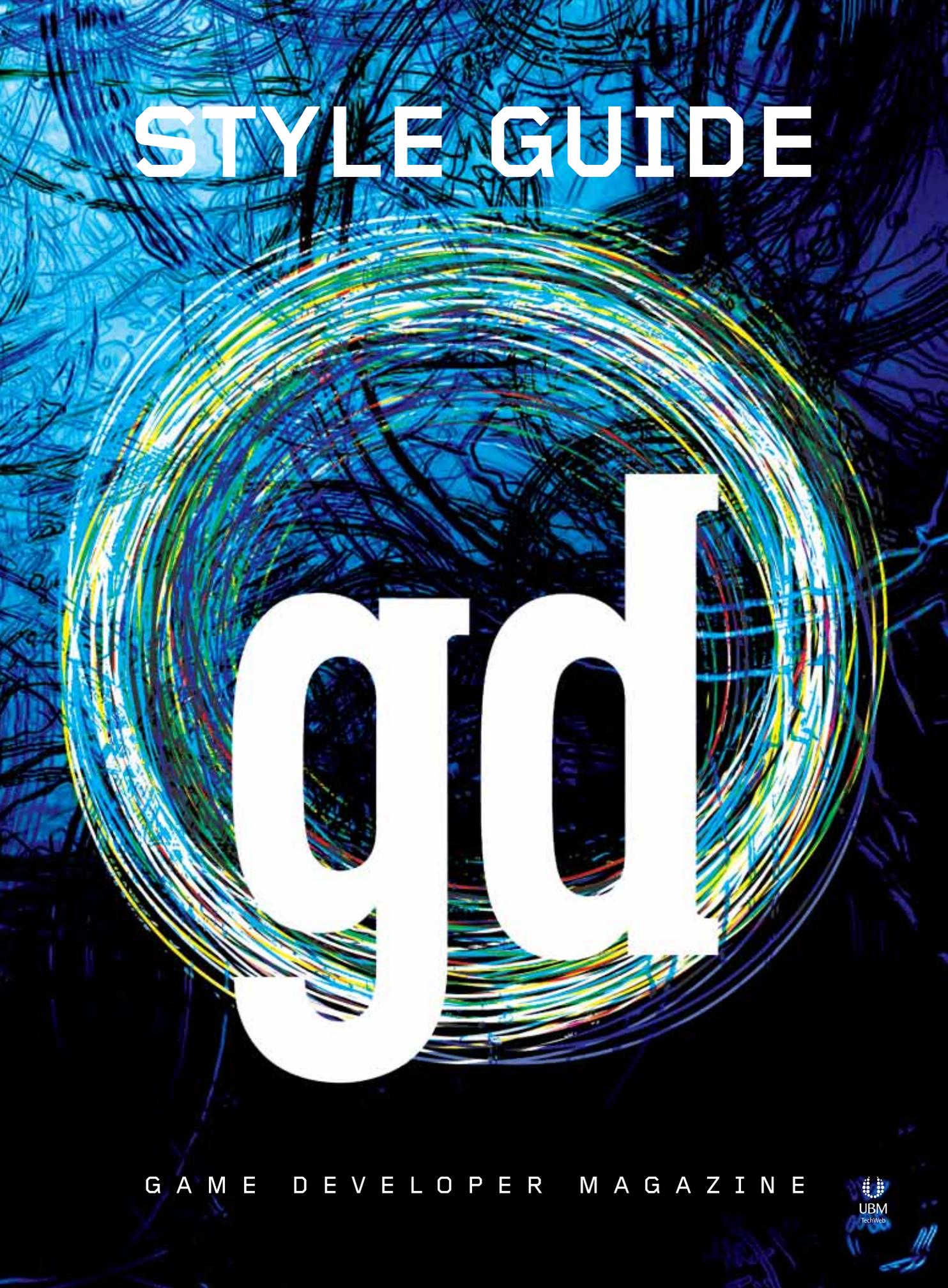


# STYLE GUIDE



# gd

G A M E D E V E L O P E R M A G A Z I N E



## Updated September 2012

**G**ame Developer's style is derived from three primary sources, in this order: the in-house style guide, Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary ([m-w.com](http://m-w.com)), and *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16<sup>th</sup> ed. If an editorial question arises that is not solved easily by one of these three sources, there are numerous other reliable references to turn to, including *Common Errors in English Usage* (Paul Brains, online at <http://public.wsu.edu/~fbrians/errors/>), *Lapsing into a Comma/The Elephants of Style* (Bill Walsh), Wikipedia.org, and the *Associated Press Handbook*. But always consult with the other editors when turning to alternate sources.

For matters pertaining to formats for the magazine (such as style for headlines and charts), please refer to Part II.

For questions about Grammar, Punctuation, and Usage, please refer to Part III.

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### PART I

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## 1-9

**1-on-1, 2-on-2, 4-on-4** Always use numerals for matchups

**1680x1050, 1920x1080, 2560x1440** For screen resolutions, don't use spaces between numbers and "x."

**3D** Unless beginning a sentence, then use "three-dimensional"

**3ds Max** Always use on first reference; thereafter Autodesk's Max or Max is acceptable. But 3ds Max is preferred.

## A

**ability vs. capability** Ability refers to something that people have and can do on their own: I have the ability to play games for 12 hours without interruption. Capability refers to something that inanimate objects have or can do: Sony's PlayStation 3 has the capability for 3D games.

**above and below** Avoid using "above" and "below" when referencing tables, code listings, and figures in an article. Instead, refer to the table's name.

