Beginning Lua with World of Warcraft Addons

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About the Author

PAUL EMMERICH is one of the programmers behind Deadly Boss Mods, one of the most famous World of Warcraft addons ever, with more than 8 million users worldwide. He started programming in 1998 and has worked in Lua since World of Warcraft was released in 2004. He has also created a variety of other projects in Lua, including porting vintage games to Lua. He currently studies computer science at the Technische Universität München in Germany. As Tandanu, level 80 Priest and Chief Coder for the guild Refuge on EU-Aegwynn, Paul enjoys winning raid encounters and adding to his HK count.Acknowledgments

This book would not have been possible without the help of a lot of people, so I want to say “thank you” to a few people here.

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Last but not least, thanks to all users of Deadly Boss Mods. DBM would certainly not be one of the most popular World of Warcraft addons without its strong community supporting it. Thanks for all the feedback, suggestions, and support!Introduction

Addons are a really exciting topic, as they allow you to modify your game and improve your gaming experience. Only a few online games allow you to modify the user interface to such an extent as World of Warcraft does; you can replace the complete user interface or you can add completely new functionality to it.

There are literally thousands of addons available, and hundreds of helpful macros can be found on the Internet. You are probably already using a lot of addons and macros as a World of Warcraft player, but do you know exactly how your addons and macros work? Virtually all players make use of these tools, but there are only a few people who can write their own or modify existing ones. You will soon be one of them!

Addons can modify almost every aspect of the game's user interface. There are many small addons that make simple but powerful additions to the interface. For example, you can add timestamps to the chat frame with just a few lines of code; you will see how in Chapter 6. Or you can add tooltips to links in the chat; you will try this easy example in Chapter 4. There are also some big addons, however, that consist of tens of thousands of lines of code. So you will also build a big, advanced addon in this book, a fully featured multiplayer Texas Hold'em poker game within the game.

The programming language that is used for World of Warcraft is Lua, a small yet powerful scripting language that is easy to learn. You will know the basics of Lua by the end of Chapter 2. These basics will be sufficient to write your first Hello, World addon in Chapter 3 as you get started with World of Warcraft addons. The real fun starts in Chapter 4 when you are writing your first really useful addons, like the chat frame tooltips just mentioned.

But let's get started now!