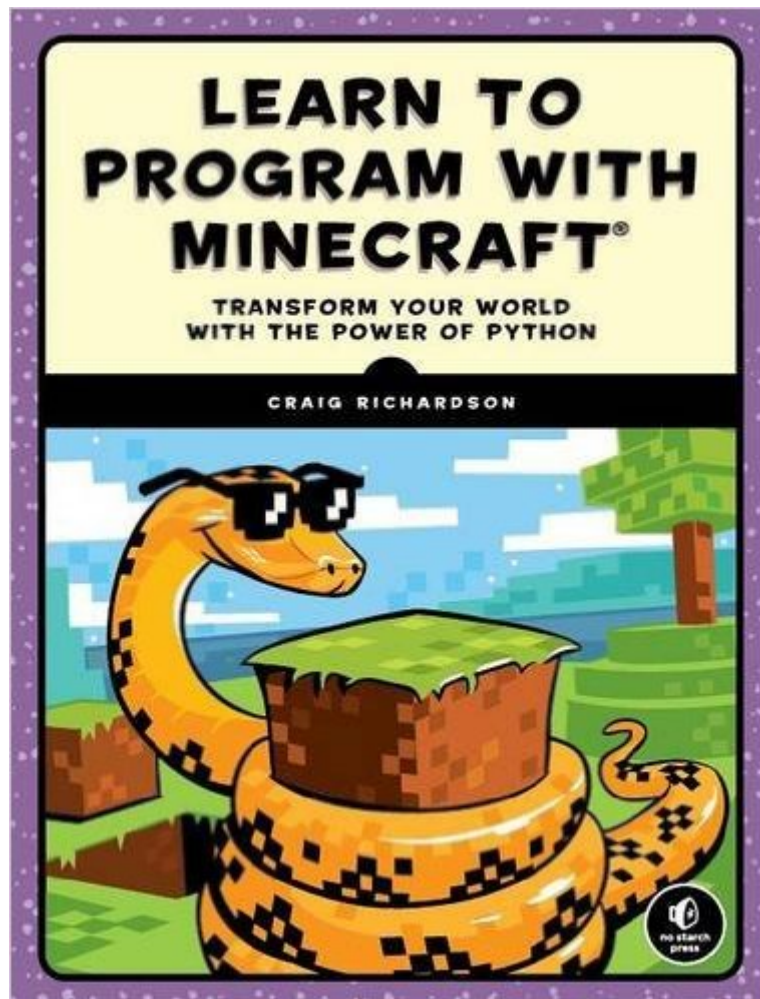


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Learn To Program With Minecraft: Transform Your World With The Power Of Python



Synopsis

You've bested creepers, traveled deep into caves, and maybe even gone to The End and back-but have you ever transformed a sword into a magic wand? Built a palace in the blink of an eye? Designed your own color-changing disco dance floor? In *Learn to Program with Minecraft*, you'll do all this and more with the power of Python, a free language used by millions of professional and first-time programmers! Begin with some short, simple Python lessons and then use your new skills to modify Minecraft to produce instant and totally awesome results. Learn how to customize Minecraft to make mini-games, duplicate entire buildings, and turn boring blocks into gold. You'll also write programs that: Take you on an automated teleportation tour around your Minecraft world Build massive monuments, pyramids, forests, and more in a snap! Make secret passageways that open when you activate a hidden switch Create a spooky ghost town that vanishes and reappears elsewhere Show exactly where to dig for rare blocks Cast a spell so that a cascade of flowers (or dynamite if you're daring!) follows your every move Make mischief with dastardly lava traps and watery curses that cause huge floods Whether you're a Minecraft megafan or a newbie, you'll see Minecraft in a whole new light while learning the basics of programming. Sure, you could spend all day mining for precious resources or building your mansion by hand, but with the power of Python, those days are over! Requires: Windows 7 or later; OS X 10.10 or later; or a Raspberry Pi. Uses Python 3