#### Examples:

- In the code snippet mark Table 1...
- Table 3 shows...
- In Figure 3 (page 17)...

**Achievement points** An Xbox Live feature that allows players to unlock various "Achievements" by completing in-game challenges.

**acronyms** *Game Developer* accepts acronyms as long as on first mention the entire term is spelled out, with the acronym in parentheses. If it's universally recognizable, just use the acronym.

**Example:** "Publishers are beginning to rely on standard mark-up language [SML]."

The following computer acronyms are so common among our readers that they don't need to be spelled out on first reference. The acronym will suffice:

- AI (artificial intelligence)
- API (application programming interface)
- DAW (digital audio workstation)
- DLL
- FPS
- GUI (graphical user interface)
- HTML
- IDE (integrated development environment)
- IGDA
- IK (inverse kinematics)
- I/O
- ISO (International Organization for Standardization; ISO-9000 deals with "quality management" for business to business dealings and is most commonly referenced)
- PC
- R&D (research and development)
- RAM
- RGB
- RPG
- SDK (software development kit)
- SKU
- SQL (structured query language)
- TA (technical artist)
- TV
- UI (user interface)

Article usage with these acronyms is as follows:

- an API
- an HTML problem

- an RPG (note that the "game" is already built into the acronym)
- an SDK
- a SQL program (pronounced like "a sequel")

**action-adventure, action-horror, action-platformer, action-RPG, action-shooter, action-strategy** May abbreviate action-RPG as ARPG on second reference.

**addresses** Only abbreviate a street address when the full address is given. Do not abbreviate words, like "street," when used without a full address. Refer to *Chicago Manual*, 15.29 for state abbreviations.

**Alt.** Denotes the key on the keyboard.

**ampersand** Only use in the official spellings of company names and game titles.

**App** Capitalize when referencing Apple's App Store.

**assembly language** Never use "in assembler" when referring to assembly language. However, it is correct to say, "The program is written in assembly language." The "assembler" is the compiler; in this instance, "assembler" is okay.

**author bio** All non-staff written articles must contain a short biography of the author(s), followed by an email address.

## B

**backstory**

**beat-em-up** No apostrophe

**because** Almost never requires a preceding comma. When a clause-modifying verbal phrase begins with "Because" and is used at the beginning of a sentence, insert a comma at the end of the phrase. Example: Because she was so obese, she had to purchase two seats on Jet Blue.

**BioWare**

**bitmap** (n.), **bitmapping** (n.), **bitmapped** (v.)

**bit-rate**

**BitTorrent**

**Blu-ray** Format for PlayStation 3 games. Not

Blu-Ray or Bluray

**bluescreen** (n., adj.) One word

**board game** Two words. Board game names are in italics: *Monopoly*, *Scrabble*, and so on.

**brand-new** (adj.) Only takes a hyphen when it's a modifier. If a noun, it's two words: The bike is brand new.

**BSP** May stand alone as an acronym.

## C

**Canadian provinces** Abbreviate the province, spell out Canada.

**Example:**

Gloucester, Ont., Canada. You never need to include the province (or state) and country for capital cities and major cities, such as Vancouver, Toronto, Los Angeles, New York.

**canceled, canceling**

**casual** Avoid the use of casual in reference to players of nonhardcore games. Use "casual-game players" instead.

**cellphone:** one word

**cel-shading** (n.) two words cel-shaded (adj.) hyphenated

**cents** Do not use. We always write U.S. monetary figures using \$. Example: \$0.40. Also, never leave a decimal naked, that is, if the figure is a fraction, include the 0 before the decimal.

**city, state** You do not need to include the state and country for capital cities or major cities. For all others, do include the abbreviated state, province (U.S. and Canada only), or foreign country using a comma. Use the abbreviations in Chicago 15.29.

**Examples:** Austin; Paris; Casablanca; Vancouver; Schaumburg, Ill.; Berkeley, CA; Redmond, WA; Burnaby, British Columbia.

**coin-op**

**company names and product names** Initial capital only, unless individual internal capitals

are universally accepted. We do not recognize lazy marketing techniques. Company and product names appearing in text are descriptive names and not logos.

Exceptions apply for names that are widely known in the industry as supporting alternative capitalization, such as LucasArts, BioWare, QuickTime, and iTunes.

We abbreviate Company (Co.), Incorporated (Inc.), Limited (Ltd.) and Corporation (Corp.) on first mention and drop it thereafter. Use a comma to separate Co., Inc., Corp., Ltd., Plc, LLC, and the like.

**Examples:**

- CMP Media, LLC
  - Microsoft, Corp.
  - RAD Game Tools, Inc.
- Companies are singular entities and therefore take singular verb conjugations.

**comprise / compose** The whole comprises the parts; the parts compose the whole.

**consoles** Frequently used console names include PlayStation, PlayStation 2, PlayStation 3, PSP, PS Vita, Nintendo 64, GameCube, Nintendo Wii, Nintendo Wii U, Nintendo DS, Nintendo DS Lite, Nintendo DSi, Nintendo DSi XL, Nintendo 3DS, Dreamcast, Xbox, Xbox 360, Game Boy, Game Boy Color, Game Boy Advance, and N-Gage.

**contractions** We prefer to use common contractions because they contribute to the casual style of the magazine. Examples: don't, I'll, it's, won't, shouldn't.

