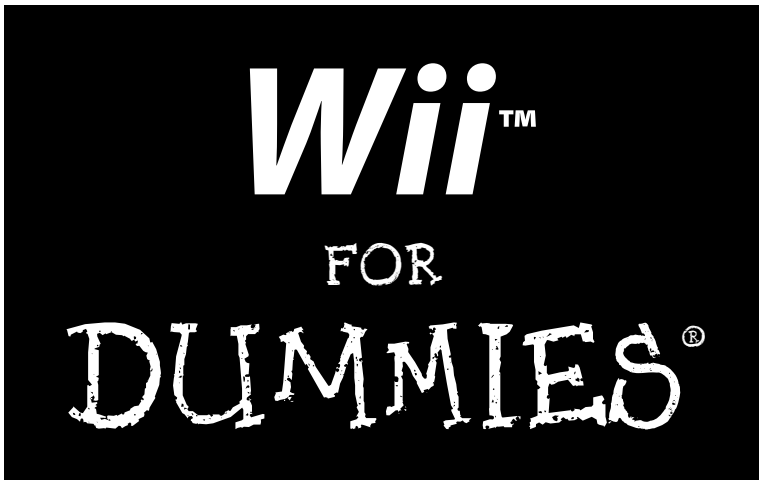

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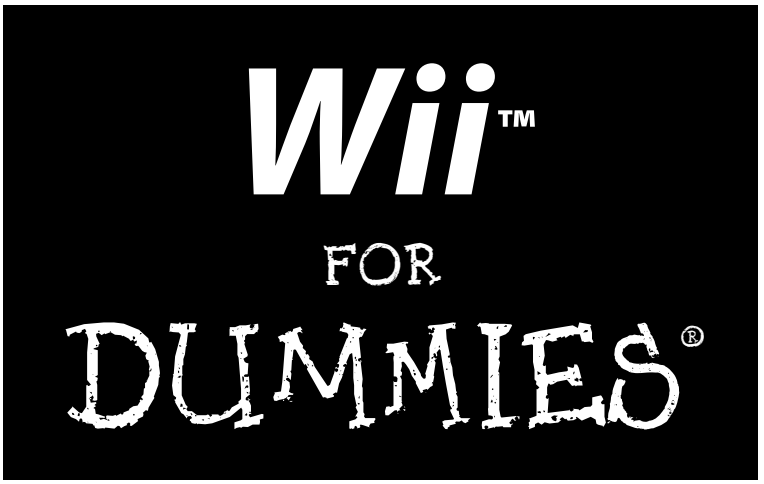
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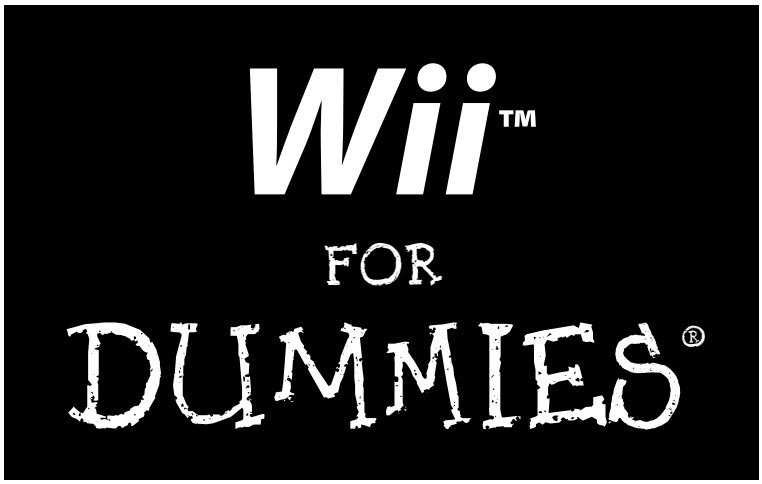

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About the Author

Kyle Orland has been playing video games pretty much nonstop since just before he got a Nintendo Entertainment System for his seventh birthday. At age 14, he started writing about those games professionally when he set up a fansite for *Super Mario Bros.* on the free Web space provided by his parents' America Online account. Twelve years later, Super Mario Bros. HQ is still up and running at a more professional-looking home: `www.smbhq.com`.

