Contents

Foreword xiii

Chapter 1 • Why You Should Care about the Gamer's Brain 1

1.1 Disclaimer: The "Neuro-Hype" Trap 2

1.2 What This Book Is about and Who It Is for 3

Part I • Understanding the Brain

Chapter 2 • Overview about the Brain 9

2.1 Brain and Mind Myths 9

2.2 Cognitive Biases 13

2.3 Mental Models and the Player-Centered Approach 16

2.4 How the Brain Works in a Nutshell 17

Chapter 3 • Perception 21

3.1 How Perception Works 21

3.2 Limitations of Human Perception 22

3.3 Application to Games 26

3.4 What You Need to Remember about Perception 36

Chapter 4 • Memory 37

4.1 How Memory Works 37
4.2 Limitations of Human Memory 43
4.3 Application to Games 46
4.4 What You Need to Remember about Memory 52

Chapter 5 • Attention 53

5.1 How Attention Works 53
5.2 Limitations of Human Attention 54
5.3 Application to Games 58
5.4 What You Need to Remember about Attention 62

Chapter 6 • Motivation 63

6.1 Implicit Motivation and Biological Drives 64
6.2 Environmental-Shaped Motivation and Learned Drives 65
6.3 Intrinsic Motivation and Cognitive Needs 69
6.4 Personality and Individual Needs 74
6.5 Application to Games 76
6.6 Quick Note on the Importance of Meaning 78
6.7 What You Need to Remember about Motivation 79

Chapter 7 • Emotion 81

7.1 Main Theories of Emotion 82
7.2 When Emotion Guides Our Cognition 85
7.3 When Emotions "Trick" Us 88
7.4 Application to Games 90
7.5 What You Need to Remember about Emotion 92

Chapter 8 • Learning Principles 93

8.1 Behavioral Psychology Principles 93
8.2 Cognitive Psychology Principles 96
8.3 Constructivist Principles 97
8.4 Application to Games: Learning by Doing with Meaning 98
8.5 What You Need to Remember about Learning Principles 101

Chapter 9 • Understanding the Brain: Takeaway 103

9.1 Perception 104
9.2 Memory 104
9.3 Attention 105
9.4 Motivation 105
9.5 Emotion 106
9.6 Learning Principles 106

Part II • A UX Framework for Video Games

Chapter 10 • Game User Experience: Overview 109

10.1 A Short History of UX 109
10.2 Debunking UX Misconceptions 111
10.3 A Definition of Game UX 117

Chapter 11 • Usability 121

11.1 Usability Heuristics in Software and Video Games 122
11.2 Seven Usability Pillars for Game UX 126
11.3 What You Need to Remember about Usability 145

Chapter 12 • Engageability 147

12.1 Three Engageability Pillars for Game UX 147
12.2 Motivation 149
12.3 Emotion 165
12.4 Game Flow 173
12.5 What You Need to Remember about Engageability 183

Chapter 13 • Design Thinking 185

13.1 Iterative Cycle 187
13.2 Affordances 189
13.3 Onboarding Plan 190
13.4 What You Need to Remember about Design Thinking 197

Chapter 14 • Game User Research 199

14.1 The Scientific Method (Hypothetico-Deductive Model) 199
14.2 User Research Methodologies and Tools 202
14.3 Final UX Research Tips 213
14.4 What You Need to Remember about Game User Research 214

Chapter 15 • Game Analytics 215

15.1 The Wonders and Dangers of Telemetry 215
15.2 UX and Analytics 220
15.3 What You Need to Remember about Game Analytics 224

Chapter 16 • UX Strategy 225

16.1 UX at the Project Team Level 225
16.2 UX in the Production Pipeline 226
16.3 UX at the Studio Level 229
16.4 What You Need to Remember about UX Strategy 233

Chapter 17 • Ethics 235

17.1 Dark Patterns 236

17.2 The Attention Economy and Videogame "Addiction" 242

17.3 Violence and Other Problematic Content 245

17.4 Toward an Ethical Game Industry 247

17.5 What You Need to Remember about Ethics 249

Chapter 18 • UX across Various Products: From VR to AI to "Gamification" 251

18.1 Some UX Challenges Specific to XR Games 253

18.2 The Metaverse and Blockchain Technology 257

18.3 Artificial Intelligence (AI) 259

18.4 Playful Learning, Game-Based Learning, and Gamification 268

18.5 What You Need to Remember 272

Chapter 19 • To Conclude 275

19.1 Key Takeaways 276

19.2 Tips for Students Interested in Game UX 278

19.3 Parting Words 280

Acknowledgment 281

References 285

Index 303