**Control** Denotes the key on the keyboard

**Control-Z** Denotes an operation using keyboard keys

**countries** Spell out country names in text, but abbreviate when appropriate in tables and lists. Exceptions: U.S. and U.K. can be used as nouns (with "the") or adjectives.

**cutscene**

**CV** "Resume" is preferred, no accents.

## D

**data** is plural; that is, "data are," and our technical audience knows this.

**dates** When a period of time is identified by a month and a year, no internal punctuation is used. Example: The product was released in June. Specific days take internal punctuation before the year only. Example: The party was on August 8, 1988. Only abbreviate the name of a month in lists, tables, calendars, and bibliographic citations. Never use a "th" or "st" alongside a number in a date.

**decades** Always use the full year (1960s) on first reference. Abbreviations ('60s) are acceptable thereafter. Note the direction of apostrophe.

**degrees** (academic)

**Examples:**

- A.A.
- A.S.
- B.A.
- B.S.
- M.A.
- M.S.
- PhD (no periods)

Capitalize the department/field only when it is naturally capitalized (languages) or when referring to the proper title of the department.

**Examples:**

- I have an M.A. in literature.
- I have an M.A. in English.
- He is chair of the Department of Literature.

**diacritic marks** Please reproduce marks such as accents, tildes, and umlauts where appropriate (especially in proper names).

**dialog box** We use this spelling only for references to a part of a software interface.

**dialogue** A conversation between two or more people.

**different** "Different from," never "different than."

**DirectX**

**DirectInput**

**Direct3D**

**DirectSound**

**drag-and-drop/drag and drop** When referring to the drag-and-drop capability, hyphenate the

adjective form. When using this construction as a verb, do not hyphenate. For example: The API features drag-and-drop objects. Drag and drop the items into the trash can.

## E

**editor-in-chief** Use for signature in Game Plan

**ellipses** Use actual periods, and if it ends a sentence, add a fourth. An ellipsis inside quotes means, specifically, that text has been removed by the editor; it does not indicate a pause in speech. Ellipses spewed liberally by writers too lazy or insecure to finish their sentences decisively should be edited and kept only for their prescribed purpose.

**email**

**em dash** Close the spaces surrounding em dashes.

**emoticons** Only use emoticons when we're representing email as email (a fictional dialog or some other situation where the method of communication—email—is more important than the content). If we're quoting email as part of an article or letter, remove any emoticons.

**end result** Do not use (redundant). "Result" will do.

**end-user** Do not use (redundant). Instead, use customer, consumer, player, or user.

**Escape** Denotes the key on the keyboard

**etc.** Replace with an equivalent phrase such as "and so on."

**exclamation points** Use sparingly.

## F

**falloff**

**fanbase**

**first-party** (n., adj.) hyphenate for clarity

**file and drive names** In text, file names are in lower case. Retain the file extension. When referring only to the file extension, leave in initial period and set in all caps; for example: setup.exe, \_EXE, \_3DS format, input.exe, and so on. When referring to drive names, use cap and colon.

**Example:** Take the disk from drive A: and put it in drive B:.

**follow up** (v.), **follow-up** (adj.)

**force-feedback**

**foreign words and phrases** Avoid, but if you have to use them, italicize and take care to render diacritical marks correctly, especially in names.

**form-factor** hyphenated

**formulae** Do not use. Use "formulas" instead.

**franchises** When referencing property franchises, use italics or game font—the same as the proper name of the movie, game, etc. Examples: *Star Wars*, FINAL FANTASY.

**frames per second** Abbreviate as fps and treat as a unit of measure. Example: 30fps.

**framerate**

**freeform**

**front end / back end** Take a hyphen when adjectival; do not take hyphens as nouns.

**Example:** The front-end software translates this request into a series of programming commands. The interactive training setup used HyperCard as a front end.

**further and farther** When communicating actual distance, use farther. When there is no notion of distance, use further. Examples: He ran farther than his brother. Our techniques can be further refined. No further instructions needed.

## G

- *Game Career Guide* or *Career Guide*
- *Game Developer* or *Game Developer magazine*
- **Game Developers Conference**
- **Game Developers Conference Europe**
- **Game Developers Conference Online**
- **Game Developers Conference China**

**game industry** This is the American expression which describes both the game development industry and the entire game retail industry as a whole. "Games industry" is

the British form of this term, which we do not use. See also company names.

**gameplay** One word for both noun and adjectival forms.

**gamer** This word is to be avoided at virtually all costs. We prefer game player, player, user, and so on. The only exception to this word's otherwise utter banishment from the magazine is in reference to certain types of "hardcore gamers" and the like. Basically, "gamer" describes a certain type of person (you know who we're talking about), and not necessarily just a person who happens to play games, which makes it generally too restrictive for our purposes.

**gaming** Do not use. Its original meaning refers to the gambling industry.

**game titles** Published computer and videogames are set in SMALL CAPS. Other software and code names for unpublished games are set in roman type, as are most common games, such as gin rummy and poker. Games that represent copyrighted complete works, such as *Monopoly*, *Hungry*, *Hungry Hippos*, and *Dungeons & Dragons*, are set in italics.

**GB** no space between this unit of measure and the number preceding it (see also measurements)

**gray** only use "grey" if it's part of a proper name (Gandalf the Grey).

**Greek letters** set in italics

**green light** (n.), **green-light** (v.)

**guerrilla** (n., adj.) always spell with a double "r"

**Guerrilla Games**

**GUI**

## H

**hack-and-slash** not "n"

**hardcore** Core is acceptable.

**hardware**

**he or she** Not "he/she." You can use he and she alternatively. Also "his or her." Never simply "he" unless referring to a specific male.