From that humble beginning, Kyle has gone on to become a successful freelance journalist specializing in video games. He writes regular news posts and features for popular gaming weblog Joystiq.com, pens the weekly PressSpotting column for CNET's Gamespot.com, co-hosts the Press Start gaming podcast on National Public Radio's web site, and jots down daily, one-hour game reviews for Crispy Gamer's Games for Lunch feature. Kyle's work has also appeared in *Electronic Gaming Monthly, Paste Magazine, Gamasutra, GameDaily,* and *The Escapist,* among other outlets. He has been quoted as a gaming expert in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, G4TV, and TheStreet.com, among other outlets.

This is Kyle's second book. He co-wrote *The Video Game Style Guide and Reference Manual* with David Thomas and Scott Steinberg in 2007 (published by Lulu.com). His favorite game of all time is *Super Mario 64*.

Dedication

To my wife, Michelle, who never lets me think I can't do anything I put my mind to.

To my parents, who bought me my first Nintendo Entertainment System and held their tongues when I threw away a nice, secure, decently paying desk job to follow my dream of becoming an underpaid game journalist.

To all the friends, family, and colleagues who wouldn't let me go crazy while writing nearly 300 pages of reference material about a single game system.

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Introduction

If you're actually reading this Introduction, you're probably a customer in a bookstore, trying to decide whether or not you should buy this book. To help you out, I've made up a simple quiz:

1. Do you own a Wii?
2. Do you intend to own a Wii soon?

If you answered yes to either question, then congratulations, you are one of the millions of people worldwide who should buy this book! If you answered "No," please feel free to go out and buy a Wii and then retake the quiz (refer to Chapter 1 for some tips on how to find one). Thank you.

About This Book

Think of this book as the unabridged edition of those tiny user manuals that come with the Wii itself. While those manuals are all right for getting started, this book gives you much more detail on the inevitable issues that come up when using the Wii. From setting the Wii system up with your entertainment center to using the Wii's many unique controllers; from connecting the system to the Internet to playing games, this book has the detailed instructions and troubleshooting you need to get it done.

This book isn't meant to be read from front to back. Treat it more like a reference that you can consult whenever you find something confusing or difficult when using the Wii. The book is divided into chapters and sections by topic, so you can easily find what you're looking for by perusing the table of contents. Failing that, please consult the index for the specific issue you need to know more about.

Conventions Used in This Book

I know that doing something the same way over and over again can be boring, but sometimes consistency can be a good thing. For one thing, it makes stuff easier to understand. In this book, those consistent elements are *conventions.* In fact, I use italics to identify and define the new terms.

Like all game systems, the Wii comes with a controller. The *Wii Remote* is the white, wireless, handheld controller that comes with the system and is the main means for interacting with the Wii. The book makes frequent mention of pressing *buttons* on this Remote. These buttons are clearly labeled on the Wii Remote itself, or you can consult Chapter 3 for more on the Remote's button layout.

The Remote can also be used to control an on-screen *pointer* using infrared technology. Moving this pointer over an on-screen option and pressing the A button is referred to in the book as *clicking.* You may also have to hold down a button on the Remote and *drag* the pointer to another location on the screen at times. See Chapter 3 for more on using the Wii Remote as a pointer.

In general the Wii can run two types of programs, disc-based games, which are discussed in Part III, and *Channels,* which are discussed in Part II. Channels are simply applications that are stored on the Wii's internal memory and don't require a separate disc to run. See Chapter 5 for more on using the Wii Menu to access Channels and start disc-based games.

When I provide URLs (Web addresses) within a paragraph, they are in a monospace font and look like this: `www.dummies.com`.

What You Don't Have to Read

While the bulk of this book is reference material that relates directly to getting the most out of your Wii, some sections simply provide supplemental information that some readers might find interesting. This extra information is placed in sidebars that are broken out in separate shaded boxes.

Any section labeled with the Technical Stuff icon (see the "Icons Used in This Book" section, farther along) is meant for advanced users, and won't be necessary for the majority of Wii owners.

Foolish Assumptions

I've written this book with inexperienced Wii owners in mind — the new gamers who've never owned a video-game system before, or the lapsed gamers who last played games on their Atari 2600 or home *Pong* units. Those with more gaming experience will find shortcuts, tips, and tricks they may not have discovered on their own.

I'm assuming you have a basic familiarity with your television and your specific home-entertainment setup. If you don't, you may want to consult the documentation for your home-entertainment equipment before you connect the Wii to your entertainment center (described in Chapter 2).

