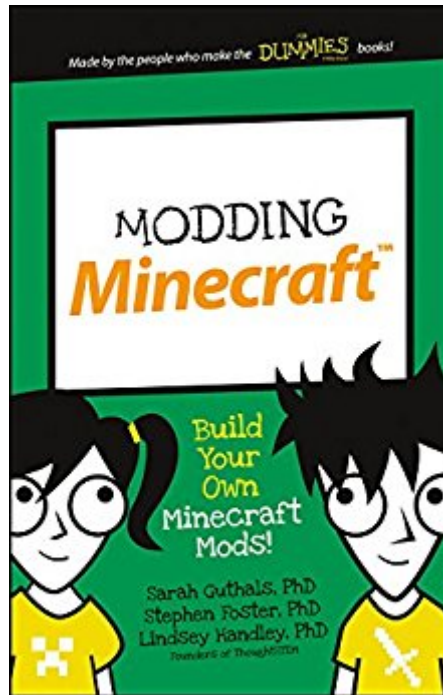




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Modding Minecraft (Dummies Junior)



Synopsis

My kid can mod Minecraft? Oh my! There's no doubt about it: Minecraft has taken the world by storm. If your resident Minecraft fanatic is ready to take their experience to a new level of play, introduce them to modding! Modding allows Minecraft players to modify the game through code, giving them the ability to add a variety of gameplay changes, ranging from new blocks and items to new mechanisms to craft. It's pretty much a Minecraft enthusiast's dream brought to life! In Modding Minecraft, your child will be introduced to three fun and easy-to-complete projects that teach them the coding skills to make the most of their love of Minecraft. Walking young readers through projects that outline how to create games in Minecraft for single or multiple players, this friendly and accessible guide takes the intimidation out of coding and instills confidence in children as young as seven as they complete cool coding projects to mod their favorite game. Full-color, eye-popping graphics and a short page count hold their attention while the goal-based format keeps them focused on the task at hand. Before you know it, your kid will be writing their own mods and having even more fun with Minecraft. Kids can complete the projects on their own or alongside an adult. Introduces getting started with a single-player, single-level game. Moves readers on to multi-level game playing. Finishes with a multi-level, multi-player game based on the classic "capture the flag" game. With simple and clear instruction that your child can understand, Modding Minecraft is the perfect place for your kid to dig deep and open up a whole new world in their creative play.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

These books provide no educational information as to what modding is. It simply renders steps on what to do on a computer.

Overview: This is a good basic intro to modding for children, but there are some things you should know before you buy. This book (and related website) use a very simplified teaching method using drag-and-drop code, in which you literally drag blocks of code from one panel into another. For Java, or any object-oriented language, that's as easy as it's going to get. You avoid having to learn syntax right away. You don't first have to learn the principles of "model-view-controller." You simply drag the shell of a function onto the screen, and then drag commands and loops into the function. To actually run the mods requires a Minecraft account, but if you're modding, you probably have that already. The teaching software sends mods to a Minecraft server, and adds that server to your login. The problem with this book is that it doesn't quite match the software, so things are not where you expect to see them. Apparently, the software has been updated since the book was published. For example, very early on, connecting the software to your Minecraft account, you click on "Minecraft Connect," but the button shown in the book isn't there! I finally found it under "Home," in case you end up looking for it. This is the kind of stuff that bores and frustrates kids. I know my 10-year-old son started to lose interest when we ran into obstacles like this, though he perked up again when I figured it out. If your child is doing this alone, it may be more of an issue. Another thing that confused us was the book shows you the panel from which you drag your code blocks, and the blank panel where you drop the code. But on the screen, only the left panel matched. The right panel was a simulated Minecraft world. It turns out that is where you drop your code! It's weird, and takes some getting used to, and even then, I found myself accidentally getting into the simulation in full screen, and getting out of it threw me all the way out of the program, and I had to start over. There needs to be a more intuitive interface, including an "exit to lesson" button. The book is somewhat redundant, and because it doesn't match the

screen, was more of a hinderance during the actual modding. We found ourselves abandoning the book altogether and just following the instructions on the screen. It is still helpful for offline reading, in terms of getting familiar with the types of blocks available and what they do, and getting a preview of the more advanced lessons. Also, the book came with an access code that you type in at the website that gains you 90 days free connection to the mod server. I don't know what it costs after that 90 days; it would be nice if that info were obvious. One plus is that the lessons, including video demonstrations, are very straight to the point. They don't waste time with a lot of zany joking around. Verdict: good way to teach kids basic programming, but needs to be updated to match the website.

My daughter is 9, and she loves playing Minecraft on her iPad. She can't get enough of it! She loves creating animals, using different skins, and building amusement parks. This "Modding Minecraft" book was a natural next step in encouraging her in STEM fields. This "Dummies Junior" book operates under the assumption that Minecraft is being used from a PC or a Mac, not a mobile device (not iPhone, iPad). You will also need access to the LearnToMod.com website. The book comes with a code that gives you a 60-day free trial to the website. What I enjoyed about this book the most is the layout. The book is small enough to not be intimidating, but long enough to really draw kids in to the creative possibilities that modding gives them. The pages are full-color, and the instructions are easy to read, easy to follow, and easy to use. This is technical writing for children, and they did a fantastic job of it.

Not all 8 year olds are going to have the patience to read this book, even if they are average readers for their age. Even being a Minecraft fanatic doesn't seem to be enough motivation for some kids. Add that to the fact that the book and the software do not line up and you have a bit of a mess on your hands. We had resorted to reading the book to him, trying to get him motivated again, he was at first, until he tried to read the book on his own. Unfortunately he had never been given a chance to code before, long story involving shared custody that I won't get into on here. So we were pretty much starting from scratch. After a few failed attempts, we decided to shelve the project and come back to it over summer vacation, when we would have more uninterrupted time to work on it with him. Our impression of the book was mostly positive, but that was looking at it as an adult, to him it was a lot of stuff that was way over his head, even though it was about his beloved game. Moral of the story: Some kids are not going to be ready for this and actually can be turned off of coding if this is their first introduction to it, primarily because of the disconnect between what the

books says and what the software program actually did.

I like the basic approach and organization of the book. The real value lies in the online lessons that are hosted on a website that then lets the student earn badges by going through a series of lessons. I love the set up and the programmatic approach taken here. The devil is in the details. The world of browsers is fluid and what worked well at one time may not work in a new version of your browser due to changes made for security or other reasons. The result in our case was that we kept encountering issues with either the voxel simulator or with the ability to push mods to Minecraft. These stumbling blocks can sometimes be ignored or worked around. But they tend to kill the momentum of the child trying to follow the lesson. It's like trying to learn to drive with a car that keeps stalling out on you. So as much as I like the approach and feel that the authors have poured an insane amount of work into this, I can't give this an unreserved recommendation due to the issues we encountered with the web-based software.

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