They/their are also acceptable as gender-neutral pronouns; just make sure that the usage isn't confusing to the reader.

**heaven, hell** always lowercased

**high** Takes a hyphen as an adjective.

**high-res** Use "high-resolution."

**homepage** Avoid this word. Refer to a web page or a web site.

**H.R. [#]** correct format for bills in the U.S House of Representatives

## I

**id Software** Capitalize the "i" if it begins a sentence.

**i.e.** "that is" is preferred. Another acceptable alternative is to use a noun phrase appositive with commas, em dashes, or parentheses.

**indie** Short for independent. Not indy.

**in-game** Hyphenate the adjective and (rare) adverb form.

**Installed base**

**Internet**

**intranet**

**italics** Use italics absolutely sparingly for emphasis where no other punctuation would work. Rewrite the sentence and use the vocabulary for emphasis. Italics should only be used for titles of works and foreign words and phrases. In an interview, the interviewer's dialog is italicized. Level 2 subheads are italicized. See italics in **Grammar and Punctuation** for more.

**iTunes, iPhone, iPod, iPad, iPod Touch, iOS**

Use a capital "I" when beginning a sentence with any of these "i-" terms.

## J

**jargon** We are not in the business of creating a new language, only implementing an existing one. Only use words that are commonly accepted and known in the fields that we cover: games, technology, entertainment. A word need not appear in Webster's for its usage to be accepted in the field. When in doubt, consult the editor, author, or an advisory board member.

**JPEG** (see also file and drive names)

**Jr.** Abbreviate and use a comma: Martin Luther King, Jr.

## K

**keyword**

## L

**languages and supporting language operating systems** Language names should appear as shown here. Generally, acronymic languages and operating systems appear in all caps, with occasional exceptions:

- ALGOL
- Prolog
- XENIX
- AWK
- Basic
- Fortran
- COBOL
- Unix
- REXX
- PL/
- C
- C++
- Pascal
- Ada
- LISP
- dBase
- assembly language
- Modula-2
- xBase
- third-generation language (not 3GL)
- fourth-generation language (not 4GL)
- Linux
- MS-DOS
- PC-DOS
- Mac OS
- OS X
- Python
- Luna
- MaxScript
- Android
- iOS

**Latin** Avoid using etc., e.g., i.e., and other Latin. Instead, use their English equivalents.

**loadout**

**load time**

**login (n.), log in (v.)**

**logon (n.), log on (v.)**

**lookup** One word as a noun or adjective describing this particular function (lookup table). Still two words as a verb ("Look up the answer").

**Los Angeles** L.A. is acceptable as a second reference, but never in addresses (LA is the abbreviation for Louisiana).

**LOTR** Abbreviation for *The Lord of the Rings*.

**low** Takes a hyphen as an adjective. Example: low-resolution

**LucasArts, Lucasfilm**

## M

**machinima** technique to make digital animation such as the Red vs. Blue series.

**Macintosh** Mac is acceptable for all references

**makefile**

**mashup**

**mathematical axes** Axes (X, Y, Z) are capitalized, take a hyphen, and stay in roman type.

**Example:** X-axis.

**mathematical operators** These are the main ones: + for addition (regular keystroke); – for subtraction (en dash); × {"3" in Mathematical Pi 1), and · (Option-Shift-9) for multiplication; / (forward slash) and, less frequently, ÷ for division. Operators do not require spaces between them and their terms. Breaking mathematical expressions at line breaks should be avoided; when necessary, though, consult the author first, Chicago second.

**matchup (n.), match up (v.)**

**MB** (see also measurements)

**measurements** (time and space) Spell out all units of physical measure (inches, miles, kilograms, pounds). The only accepted abbreviations for computing measures are:

- MB, GB, and TB run in with amount: 16MB
- K (never KB) also run in: 512K
- Hz/kHz/MHz also run in: 300MHz

In the case of a two- or three-dimensional measure (30x50), use the word a lowercase "x" with no space between numbers.

This also applies to display resolutions

{1920x1080, 2560x2048}

**menu** Never use menubar.

**messageboard** One word.

**mindset**

**mip-map**

**mip-mapping**

**mocap**

**more than** We prefer the use of “more than” in expressions of degree, amount, or number. “More than 60 people attended.” “Over” refers to physical location, as in, “The moon came over the mountain.”

**Multithread, -ing, -ed**

## N

**n** The integer variable n is set in italics. More at variables.

**naturally** This word is forbidden when used to imply something is obvious. Nothing is obvious to all people.

**next gen** (n.), **next-gen** (adj.) Does not apply to the PlayStation 3 or Xbox 360, which have been out for years now.

**non-player character** Spell out on first reference; NPC thereafter.

**number ranges** 20 to 40 is preferred, but 20–40 with an en dash is acceptable. In the Calendar, use an en dash with no spaces to express a range. When discussing money, use a \$ and any written words (millions, billions) every time you mean them. Example: My salary increased from \$20 million to \$21 million this year (not \$20 to \$21 million, unless you mean for the first figure to be 20 bucks).

**numbers** Spell out numbers one through nine, unless used in reference to units of measure or percentages; 10 and above are numerals except when beginning a sentence. If many numbers are compared in the same paragraph, use the numerals for all. See numbers in Grammar and Punctuation for more rules.

