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Over the last decade, machinima—the use of computer game engines to create movies—has emerged as a vibrant area in digital culture. Machinima as a filmmaking tool grew from the bottom up, driven by enthusiasts who taught themselves to deploy technologies from computer games to create animated films quickly and cheaply. The Machinima Reader is the first critical overview of this rapidly developing field.

The contributors include both academics and artist-practitioners. They explore machinima from multiple perspectives, ranging from technical aspects of machinima, from real-time production to machinima as a performative and cinematic medium, while paying close attention to the legal, cultural, and pedagogical contexts for machinima. The Machinima Reader extends critical debates originating within the machinima community to a wider audience and provides a foundation for scholarly work from a variety of disciplines.

This is the first book to chart the emergence of machinima as a game-based cultural production that spans technologies and media, forming new communities of practice on its way to a history, an aesthetic, and a market.