



Computers as Theatre (2nd Edition)

By Brenda Laurel



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Computers as Theatre (2nd Edition) By Brenda Laurel

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Brenda Laurel's *Computers as Theatre* revolutionized the field of human-computer interaction, offering ideas that inspired generations of interface and interaction designers-and continue to inspire them. Laurel's insight was that effective interface design, like effective drama, must engage the user directly in an experience involving both thought and emotion. Her practical conclusion was that a user's enjoyment must be a paramount design consideration, and this demands a deep awareness of dramatic theory and technique, both ancient and modern.

Now, two decades later, Laurel has revised and revamped her influential work, reflecting back on enormous change and personal experience and forward toward emerging technologies and ideas that will transform human-computer interaction yet again. Beginning with a clear analysis of classical drama theory, Laurel explores new territory through the lens of dramatic structure and purpose.

***Computers as Theatre, Second Edition*, is directed to a far wider audience, is written more simply and elegantly, is packed with new examples, and is replete with exciting and important new ideas.**

- This book
- Draws lessons from massively multiplayer online games and systems, social networks, and mobile devices with embedded sensors
- Integrates values-driven design as a key principle
- Integrates key ideas about virtual reality
- Covers new frontiers, including augmented reality, distributed and participatory sensing, interactive public installations and venues, and design for emergence

Once more, Brenda Laurel will help you see the connection between humans and computers as you never have before-and help you build interfaces and interactions that are pleurably, joyously right!



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Editorial Review

Review

"The future of our interactions with technology will build upon the foundations provided by Brenda Laurel in this deep, thought-provoking, and critically important book."

—Don Norman, *Nielsen Norman Group*; author of *Design of Everyday Things*, Revised and Expanded Edition

"An extremely timely update of a secret classic. Brenda Laurel will teach you a powerful and extremely refreshing way to look anew at things digital and the creation thereof. If you read the original, hit it again; it makes even better sense in the twenty-first century!"

—William Gibson, author of *Distrust That Particular Flavor* and *Zero History*

"Brenda Laurel's *Computers as Theatre* was one of the few truly transformative books to emerge in the heady, early days of the 'digital revolution,' demanding that we think of the computer as posing a series of creative problems that might best be addressed through the lens of the dramatic arts rather than purely technical problems that remain in the domain of the computer scientists. In this new edition, she revisits that classic text in light of her rich and diverse experiences as a designer, educator, and entrepreneur."

—Henry Jenkins, author of *Spreadable Media: Creating Meaning and Value in a Networked Culture*

"Read this—it's both scholarly and fun and runs your own internal models of human-computer interaction through a series of gymnastics that will loosen and broaden your thinking about UI issues forever."

—Howard Rheingold, author of *The Virtual Community*, *Smart Mobs*, and *Net Smart*

"This new edition is livelier and cooler than ever. It is absolutely required reading for anyone interested in computers and their influence on culture. Thank you, Dr. Laurel, for a wild ride!"

—Mary Flanagan, inventor, designer, and author of *Critical Play*

"The revision of this perennial classic is long overdue, and Laurel's thoughtful revisiting of her influential ideas from more than two decades ago does not disappoint. Her book bridges the intellectual heritage of our distant past (Aristotle), our recent past (Engelbart, Kay, Bushnell), and our present state of affairs concerning computers, illustrated by colorful, anecdotal parables."

—Celia Pearce, Associate Professor of Digital Media, Georgia Tech; author of *Communities of Play: Emergent Cultures in Multiplayer Games and Virtual Worlds*

"The arts have the power to grab hold of us, shape our attention and action, and make us feel like an experience is complete and meaningful. *Computers as Theatre, Second Edition*, is the essential guide to integrating that power into the design of new technologies."

—Noah Wardrip-Fruin, Chair, Digital Arts and New Media, University of California, Santa Cruz; author of *Expressive Processing*

About the Author

Brenda Laurel has worked in interactive media since 1976 as a designer, researcher, writer and teacher. She currently serves as an Adjunct Professor of Computer Science and Affiliated Faculty for Games and Playable Media at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Dr. Laurel previously served as Professor and Founding

Chair of the graduate program in design at California College of Arts and the Media Design Program at Art Center College of Design. She previously was a distinguished engineer at Sun Microsystems Labs (2005-2006). Based on her research in gender and technology at Interval Research, she co-founded Purple Moon in 1996 to create interactive media for girls. In 1990 she co-founded Telepresence Research, focusing on virtual reality and remote presence. Other employers have included Atari, Activision, and Apple. Her books include *The Art of Human-Computer Interface Design* (1990), *Computers as Theatre, Second Edition* (forthcoming 2013), *Utopian Entrepreneur* (2001), and *Design Research: Methods and Perspectives* (2004). She earned her BA from Depauw University and her MFA and PhD in theatre from The Ohio State University.

Users Review

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Kelley Thornton:

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