**Nvidia**

## O

**object-oriented programming**

**obviously** See naturally.

**of course** See naturally.

**offline**

**off-site** Hyphenated adjective and (rare) adverb form. Never use either as a noun.

**offscreen**

**oftentimes** Avoid. “Often” will do.

**okay** Not OK

**online**

**onscreen**

**on-site** Hyphenated adjective and (rare) adverb form. Never use either as a noun.

**onto vs. on to** use “onto” for “aware of” or “on top of.” Otherwise, use on to.

**Example:** I'm onto your shenanigans. Hold on to your hat.

**operating systems** See **languages and operating systems**.

## P

**PhD** no periods

**page** Abbreviate to pg.

**passive voice** Avoid using passives when possible, but never at the sake of clarity. Note: Passive voice is different than passive language; passive voice is when you make what should be the object of the sentence the subject:

- Passive voice: The ball was thrown by John.
- Active voice: John threw the ball.

**pathfinding**

**percent** Spell out in text, but use the symbol (%) in charts and figures.

**phone numbers** Follow this format for U.S. numbers: (415) 947-6000

**photorealism, photorealistic**

**pixelated** not pixilated, which Word’s and InDesign’s standard dictionaries will change pixelated into if you’re not careful. Pixilated means “somewhat unbalanced mentally; bemused; whimsical.”

**playtest**

**plug-in** (Only the verb form is unhyphenated)

**pluralize** a game name by adding an “s” to the end, even if the name ends with a “y”: FINAL FANTASYS

**podcast**

**point-and-click** (adj.) As in a “point-and-click interface.”

**possessives** Add ‘s to the singular form (even if it ends in a sibilant, unless you’re Moses). Add s’ to the plural form. For example: Dickens’s novels, Mr. Jones’s reputation, and the Joneses’ reputation. For abbreviations, use ‘s unless the word abbreviated actually ends in an “S”: Nintendo DS’s, not DS’. Beware of nouns that are always plural: Stormfront Studios’ games.

**power user**

**preamp**

**preorder**

**pseudocode**

## Q

**QA** (n.) Quality Assurance, not Question and Answer (Q&A)

**Online services**

- Xbox Live, Xbox Live Arcade. Xbox Live Indies
- PlayStation Network
- WiiWare
- Nintendo eShop
- Steam
- Origin
- Desura
- GamersGate
- Impulse (now GameStop)
- Direct2Drive (now GameFly)

**quicksave**

**QuickTime**

**Quick Time Event** Spell out on first reference. QTE acceptable on second reference.

## R

**RAD Game Tools, Inc.**

**raytracing**

**real time** (n.), **real-time** (adj.) Example: The application runs in real time; the real-time application does not fit our needs.

**rock 'n' roll**

**rock-paper-scissors** RPS is acceptable after first reference

**roleplay** (v.), **roleplayer** (n.), **roleplaying** (n.), **role-playing** (adj.)

**roundup**

**run time** Two words as a noun (time) modified by an adjective (run). Hyphenated as a compound adjective.

**Examples:**

- A run-time error.
- They discovered the bug at run time.

## S

**S. [#]** Style for bills in the U.S. Senate.

**screenshot**

**SDS modeler** May also use subdivision surface modeler on first reference

**setup** (n.), **set up** (v.)

**Shift** Denotes the key on the keyboard

**shooter** May use in reference to shoot-em-up games. Do not use shmup, which is English and not in common U.S. use.

**shrink-wrapped software**

**Siggraph** Initial cap only, unless a direct citation of the conference proceedings, which must follow the title as originally published.

**Example:** "Rendering a Teapot."

**since** Reserve "since" for indicating time; use sparingly to mean "because." You do not need a comma before the word "since" in nearly all situations. See because.

**single-player** Use hyphen for the game mode as a noun or adjective. If you're referring to just one player, use single player, no hyphen.

**slang** *Game Developer* is a professional trade publication, and the language we use should reflect that. "Cool," "suck," "bitchin'," and "ass" have no place in our pages.

**splitscreen**

**split infinitives** are perfectly acceptable and natural in all but the most academic writing and are thus permitted in *Game Developer*.

**standalone** (n.), **stand alone** (v.)

**startup** One word as a noun to describe a brand new company. The adjective is hyphenated (start-up capital). The verb is two words (start up the engine).

**states** See Chicago 15.29 for a complete list. See also cities.

**Stateside**

**storyline**

**synch** Not sync, as in lip-synch, lip-synching.

**system-wide**

## T

**Third-party**

**time** When referring to morning or evening hours use A.M. or P.M. Examples: 10 A.M., 5:30 P.M., 6 in the morning, quarter to 3. Beware of redundancies, such as "9 A.M. in the morning." Never use military time in *Game Developer* (though it may appear in European-specific information, such as GDCE mailers).

**timeline**

**titles** Job titles are always lower case, unless you are Emperor Akihito of Japan or enjoy similar status, or are a member of a profession that bestows actual professional titles, such as "Doctor" or "Esquire." Professional or honorific titles are capitalized before the name and lowercase for appositive references. President

and Vice President are only capitalized for actual officials, not the executives at Sony, Microsoft, or other private corporations. A former president of the U.S. is referred to as "President" and the "former" need not be included (President Jimmy Carter). Senator and similar public titles are capitalized but are abbreviated when they directly precede a name (Sen. Barbara Boxer, Assemblymember Mark Leno, California Rep. Henry Waxman).

