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Chapter 1 : The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual

Fitting neatly between The AP Stylebook and Wired Style, and formally endorsed by Games Press, the ultimate resource for game journalists, The Videogame Style Guide and Reference Manual is the first volume to definitively catalogue the breathtaking multibillion-dollar game industry from A to Z. Includes official International Game Journalists.

Disclaimer The authors of this book have made every reasonable effort to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in the guide. Due to the nature of this work, editorial decisions about proper usage may not reflect specific business or legal uses. Neither the authors nor the publisher shall be liable or responsible to any person or entity with respects to any loss or damages arising from use of this manuscript. Dan Hsu for the foreword. Meghan Gallery for the front cover design. Jason Wilson and the entire Ziff Davis editorial team, for their copyediting assistance and contributions. GameMod. Those who contributed to the original guide when it was just a wiki project: Kyle For Michelle, the epitome of my love. Scott Tokryn, for her patience and support. The Playstation 2, Gamecube, and Xbox provided countless hours of gaming goodness. Why does it matter? Heck, the average age of gamers in the U. And for videogame writing to be taken seriously by adults, it has to be written for adults. 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. The kicker being this: Overall, game writing has a great deal of room to mature, and it starts with this style guide. 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: 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. 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. I began to wince while reading my favorite magazines. 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. 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! An average, well-educated videogame player, one who has never read a game magazine, wants to browse a few reviews of recent releases. However, this inconsistency makes these stories harder to parse for a non-specialist reader. 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. 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. If you guessed PONG, you guessed wrong. 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. Unless properly annotated, another information seeker might potentially confuse best-seller Prince of Persia with its 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. As the industry evolves, these and other questions about self-perception deserve consideration and meaningful attempts at answers. 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: As the title implies, this volume is simply a suggested guide to navigating previously uncharted waters. 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. It all

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depends on whom you ask, which continent you live on, and which media outlet you work for. But someone had to make a choice and draw a proverbial line in the sand. 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: Note that this guide was designed with mainstream readers in mind. Terms that might be familiar to an avid gaming audience but not to a mainstream, non-enthusiast readership are labeled as jargon. 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. 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. 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. Def in it ion s 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. 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. E rror s, Om i s s i on s an d Su g g es t i on s 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. In general, only use 1-up if the game specifically refers to an item by that name. Use the specific item name or extra life in all other cases. Do not use 1-up as a generic term for a power-up. The user reviews on 1UP range from the sublime to the silly. Use player one, player two, etc. There is a 1-up mushroom about halfway through the first level of Super Mario Bros. A l s o s e e: Game developer Insomniac has risen to fame on the shoulders of a long string of successful AAA titles. Typically divided into categories such as strength, accuracy, stamina, charisma, etc. Achievement Specific term for special goals that can be completed on Xbox Live-enabled games. Capitalize names of specific Achievements and put them in quotes. Only capitalize the word Achievement when specifically referring to Xbox Live Achievements; use lowercase when referring to more general achievements in videogames. This is different from infrastructure mode, in which wireless devices connect via a formal networking structure such the Internet. We ran a series of Twisted Metal: AI See artificial intelligence. Alpha code is typically missing important features or functions planned for the final game. An alpha version is often considered an important benchmark in software development as it indicates that the core of the program is working and ready for testing. An alpha version can be referred to simply as an alpha on all references. The Halo 2 alpha assured office skeptics that Bungie would once again come through with a first-rate game. The alpha code did show some signs of graphical slowdown, which is to be expected at this stage of development. Alternate fire triggers a secondary function of a weapon or item, such as launching a grenade instead of shooting bullets. Instead of buckshot, the alternate fire mode

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causes the shotgun to spit out a grenade.

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videogame journalism's inconsistencies come to light for calendrierdelascience.com 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.

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reference citations using the acs style guide ed., published by the American Chemical Society. Chapter 6 of that publication is devoted to references and contains many examples.

Chapter 8 : The Chicago Manual of Style

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