If you're planning to hook your Wii up to the Internet, I assume you currently have a broadband Internet connection hooked up in your home and understand the basic functionality of your high-speed modem and/or router. A complete tutorial on setting up a home Internet network is beyond the scope of this book — for help there, check out *Home Networking For Dummies,* 4th Edition, by Kathy Ivens (Wiley Publishing, Inc.).

How This Book Is Organized

I divided this book into parts, organized by topic. Each part deals with one important aspect of the Wii experience. If you're looking for information on a specific topic, check the headings in the table of contents, or skim the index.

By design, this book enables you to get as much (or as little) information as you need at any particular moment. For example, if you just need guidance setting up the system, refer to Chapter 3; if you're just looking to use the Photo Channel, look up Chapter 8. By design, *Wii For Dummies* is a reference that you'll reach for again and again whenever some new question about the Wii comes up.

Part I: The Basics

After some brief background about the history of Nintendo and the new Wii system, Part I tells you what to do with your new Wii after you get it from the store into your house. This includes information on hooking up the system to your TV or home entertainment setup, taking control of the system with the included and optional controllers, and connecting the system to your high-speed Internet connection.

Part II: The Channels

Video game systems aren't just about games anymore, and the Wii is no exception. The Wii Menu lets you access other functions through built-in applications called Channels. These Channels open the Wii up to functions

that used to be limited to a computer, such as a full-featured Web browser and digital photo viewer. You can also use Channels to create and share cartoon-like digital avatars called Miis and download new games and Channels directly from the Wii Shop Channel. You also discover the News, Weather, and other miscellaneous Channels.

Part III: The Games

Despite the added functionality of the Channels, the Wii is still a game system, and so it's meant to play video games. Part III details some basic information on how to pick games that are right for you and your family before diving in to a detailed description of two of the most popular games for the system: *Wii Sports,* which comes packaged with every Wii system, and *Wii Fit,* the revolutionary personal trainer in a box that uses your entire body as a controller. You can also find some recommendations of games to buy from your local gaming or electronics store.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

I've remained true to *For Dummies* style by including a Part of Tens. The chapters in this part can help you find ten games to download from the Wii Shop Channel, as well as ten optional Wii accessories that can help spice up your Wii experience.

Icons Used in This Book

To make your experience with the book easier, I use various icons in the margins of the book to indicate particular points of interest.

Whenever I give you a hint or a tip that makes an aspect of the Wii easier to use, I mark it with this little Tip thingamabob — it's my way of sharing what I've figured out the hard way — so you don't have to.

This icon is a friendly reminder or a marker for something that you want to make sure that you keep in mind. Usually this stuff is discussed elsewhere in the book, but who knows if you've read that part yet?

Ouch! This icon warns you about potential pitfalls or problems that you could run into, and gives advice on avoiding or fixing the issue. Be sure to read the whole paragraph before you even think of doing anything discussed next to this little guy.

The Wii is specifically designed not to require a lot of arcane, technical knowledge from its users, so this icon isn't used too often in this book. When it is used, it means this portion discusses some advanced stuff that most users won't need to worry themselves with. For the most part, if you don't understand anything next to one of these icons, just ignore it.

Where to Go from Here

Now you're ready to use this book. Look over the table of contents and find something that catches your attention, or a topic that you think can help you solve a problem.

Do you have any questions about this book? How about comments? Bitter invective? You can contact me online through my personal Web site, `www.kyleorland.com`.

Part I
The Basics

"I don't see the nunchucks, but I've got a set of throwing stars we can use instead."

In this part . . .

Welcome to the wonderful world of Wii! This part of the book is for new Wii owners just getting to know their new systems. First, you get a little background about the history of Nintendo and the Wii's historic launch. Then it's time to get busy hooking the Wii up to your entertainment center — and figuring out how to use the Wii Remote and other controllers that work with the Wii. Finally, you discover how to hook the Wii up to your high-speed Internet connection to access a world of new features.

So wander this way, and wade waist-deep into the Wii waters (okay . . . I promise that's the last time I'll do that).

Chapter 1

How the Wii Came to Be

In This Chapter

- Reliving the Wii's secretive development
- Finding a system in stores

If you're like a lot of new Wii owners, you probably don't know much about your new purchase or the story behind it. Sure, you may have heard a snippet on the local news about how the system was almost impossible to find after its initial release in late 2006. You even may have read a newspaper story about how the system is catching on with all sorts of unlikely groups of new gamers.