**toolbar, toolkit, toolset**

**Tool Box** Section of the magazine. Two words.

**touchpad, touchscreen**

**toward**

**TrueType**

**Twentysomething**

## U

**units of measure** Always set a numeral next to its unit of measure, no space in between. In tables, you may abbreviate seconds (s), minutes (min), and hours (hr), but spell them out in text. Examples: 30fps, 40K, 5MB, 6GB, 50mph, 15 minutes, 28 seconds.

**Unreal engine** Don't use game font for this software engine.

**U.S., U.K.**

**university names** Abbreviate the proper noun "University" in references (Stanford Univ.). Spell out full university names (including the word "university") in text and bios. No location is required.

## V

**version** Do not use the word version or "v." when referring to a specific version of a product. The .0 is not necessary, unless to differentiate from, for example, a .1 or .5 release of the same version number. Example: 3D Studio Max 2 was followed by 3D Studio Max 2.5. 3D Studio Max 3.1 fixed some bugs that were present in version 3.0. If the first reference includes the full product name, later references to "version 2" are acceptable.

**versus** Abbreviate to "vs." in titles and subheads; abbreviate as "v." only when

referring to court cases. Spell out elsewhere.

**video game** We use “video games” as a word that comprises console games and all electronic games played on all electronic devices, including computers and phones.

**voicemail**

**voice acting, voice actor**

**voiceover**

**voice work**

**vulgarity** Use sparingly. In direct quotes, do not censor profanity.

## W

**walkthrough**

**-ward words** Backward, forward, and toward do not take an “s”

**web**

**web browser**

**webmaster**

**web server**

**web site**

**web application**

**web addresses** Include the http:// if the beginning of the URL is not www (www.gdmag.com, but http://members.aol.com/ffjoeblowshomepage). Don't include the final slash. *For rules on line breaks within URLs and email addresses, see Chicago 7.44 and 6.17.*

**where** Be wary of “where,” which, when used to start an adjective clause, indicates a place. Do not confuse “where” with “in which.”

**Examples:**

- The game, in which the player gets jiggy, is lame.
- On the dance floor, where you get jiggy, you earn points by shaking your booty.

**whiteboard**

**widescreen**

**Wii Remote** It is preferred to use the Wii controller so as to avoid the capital R

**wikipedia.org** A helpful online resource for finding out if something exists, but not necessarily the best source on spelling or usage. Always refer to the in-house style guide first, then Webster's, then Chicago. You can also check with an author, who likely knows best if a word is accepted and understood in the field and is used in context properly.

**Windows** Windows operating systems are always spelled out:

- Windows XP
- Windows Vista
- Windows 7
- Windows 8
- Windows Mobile

**workaround**

**World of Warcraft**

**worldwide**

## X

**XNA** Microsoft's toolset for creating indie games

**X-axis**

**Xmas** Unacceptable

## Z

**Z-buffer**

**zero** Use the numeral when referring to specific numeric material, and spell it out when it's not. Numeric: “Spatial frequency repeatedly goes from 0 to the maximum resolution of 30 cycles per inch, then back to 0.” Nonnumeric: “The number of times the program succeeded was zero.”

**zip code**

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## PART II: MAGAZINE FORMATS

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**acknowledgment** All acknowledgements in print should begin with “The author(s) acknowledge(s)...” These appear at the end of the article and before the bio. Formatting should be 6 or 7 point size, DIN light italic, unlocked from baseline grid, kerning at 9, leading at 0 or -1.

**art/photo credit** The credit appears alongside the fold or margin (or as space permits).

**bullets** See **vertical lists**

**capitalization** In heads and decks, initial cap every word except:

- Coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
- Articles (a, an, the)

Generally, words that are three letters long or less are lowercase in headlines and decks, unless the word is an acronym, proper noun, key word, or first word in the head or deck (API, GUI, Bob, Off and On Control Panels)

*See Chicago, 8.167, for more information.*

We always capitalize the first and last word of a title, no matter what part of speech, but not for subheads or for the first and last words of a title's or subhead's individual printed lines.

Level 2 subheads are always set in italics in sentence-style capitalization, which generally calls for initial-capping the first word only, plus any proper nouns.

**captions** For figures and listings, insert two spaces after the figure number. All captions should be complete sentences and punctuated as such.

For groupings of figures (A, B, C) with a single caption, determining when to use “above” versus “top” or “below” versus “bottom” is a simple matter of deciding whether the caption should describe the locations of the images in relation to each other (use “top” and “bottom”) or in relation to the physical location of the caption itself (use “above” and “below”). Different layouts lend themselves better to one or the other, but the terms are not interchangeable.

Captions for art should be included when there may be some confusion about that art or its relation to an article.

**code** Always set flush left. Comment lines set off by a semicolon can be edited. Code fragments longer than four or five lines should generally be set off in listing boxes.

**Figures and Listings** References to figures and listings in text take parentheses, unless they are part of the sentence. Example: The expert system's processing box has two logical components (see Figure 2). Or: A pseudocode example for this problem is given in Listing 1. Also see **captions**.

**headlines** Headlines should be snappy and concise and relate to the story. Avoid using long, drawn-out article headings and subheadings when possible. Short, concise headings work best, but longer heading concepts may work slightly better for web publishing to draw in the reader. When quotation marks are needed in a head or subhead, use single quotation marks.

**jump lines** The continuation of an article must be noted by "continued on" and "continued from" when the next page of the article is not the next consecutive editorial page—that means you don't count ads. If more than 2 ads separate one page of continuous edit from the next, jump lines may be used at the editor's discretion. Also OK to jump at the end of a complete sentence.

