Preface

It has been 5 years since a book similar to this one has been released, and it is long overdue. After the end of the *AI Game Programming Wisdom* series in 2008, many of us who worked on these books refocused our effort toward building a community of game AI programmers by forming the AI Game Programmers Guild (www.gameai.com) and organizing the AI Summit at the annual Game Developers Conference. While these continue to be extremely worthwhile endeavors, it became obvious that something was just missing.

Although it appears that technical books might be on the decline with the exponential rise of information on the Internet, I think you'll agree that it's difficult to find high quality, detailed expert knowledge for a niche field such as game AI. The truth is that there are just not that many game AI experts in the world, relative to people in other fields. The AI Game Programmers Guild has a membership of over 350 professional game AI developers that it's been building over the last 5 years, so perhaps the number of total professional game AI developers in the world is double or triple that number. The reality is that it's a small world and to be able to get 54 of them to share their expertise with you within this one book is quite a gift that I'm extremely grateful for.

What I personally love about creating a book like this one is that it is a force multiplier. The knowledge and wisdom gained from one game can be shared with hundreds or thousands of other game developers by simply distilling the techniques and concepts onto the printed page. Knowledge and wisdom that might otherwise disappear or have to be reinvented is instead allowed to spread and pollinate within dozens or hundreds of other development studios and minds. We aren't forced to reinvent techniques and instead can stand on the shoulders of our peers.

Fortunately, the field is finally maturing and building up some solid institutional knowledge. Gone are the days of inventing everything from scratch. Nowadays, we build architectures based on well documented ideas like behavior trees and utility theory. We can leverage pathfinding knowledge and know-how that took dozens of years to figure out. Yet, there is still much to invent and many directions to explore. Hopefully, the contributions in this book will give you the leg up you need and the inspiration you crave.

Steve Rabin