

Re: AoE 3rd Edition coming soon? A question for Winfield

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.electronics.design/2006-06/msg04710.html>

- *From:* Winfield Hill <Winfield_member@xxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 22 Jun 2006 05:55:40 -0700
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bill.sloman@xxxxxxxx wrote...

The book is a university text book – admittedly aimed at bright students. Paul Horowitz originally developed it for his electronics for physicists course at Harvard, and it was an undergraduate text in the electronic engineering course at Cambridge University in the U.K. when I was working in Cambridge (not at the university).

That's not wholly true. Our book was written as a reference book as well as a textbook. To the extent we start at a basic level, we hoped the book could be a self-learning and reference tool for a non-engineer or hobbyist. We wanted to appeal to graduate students in fields other than physics or engineering. It's true that Paul's motivation to work on the book came in part from his need for a book for Physics 123, the Harvard Physics dept electronics course. But my motivation came from a desire to tell the world about my bag of design tricks and my favored back-of-the-envelope approach to electronics engineering. As we say in the preface, it's a book by a practicing engineer and a teacher. Even though the early project-pitch to publishers was based on Paul's class notes, there's not much in common between them and the finished book. That early pitch to publishers, BTW, resulted in a stream of rejections.

Successful undergraduate textbooks sell very well – a psychologist that I know got a \$250,000 advance from his publisher for the third edition of his first-year psychology textbook, which only stands at 52,000 in the Amazon sales rankings.

It does do well in Amazon's rankings and has sold over 500,000 copies worldwide, IIRC. But our publisher's analysis shows that less than half of those were for classroom textbook use. Our book is clearly not optimally designed as a textbook, it has far too much reference material that's not relevant to teaching and confuses the student who's preparing for taking exams. It's ideally oriented, in our minds, to a scientific experimenter who needs to make something to improve their experiment.

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It can be helpful to a classically-educated electronics engineer who needs to pick up some practical circuit-design skills. You know, the engineer who may be well trained in FPGAs, microprocessors and MatLab, but who doesn't know much about soldering irons, JFETs, opamp current sources, or power transformers with bridge rectifiers and filter caps. It also goes into considerable detail in some areas not often taught in EE school, but often needed in the real world, such as low-noise amplifiers and low-power circuit-design tricks.

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Thanks,

– Win

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