#### level 2 subheads (a.k.a. "paraheadings")

Level 2 subheads—or subheads within subheads—should be capitalized as a sentence, though they need not be full sentences. Always punctuate. Often italicized or otherwise differentiated.

**listings and figures** Capitalize "Figure 1" and "Listing 1," as they are the proper names of each object. References in text appear in parentheses unless they are part of the sentence.

#### Examples:

- The expert system's processing box has two logical components (see Figure 2).
- A pseudocode example for this problem is given in Listing 1.

Also see **captions**.

**nudity** We are not in the business of promoting games or their sexual content. Bodies exposed in an artistic and mature nature may be permitted, but the editor must sign off in writing on any images of frontal nudity or sexually suggestive images.

**references** When in the body of an article, references should be short and sweet. When a References or Resource box is included with the article, the full and proper citation must

be listed. If the author cannot provide the full information, the reference should be cut. See *Chicago 17* [all of it] and refer to the "N" citations.

**subheads** Use Chicago's headline style for capitalization guidelines, although the first and last words in a line are not automatically capitalized. Also see **level 2 subheads** and **capitalization**.

**variables** With some notable exceptions, mathematical variables are set in italics and appositives are punctuated as any other appositive expression, based on whether its function is restrictive or nonrestrictive:

- In the quadratic equation, the term *n* does not appear [restrictive]. Integrate the equation and solve for the mass of the object, *m* [nonrestrictive].
- Terms describing a coordinate system are treated a little differently, as uppercase roman letters: UV coordinates, Z-axis (always use hyphen), XY plane (no hyphen), Y value.

**vertical lists** Here's a list of rules for vertical lists:

- Always use bullets.
- Set items with a hanging indent.
- Set the list off with a colon (*however, as per Chicago 5.100, a colon should not be used to introduce a list that is the complement or object of an element in the introductory statement*).
- Make sure the list items are parallel in construction—either all phrases or all sentences.
- Use an initial cap to begin each item in the list, unless each item in the list is only a word or two.
- Delete blank lines above and below the list.
- Place a period after the last item in the list, whether it's a phrase or a complete sentence.

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## PART III: GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, AND USAGE GUIDE

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### Abbreviations

Don't capitalize articles and prepositions in game names. Example: CALL OF DUTY (CoD), WORLD OF WARCRAFT (WoW)

### Brackets

- In interviews, use brackets around added info. Example: Yes, I like that game. [Laughs]. Capitalize.
- Editor's note [text, text, text—Ed.]

### Commas

- Use serial commas
  - When using coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS, aka For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So), be sure to use a comma before the conjunction.
  - Use commas to separate multiple adjectives.
 

**Example:** He was a tall, handsome, stupid man. If the adjective acts like an adverb and modifies another adjective, no comma is used.

**Example:** He wore a garish bright green tie. If you can separate the adjectives with an "and," you need a comma.
- Use comma of direct address.
 

**Examples:** "Hey, Mike, I'm talking to you." "Yes, Doctor, I'm ready for my treatment."
  - Use a comma to separate introductory phrases of four or more words that begin a sentence.
 

**Example:** Back in my day, we used typewriters, and we loved it. If you're worried shorter phrases may cause confusion, use a comma.
- Use commas to set off parenthetical elements and appositives.
 

**Examples:** The bridge, which spans the Petaluma River, is falling down. Frida, his wife, waited in the kitchen.
- Don't use commas to separate verbs from the subject of a sentence, especially if the verb is a compound.
 

**Example:** He went into the cabinet and got a bottle of bourbon.
- Use commas to set off quotes.
 

**Example:** "The way to the grocery store," John said, "goes through that block of apartments." Don't use commas to introduce quotes material introduce by "that."

**Example:** He often said that "the many rules about commas can be confusing."
- When in doubt about whether you should

use a comma or not, err on the side of caution and don't use one.

### Colons

- Capitalize the first word after the colon when it's a proper noun or the beginning of a complete sentence.  
**Example:** He promised this: The company will make good on its losses.
- Add a colon between a game name and its subtitle, even if a colon doesn't appear to be on the box or the company's literature. It's a title, not a logo, so it needs a colon.

### Dash

- Use an em-dash for breaks (option+shift+hyphen) Editor's note [text, text, text—Ed.]
- Use en-dash for compounds with two-word proper nouns: FINAL FANTASY—style game (option+hyphen)
- In speech, use em-dash for cut-off speech, but ellipses for trailing-off speech
- Em-dashes may also be used to set off parenthetical information and for emphasis. But use them sparingly for this.

### Exclamation point

Games with exclamation points (SID MEIER'S PIRATES!, DESTROY ALL HUMANS!) retain them in running text most of the time. Drop them at the end of a sentence or when the game name has an apostrophe-S.

### Parentheses

- Parentheticals within a sentence should open and close before the period. •If the parenthetical starts outside a sentence and stands alone, the period goes before the ending parenthesis.
- Punctuation in parentheses (!) acts as its own unit/commentary, so put spaces around it.

### Quotation Marks

- The comma and the period always go within the quotation marks
- The dash, the semicolon, the question mark, and the exclamation point go within the quotation marks when they apply to the quoted material only. They go outside the quotation marks when they apply to the whole sentence.
- Do not use parentheses within quotation marks, since people speak in pauses and not in parentheses.  
**Example:**  
 Incorrect: "The three new classes (warrior, rogue, and mage) are really sweet."  
 Correct: "The three new classes — warrior,

rogue, mage — are really sweet." Use brackets to insert anything needed to clarify a quote or to add missing words.

