

(Free) Game Magic: A Designer's Guide to Magic Systems in Theory and Practice

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Jeff Howard

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#2668939 in Books Jeff Howard 2014-04-24Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 1.00 x 6.00 x 9.20l, .0 #File Name: 1466567856376 pagesGame Magic | File size: 17.Mb

Jeff Howard : Game Magic: A Designer's Guide to Magic Systems in Theory and Practice before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Game Magic: A Designer's Guide to Magic Systems in Theory and Practice:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Incredibly overpriced sloppy, but bursting with interesting ideasBy Tevis Fen-KortiaGame Magic by Jeff Howard is unbelievably expensive and badly needs editing, but it does provide a helpfully broad if sketchy overview of magic systems from role-playing games, video games, fantasy novels and history.Downsides:1. Price - College professors are criminally underpaid, but they can mandate that students buy

certain books. Jeff Howard is a college professor. He mandates that his students buy this book. This book is unbelievably overpriced, and Howard gets the profits am I being cynical in spotting a pattern here?2. Sloppy Howards ideas are conveyed in a bizarre, seemingly-random order. For example, he refers constantly to the Vancian magic system used in the original Dungeons Dragons, but doesnt explain what that means until nearly the end of the book. Broadly speaking he begins with video games, then the RPGs which inspired them, then the novels which inspired those RPGS exactly the opposite of chronological, so everything you read is aggressively out-of-context and needlessly confusing.3. Omissions - Howard makes frequent poor choices and obvious clumsy omissions. For instance, he explains how spells in Magic; The Gathering are organized by five colors, each representing a different philosophy. Black magic is about power at any cost, so using it entails self-sacrifice, like taking damage or sacrificing a creature. Howard then says Each of the colors provides a similar experience. Ooh, thats actually interesting! This is why I gave Howard so much of my \$, in exchange for him sharing the interesting aspects of various magic systems. The similar experiences of the other colors he lists as... nope. Here and in many other places, Howard mentions the existence of an interesting idea, but then fails to give readers the actual information and abruptly moves on to the next sketchy topic.4. Pseudocode Maybe 10% of this book is rule snippets for magical systems written out as pseudocode, which looks like C or Java, but is not actually machine-parsable. The logic is always obvious, it takes up way too much space (especially the cutesy comment lines), and ultimately feels like Howard is wasting his readers time (after already massively overcharging us) to cross-promote his software project. Upside: I havent kept up with RPGs since the original ADD, I havent read fantasy novels published since 1981, Ive never played Magic; The Gathering and I dont play videogames. Howard is obsessively interested in this stuff, and has provided at least a broad, sketchy overview of the interesting aspects of magic systems hes come across. At least every 2-3 pages youll find a neat idea. There arent as many illustrations and charts as Id like, but when Howard includes for instance a diagram of all the magical runes used in the game Eternal Darkness, and explains briefly how they work, its genuinely interesting and imagination-stimulating. Overall this book was worth reading because it includes so many evocative ideas, but I wish I could go back in time and borrow it from the library or a friend rather than pay so much \$ for it! I hope Howard releases an updated edition someday with professional editing, a more systematic organization, more comprehensiveness and especially a chart or diagram for each system presented, rather than the mostly-slapdash prose descriptions. Bottom line: It was worth slogging through this sloppy mess for the many interesting ideas hidden inside, but Id caution readers against paying more than twenty bucks for this that is, unless youre enrolled as Howards student and hes using the class syllabus as an enchanted portal into your parents bank account. 8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Ambitious By Customer PROS- A great author, that makes an effort to write about areas in game design not yet covered by existing literature. CONS- Confuses magic with occultism, mythology and religion, and just defines magic as anything supernatural.- Too much a mix of different topics, lacking a clear organization.- Does not go into much depth of the history and anthropology that would be required to create a deeper meaning beyond just manipulating symbols.- Littered with useless code snippets that are syntactically and semantically incorrect.- Way too expensive.- Not readable on a mobile device.

Make More Immersive and Engaging Magic Systems in Games Game Magic: A Designers Guide to Magic Systems in Theory and Practice explains how to construct magic systems and presents a compendium of arcane lore, encompassing the theory, history, and structure of magic systems in games and human belief. The author combines rigorous scholarly analysis with practical game design advice in the form of a magical recipe book (grimoire). The book gives you an in-depth understanding of the history and structure of magic to make your games richer and deeper. It shows how to set up tables of correspondences and spell components as well as how to write programming code integrating these components as part of game mechanics. It also illustrates how to divide a simulated world into domains of influence (such as alteration, conjuration, and necromancy) and how to use specific rule systems to simulate powers within these realms. Showing you how to weave compelling magic into your games, the book is interspersed with examples that illustrate how to design and program magic systems. Working examples are available for download on a supporting website.