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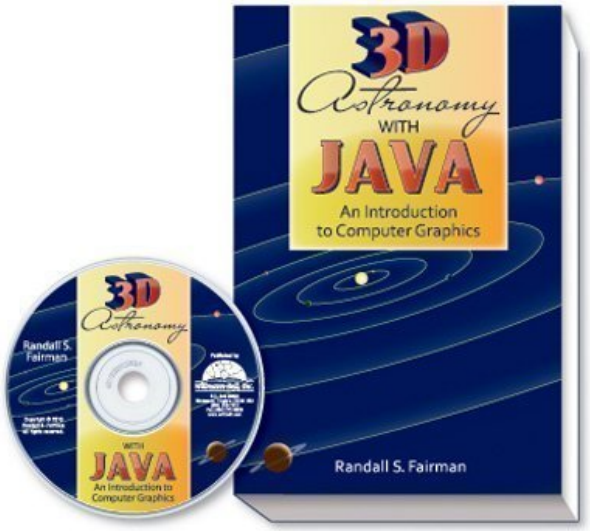

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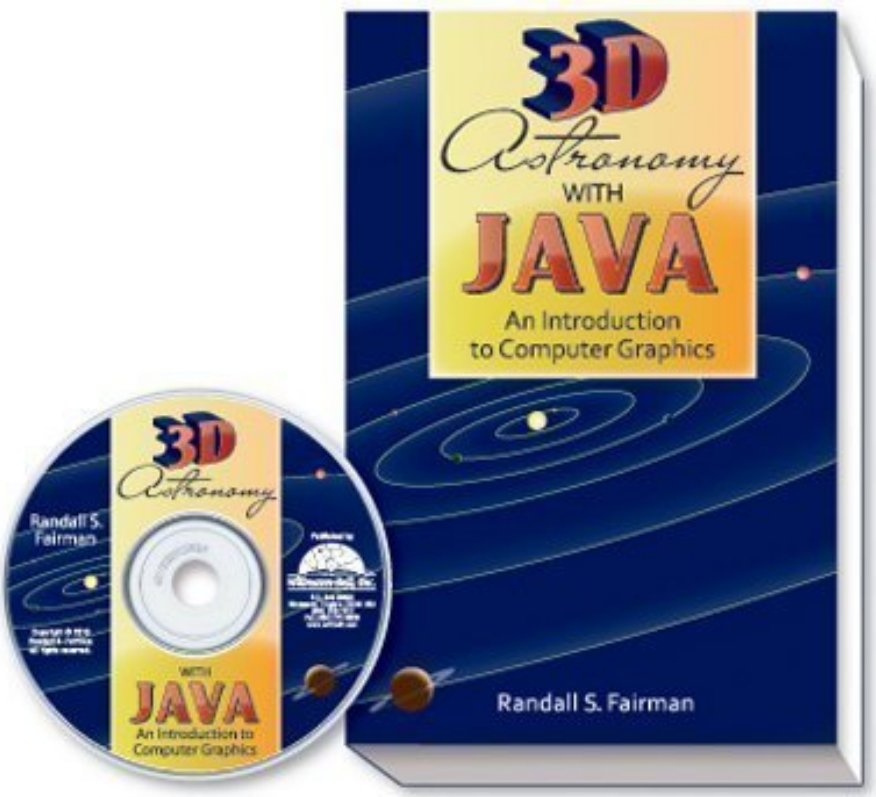

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This book and the accompanying JAVA software code (on CDROM) is an introduction to Astronomy and graphics programming. Astronomy and computer graphics are naturally complementary. Graphics programming is an excellent way to get a feel for "what's happening" in the sky. It's difficult to gain an intuitive feel for complex phenomena, like precession, without seeing some examples. A graphics program literately shows you what's happening. Moreover, computer graphics and positional astronomy are both based on applied geometry. There's a lot of overlap in the mathematics used in the two subjects. The graphics techniques presented are the foundation on which many popular three-dimensional games and computer-generated animations are based. The extensive bibliography provides a selection of books on computer graphics for those wishing to delve deeper into this subject. Roughly half of the book consists of an introduction to Java, the rudiments of graphics programming, and the most fundamental ideas of astronomy. More than a dozen small programs are developed along the way that illustrates these ideas. The second half of the book continues by applying the code developed earlier to larger-scale projects. Most of the programs in the latter half of the book are based on data from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). The JPL provides files giving very precise position data for the planets over a period of roughly 6,000 years. The book goes on to explain the ideas on which commercial planetarium programs are based by developing a program with similar basic features. This final project displays an animation showing what an observer on the surface of the earth would see in the sky from a given time and place.

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Clear, Consice and Excellent
By Stephen L. Mcconnell
I have to say this is one of the most ambitious books I have seen. The author's goal is to:

1) Present the basics of Mathematical Astronomy
2) Present the basics of Java
3) Present the basics of 3D Graphics

All in one book.

I have to say that he succeeded better than I could have ever expected.

The first chapter covers the basics of Java in 50 pages better than I have seen in most HUGE tomes on Java (and I've been a Java developer for over 12 years) . If you have the basic concepts of programming and want

to learn Java, this book is, surprisingly, one that will get the programmer on their way. He has source code in the book that ACTUALLY WORKS (as opposed to so many introductions to Java) and is on the enclosed CD, so you KNOW it actually works.

The second chapter is an introduction to the basic trigonometry, vector and matrix methods he used in the rest of the book. It is a light overview, but he has an appendix that goes into further depth. However, it a very clear and understandable overview.

The third chapter of the book starts getting you into the meat of the Graphics Development, GUI programming, Event handling, creating a basic scene and moving around in that scene. Source code is in the book and on the CD (and it works!!!)

The rest of the book build on Keplers laws, different coordinate systems, the JPL ephemeris database (6000 years of ephemeri), adding the planets into the model, then adding start into the model and then animating it.

He has a fascinating reading list at the end for those that want to dig deeper into the subjects of Java, Astronomy, Mathematics and Computational Mathematics and Graphics.

This is BY FAR the best book I have read on Java, Mathematical Programming, Basic Astronomy, Graphics and GUI front end programming. If you are wanting to learn ANY of these things, this book is not a collection of unrelated recipes, unrelated code. If you work through the math and code, you will truly learn each subject.

As a Java and OO developer for over 12 years, I found his code and coding style to be outstanding, clear and understandable.

The text of the book is not filled with unnecessary, flowery phrases. It is tight and densely packed with very readable explanations of the Math, Astronomy and Code.

Thank you Dr. Fairman for a tremendous book that introduces us to the basics of Celestial Mechanics and motivates us to learn more.

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