
Foreword

THIS is a book about creating beautiful applications. Not just blizzards of text boxes and buttons in some nondescript standard look-and-feel, but applications that are truly beautiful.

If you wind the clock back enough years, the world of graphical user interfaces was ruled by standardized look-and-feel specifications. This approach was taken in an effort to centralize all of the GUI coding in applications, make it easy to document the applications (everyone knows what a slider does, therefore it doesn't need to be described), and work around the relatively poor graphics performance of desktop computers.

But the last decade's collision between the computer industry and the consumer has led to a huge increase in the emphasis on aesthetics in user interfaces: for everything from brand awareness to increasing the comprehensibility of sophisticated systems, to eye-catching coolness to draw the customer in, to just plain "Wow!" . . . Aesthetics are *in*.

Combine this with the phenomenal increase in computer power that Moore's Law has brought us, especially as it has been expressed in the performance of commodity graphics rendering hardware, and you've got a huge range of entertaining programming possibilities.

There's a lot of subtlety in this, from "What makes a beautiful interface?" and "How do I make the pixels beautiful?" to "How do I make this fast?" This book covers all of these topics and more. For me, this is the kind of programming task that counts as pure pleasure. I'm sure it will bring you pleasure, too.

—James Gosling