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 and up

Customer Reviews

Minecraft is a hit with the kids and when you combine it with the elegance and simplicity of Python, it presents an excellent way for introducing programming to kids. One of the first things that typically hits you when you want to prepare a package to teach the kids is to ensure that all the software is in place and organized into appropriate folders, so that the setup is not just minimal but also is intuitive enough for you to explain to the kids and for the kids to follow. This book takes extra steps on that front by making sure that in the first chapter itself : Setting Up for your Adventure, you have all the detailed steps to setting up the environment either for your PC, Mac or even Raspberry Pi. The instructions along with the ZIP files provided by the author worked well. Just ensure that you do not assume that just because you have some version of say Java, it should be fine. Take my advice and install the specific versions that the author has instructed and it works well. The book then progresses well by explaining first about Python constructs and then applying them to do a little task in Minecraft. This approach ends up as being a refresher or learning material not just for Python but then also for the different objects and tasks that you can do inside of Minecraft. Most aspects of Python are covered and some of these include:- Variables- Expressions and Operators- String Manipulation- Conditional Statements- Loops- Functions- Lists- File Operations- Object Oriented Concepts. The above Python concepts are mapped beautifully to fun things that you can do inside Minecraft. These include teleporting the players, sending chat messages, Determining where you are standing in the game, Building structures via functions, Managing a list of items and so on. I actually tested out various parts of this book with my two sons, aged 12 and 9, and they enjoyed various aspects of it. Especially the part where you could create complex structures via loops and the teleporting stuff. If you are looking for a good and gentle introduction to Python and how you can program bits of Minecraft, this is a great reference to get going.

This is a partial review based on the first three chapters. I will flesh it out in the coming months, hopefully. Four stars for now but could well be a five star book if the rest is as good as the first part. (tl;dr - give it go; it's definitely worth it.) Bearing in mind I'm writing this is in Dec 2015 very soon after the book was published the setup process ran very smoothly on my Mac running El Capitan. You'll need OS X 10.10 or later and a paid version of the Minecraft desktop program (as far as I'm aware this book doesn't support mods to MC Pocket Edition or even playing MCPE on the supplied server software). Download Python 3 and the latest Java Development Kit (JDK) for free and a

folder containing Spigot (an open source MC server) and other tools from the publisher's website. Follow the detailed instructions and you should be ok. What I like about this book: + It's attractively laid out, with color pictures every three or so pages and colored syntax for code. + It dives straight in to making changes in your MC environment: making the player 'teleport' to various coordinates. Early, positive, fun feedback is great. + Code aspects are introduced gently and with very well crafted explanations; there are many additional numbered comments throughout that further explain the code. + I like that using Python's IDLE (Integrated Development Environment) makes it very easy to write code and make changes in your game straight away (a JavaScript book for MC I'm evaluating in parallel requires a bit more work from the reader and the JS API doesn't feel as tightly integrated as this Python API (Application Programming Interface)). + It's good to see that the book's companion website has tabs for "Reviews" and - critically - "Updates" as you can bet there will be errata and updates as and when the MC client - server - Python API - JDK dependencies break at some point in the future (any book on programming needs to be well supported for a good few years; that's just the way things are). + I'm pretty picky about technical books aimed at beginners and kids and so far I've found one, esoteric and unimportant, error. Things I'd like to have seen (or see updates for on the website): - An appendix for teachers/parents/advanced students explaining a little more about why things are done in a certain way, in addition to the how (eg. more info about the MC server used, what it does, how does it compare to other servers etc) - Learning resources, online discussion board, lesson plan resources etc. - Ability to support true multiplayer in the server. The book states that the supplied Spigot server will only allow one player to play on the server but I think most kids would be dying to show off their changes to friends on the same server. - Support for MCPE (MC Pocket Edition). I may be wrong but I don't think this is supported as you need the MC desktop version and you can only connect with one player. - An appendix showing the Python API or at least a list of all the calls used throughout the book (eg. `setBlock`, `setTilePos`, etc). Really, these are unfair criticisms because they're not at all required in order to do what the book says: learn to program python with MC; they'd just make it a better experience. Age group: ~11 upwards working on their own. Maybe a motivated ~9 or 10 yr old with some help. Your mileage may vary ;) It looks very good based on my first foray - recommended for sure!

My 9 year old son is working his way through this book now on his Raspberry Pi 2, and having a good time. It is a very well put together text, full of visuals and clear instructions. A great way for kids to learn to program and enjoy Minecraft as well.

Extremely well written book for kids. My kids are following the steps on their own after help with first two chapters to setup. Recommend looking at comments in other reviews for answers to questions if you are stuck on an error. Lots of helpful q&a and reviews. They helped us get unstuck. Note: My 9 yr old is very advanced and is used to programming in Scratch as well as general troubleshooting of computers/software/mechanics. I would say this is appropriate for anyone 9 and older with a little parent help, and 12 and older without help. This requires you purchase Minecraft from the Mojang website for your child (Do not purchase the Windows 10 version of Minecraft since that cannot be used for modding at this time).

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