These factoids are just a part of the story behind the Wii. This chapter covers the hundred-plus year history of Nintendo leading up to the launch of the Wii and beyond.

Nintendo's early years

Nintendo wasn't always the electronic-entertainment powerhouse it is today. The company was originally founded in 1889 as a producer of traditional handmade Japanese playing cards called *hanafuda*. The name "Nintendo" roughly translates to "Leave luck to heaven." Company founder Fusajiro Yamauchi had plenty of luck when the Yakuza (the Japanese mafia) took a liking to Nintendo's cards for their illegal gambling halls. This interest helped the company expand to American-style playing cards by 1907, and build a wide-ranging distribution network of Japanese retailers by 1927. In 1947, Nintendo opened a three-story factory next door to the simple, one-room office that had once served as its headquarters.

By the 1950s, control of Nintendo had transferred to Hiroshi Yamauchi, Fusajiro's grandson. He expanded the company's card business by introducing plastic-coated cards in 1953 and, in 1959, signed on with Walt Disney Co. to sell cards printed with popular Disney characters. The new Disney-branded cards took the Japanese playing-card market out of the illegal gambling dens and expanded it to the family home. Nintendo sold a record 600,000 packs of cards of the year the Disney printings were introduced.

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Despite this continued success, Yamauchi wasn't satisfied managing a playing-card company. In the 1960s, Nintendo experimented with marketing and selling a variety of different products, eventually expanding into the toy business. Plastic toys like the Ultra Hand (an extendable grabber), the Ultra Machine (an indoor ping-pong-ball-pitching machine), and the Ultra Scope (a toy periscope) were marketed heavily on TV, and sold through Nintendo's already established network of retailers.

Nintendo jumped to electronic toys in the early '70s with the Nintendo Beam Gun, a light-emitting rifle that activated small, light-sensitive cells which caused a set of plastic barrels to explode. Nintendo used this same essential technology to convert a series of abandoned bowling alleys into virtual skeet-shooting ranges. When these light-gun ranges fell out of style, Nintendo headed back to the home market, selling a licensed version of a Magnavox-made, *Pong*-style game in Japan in 1977. Nintendo had finally entered the video-game business.

This chapter also gives you some advice on hunting down your very own Wii (or helping a friend hunt down a Wii, if you already own one).

I learned much of the history in the sidebars in this chapter from David Sheff's excellent book *Game Over: How Nintendo Zapped an American Industry, Captured Your Dollars and Enslaved Your Children* (published by Random House). Check it out for a much more thorough account of Nintendo's early history.

Wii Development and Unveiling

Even while releasing the GameCube system in 2001, Nintendo was already beginning the planning for its follow-up system, then codenamed Revolution. From the outset, Nintendo wanted the Revolution to take the video game market in a new direction. Instead of trying to make a system with the most powerful technology or the most realistic graphics, Nintendo was going to attempt to change the fundamental way people played games. "The consensus was that power isn't everything for a console," said legendary Nintendo game designer Shigeru Miyamoto, the man behind *Donkey Kong* and *Super Mario Bros.,* in a 2007 interview with *BusinessWeek.* "Too many powerful consoles can't coexist. It's like having only ferocious dinosaurs. They might fight and hasten their own extinction."

Nintendo president Satoru Iwata confirmed this new direction for the company when he announced the existence of the Revolution project to the world at a 2004 press conference. "Today's consoles already offer fairly realistic expressions, so simply beefing up the graphics will not let most of us see a difference," he said. "The definition for a new machine must be different. I want you to know that Nintendo is working on our next system and that system will create a gaming revolution. Internal development is underway."

The rise and fall of a video-game giant

In 1981, Nintendo caught the crest of the huge arcade-gaming wave with *Donkey Kong.* The game was notable for its basic story (told through animated cut scenes), run-and-jump gameplay, and one of the first identifiable human characters in a game (who would eventually be known as Mario the plumber). The game sold hundreds of thousands of units to arcades in Japan and the United States. Nintendo had further success with a few follow-up arcade games, and with a popular line of miniature, handheld games known as *Game* and *Watch.*

This early success in the arcade game market was all a drop in the bucket, though, compared to the overwhelming reaction to Nintendo's Family Computer, or Famicom. First released in Japan in 1983, the home system became a hit — thanks, in part, to *Super Mario Bros.,* one of the first action games to feature a smooth-scrolling background. Nintendo brought the Famicom to the United States in 1985 as the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). The American market was initially wary of the Japanese-made system, but the system slowly built up momentum and eventually took over 90 percent of the American video-game market, By the early '90s, there was a NES in nearly one in three American households. The name "Nintendo" was synonymous with "video games."

