advancement of game criticism. Why? Because, simply, as common reviewing convention grows toward more sophisticated criticism, the critics can help make sense of the medium in both a personal and larger cultural context for gamers.

And this is good news for games.

For videogames to actually grow as an expressive art form and reach beyond the status of toy products built as simple diversions and recognize their full potential as a renowned creative and aesthetic pursuit, people need to talk about them differently. Game journalists can help lead that conversation by finding more interesting answers."

— David Thomas

About the IGJA

The International Game Journalists Association was formed in 2004 in an effort to promote the quality and professionalism of videogame journalism. Recognizing both the rapid growth and relative newness of the medium, the IGJA seeks to support individual and group efforts to advance the art of game criticism, news gathering, writing, and reporting. Please join us at **www.igja.org.**

About the Authors

Kyle Orland began writing about games when he founded fansite Super Mario Bros. HQ (**www.smbhq.com**) in 1997. Since then, he's worked as a freelance journalist for many publications including National Public Radio, *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, *Gamespot*, *The Escapist*, *Next Generation*, *Joystiq*, *GameDaily*, and *Paste Magazine*. A complete list of his published works can be found on his workblog (**http://kyleorland.blogsome.com**). Kyle graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park in May 2004 with degrees in computer science and journalism. His favorite game of all time is *Super Mario 64*.

Scott Steinberg is the author of *Videogame Marketing and PR* (**www.sellmorevideogames.com**) and works as the managing director of Embassy Multimedia Consultants (**www.embassymulti.com**), which counsels game industry leaders on hardware/software development, marketing and promotion. He's also a former vice president of product acquisitions for Microids and director of acquisitions for DreamCatcher Interactive/The Adventure Co. He remains gaming's most prolific journalist, having covered the topic for 300+ outlets ranging from CNN to the *New York Times*, *L.A. Times*, *Playboy*, *Rolling Stone* and *TV Guide*. Other ventures include independent game publisher Overload Entertainment, copywriting company Clandestine Media and GamesPress.com, the ultimate resource for game journalists.

David Thomas (**www.buzzcut.com**) has spent 20 years as a newspaper veteran and teacher specializing in arts and technology criticism. A founder of the IGJA (**www.igja.org**), David remains an advocate for a professional approach to game journalism that doesn't dilute the fun inherent in the medium. For the past 10 years, he has covered games for *The Denver Post* and his column is syndicated through King Features. He regularly freelances for *The Escapist* online magazine. He also teaches the history of digital media, critical videogame theory, and other game and media-related classes for the University of Colorado.