### Semicolons

- Use to separate two independent clauses. These clauses are usually related in some manner.  
**Example:** The package was due last week; it arrived today.
- To clarify a series, use semicolons to separate elements of a series when the items in the series are long or when individual segments contain material that also must be set off with commas.  
**Example:** He leaves a son, John Smith of Chicago; three daughters, Jane Smith of Wichita, Kan., Mary Smith of Denver, and Susan, wife of William Kingsbury of Boston; and a sister, Martha, wife of Robert Warren, of Omaha, Neb.  
 Note that the semicolon is used before the final "and" in such a series.

### Italicize

- Books
- Periodicals
- Board games
- Comic strips and books, print or Internet
- Movies, TV shows (but use quotes for single episode names), plays, and podcasts
- Albums
- Ship names, but not types: *Millennium Falcon*, an F-16. If the ship name has USS, those do not get italicized (USS Enterprise)
- Foreign words, unless they are common
- Pinball games

### In Quotes

- Episodes of TV shows
- Songs
- Titles of articles (no quotes around column names)

### Numbers

- Spell out one through nine
- Use numerals for 10 and above
- Exceptions: If the number begins a sentence, percentages, time of day, date, time measurement (formatted hours:minutes:seconds), measurements (8-inch), ages, levels, millions and billions (\$4 billion, 9 million copies), the words twentysomething, thirtysomething, and so on.
- Use commas for 1,000 and up
- In game abbreviations, change Roman to Arabic and close up to letters: GRAND THEFT

AUTO III, GTA3. EXCEPTIONS: FINAL FANTASY games (FFXII), CIV 4, CIV 5

- Dates: Always use Arabic figures; do not use the ordinals st, nd, rd, or th. March 1, not March 1st
- Use figures for millions or billions unless it's a casual reference; it doesn't get a hyphen in such compound modifier constructions as \$100 million ransom, a \$100 million business, but in multiple compound modifier constructions, it does: \$100-million-plus ransom, 200-million-member group.

### Magazine and Comic Book Issues

- Use # sign, capitalize "Issue"
- or our magazine, use the following style: See March 2011, pg. "X"

### Dates

- No apostrophe between the date and an "s" e.g., 1990s is correct
- Use an apostrophe when shortening a decade e.g., '80s is correct
- Do not abbreviate months

### Acronyms

- Widely accepted terms (radar, sonar) need not be spelled out. For new terms, spell out on first reference and follow the explanation with the abbreviation in parens. Shortened game names are an exception—do not put shortened game names in parens following a full title.

### Capitalization

- Game-specific moves, attacks, attributes, scores, and skills are capped: Hadouken. Don't capitalize melee attack or ranged attack, as these aren't game-specific attacks; they are types of attacks.
- Capitalize the names of spells, screens, menus, and options: Lay of Hands spell, Social score
- Capitalize the proper names of races (e.g., Klingons, Jawas, and Martians) and creatures such as FINAL FANTASY summons (Bahamut, Shiva, and so on). Nonsentient animals, creatures, and monsters, such as banthas, headcrabs, and chocobos, are not capitalized.
- File names are set in lower case (quake.exe).
- Menu items are set in init. caps.  
**Example:** "The user chooses Select App from the Edit menu."
- Keyboard keys are set in initial caps. They are not abbreviated as their names appear on the keyboard, except for function keys and Alt.

**Examples:** Option-Shift-W, Control-Z, Control-Alt-Delete, F9, Page Down, Control-Escape. Key descriptions, rather than names, are lowercase: the left arrow key, Command-period, backslash. A general rule: if they key name is spelled out on the keyboard, it is capitalized, otherwise lowercase.

- In company and product names, init. cap only (more at **Company names and product names**). Exceptions only occur when the name is demonstrably an acronym.
- NEVER USE ALL CAPS FOR EMPHASIS. Use italics.

### Money

- Use figures with a dollar symbol: \$5, \$10, \$0.72
- Use figures for amounts up to \$1 million: \$150,000, \$3 million
- OK to drop the dollar sign when using terms like “bucks” (60 bucks) but not “dollars”

### Numbering

Use periods: 1., 2., 3.

### Percentages

Spell out the word “percent” and use numerals: 12 percent. Use the % for charts, figures, and tables.

### Hyphenation

- The following prefixes are generally closed: anti, auto, bi, bio, co, counter, extra, hover, infra, inter, intra, macro, mega, meta, micro, mid, mini, multi, over, post, pre, pro, proto, pseudo, re, semi, sub, super, supra, trans, über, ultra, un, under.  
EXCEPTIONS: pre-alpha, re-create/re-creation
- Open or hyphenated prefixes include: all-, cross-, ex-, full-, half-, quasi-, self-, well-
- The following suffixes are generally closed: -ific, -maker, -mate, -up.
- Do not hyphenate -ly adverbs when they modify verbs in compound modifiers.  
**Example:** The hastily built structure. The eagerly anticipated sequel.

### Quotes

- Generally, use “said.”
- Use “said” if the quote comes from another source: He said in a recent GQ interview....
- Do not censor profanity in direct quotations.

### Standard References

- *Game Developer* magazine's in-house style guide.
- Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary ([m-w.com](http://m-w.com)).
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed.
- *Lapsing into a Comma*.
- *The Elephants of Style*
- *Common Errors in English Usage*, 2nd Edition (<http://public.wsu.edu/ffbrians/errors/>)

### Still have questions, contact us at:

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- [www.gdmag.com/contactus](http://www.gdmag.com/contactus)