Nintendo followed up the phenomenal success of the NES with the even more phenomenal success of the Game Boy in 1989. One of the first portable systems to support interchangeable games stored on plastic cartridges, the Game Boy fended off competition from more powerful portables thanks to a lower price, longer battery life, and exclusive rights to the addictive puzzle game *Tetris.* The Game Boy line sold over a hundred million units worldwide over the next two decades.

Nintendo's success on the home-gaming front was not as consistent. After achieving market dominance with the NES, Nintendo was slow to react when Sega's more powerful Genesis system started to find some success in the early '90s. By the time the new Super Nintendo Entertainment System was released, Sega had enough of a foothold to gain control of nearly half the home gaming market.

In the mid-90s, Nintendo's market position eroded further in the face of the Sony PlayStation, whose compact-disc-based games made similar games on the new Nintendo 64 system look like relics from long ago. By the dawn of the new millennium, Nintendo's GameCube and Microsoft's new Xbox system were fighting over the market scraps left behind by Sony's PlayStation 2, which was becoming nearly as dominant in the marketplace then as the NES had been almost 20 years prior. Two decades after the NES launched in America, "PlayStation" was now synonymous with "video games" to an entire generation of players. Nintendo needed something big to turn its market position around. That "something big" turned out to be the Wii.

Among avid gamers, rumors started flying about what, exactly, Nintendo had planned for its mysterious Revolution. Some speculated that the system would include a controller with a built-in touch screen, similar to the company's recently released Nintendo DS handheld. Others thought the controller might include a built-in microphone for voice-controlled gaming, or a modular design with specialized, snap-off sections. There were a few gamers who even envisioned fanciful concepts for three-dimensional virtual reality

helmets or projection systems that transformed the entire living room into a magical play space.

It wasn't until the Tokyo Game Show in September 2005 that Nintendo finally halted the speculation by revealing a prototype of its unique new remote controller. Selected members of the gaming press got to try out the controller on a series of specially designed demos that showed off the Remote's ability to sense the movement of the player's hand. Initial reactions among the press were cautiously optimistic. A writer at 1UP.com said the Remote initially made his arms and hands tired, "but once I sat down and relaxed, resting my hands on my legs as I would with a normal controller, everything clicked." A writer from gaming website IGN said it was "easy to imagine why Nintendo is so heavily invested in the idea. There is such great potential to do so many unique things."

This initial enthusiasm turned to confusion, though, when Nintendo revealed the final name for its new system in early May 2006. From then on, what had been known as Project Revolution would officially be known as the Wii. Nintendo explained the new name in a press release, saying in part that, "Wii sounds like 'we,' which emphasizes that the console is for everyone. Wii can easily be remembered by people around the world, no matter what language they speak. No confusion. No need to abbreviate. Just Wii."

The press wasn't so understanding. Journalists, developers and gamers around the world made fun of the system's name with less-than-wholesome homonyms. Some in the industry thought it was a joke, intended to get some free press from the marketing world. A few gamers even tried to boycott the name, continuing to call the system Revolution long after that name was officially dead. Over time, though, the initial shock seems to have worn off, and today most gamers can talk about their Nintendo Wii with a completely straight face.

By the end of May 2006, Nintendo was ready to let a wider audience of industry insiders try out the Wii for the first time at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, an annual game industry trade show. Crowds flocked to Nintendo's booth throughout the three-day event, snaking around the Los Angeles Convention Center and waiting up to four hours to get into the small demonstration area. The long wait was worth it, to be among the first gamers anywhere to try demos of games like *Wii Sports, Super Mario Galaxy,* and *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess.*

On September 14, 2006, Nintendo finally revealed that the Wii would launch in the United States just two months later, on November 19, at a price of $250. This put the system's launch just two days after that of Sony's PlayStation 3, the $500-to-$600 follow-up to the then-dominant PlayStation 2. Both new systems also had to contend with Microsoft's Xbox 360, which had launched to