2OLD2P MAGAZINE

VOLUME 4 - JULY 2006

UNO

A 360 CARD GAME THAT CAPTURES THE DEMOGRAPHIC

4

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- TABLE TENNIS REVIEWED

NINTENDO'S WII

WILL THIS LITTLE CONSOLE GO WII WII WII WII ALL THE WAY TO YOUR HOME?

A LOOK BACK AT THE 2D WORLD OF CASTLEVANIA
REINVENTING THE GAMING ADDICTION WITH 360 ACHIEVEMENTS
AND MORE...

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2OLD2TYPE PODCAST | WEEKEND RENTALS | ASK MIKEJAMES | RETRO GAMES

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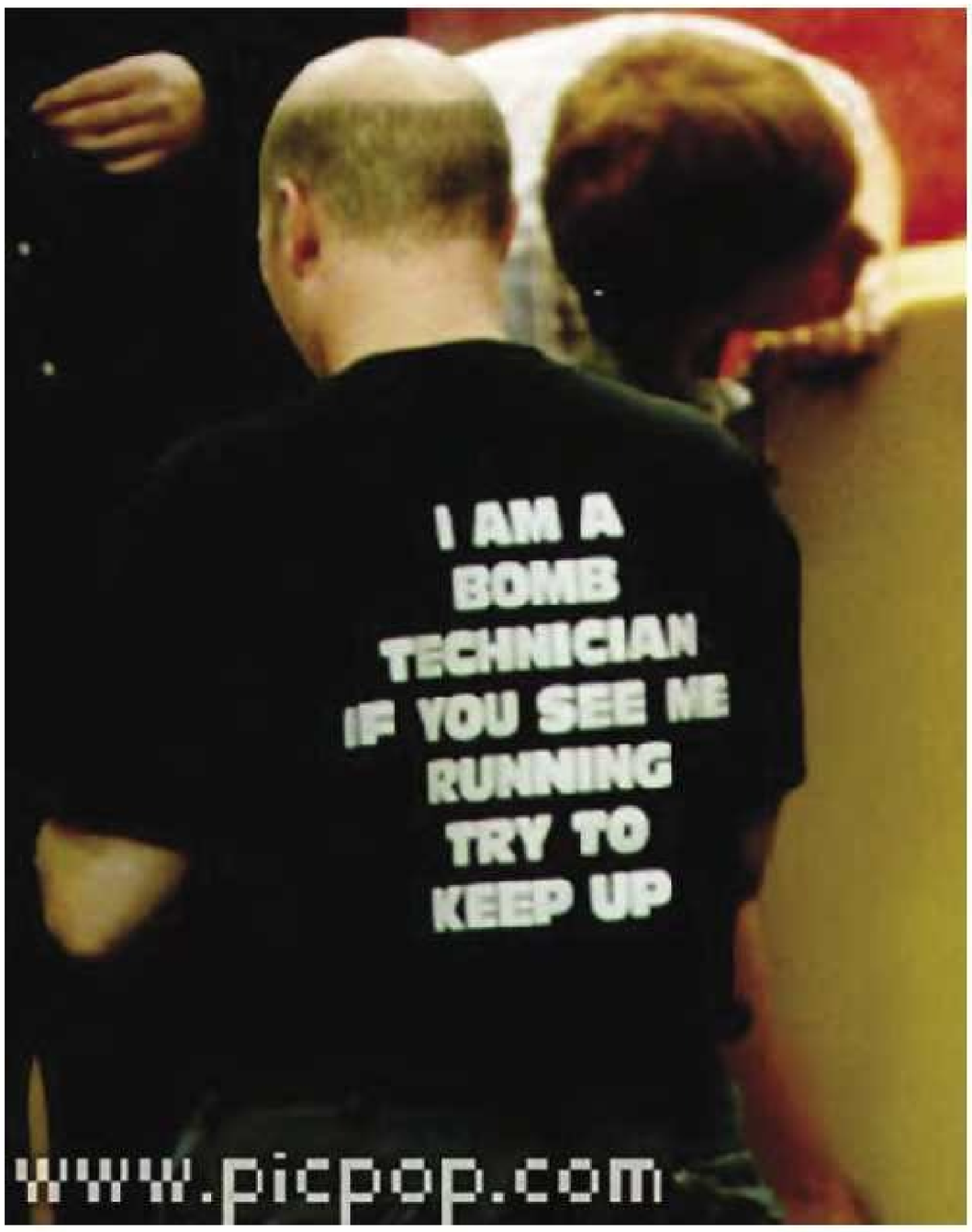
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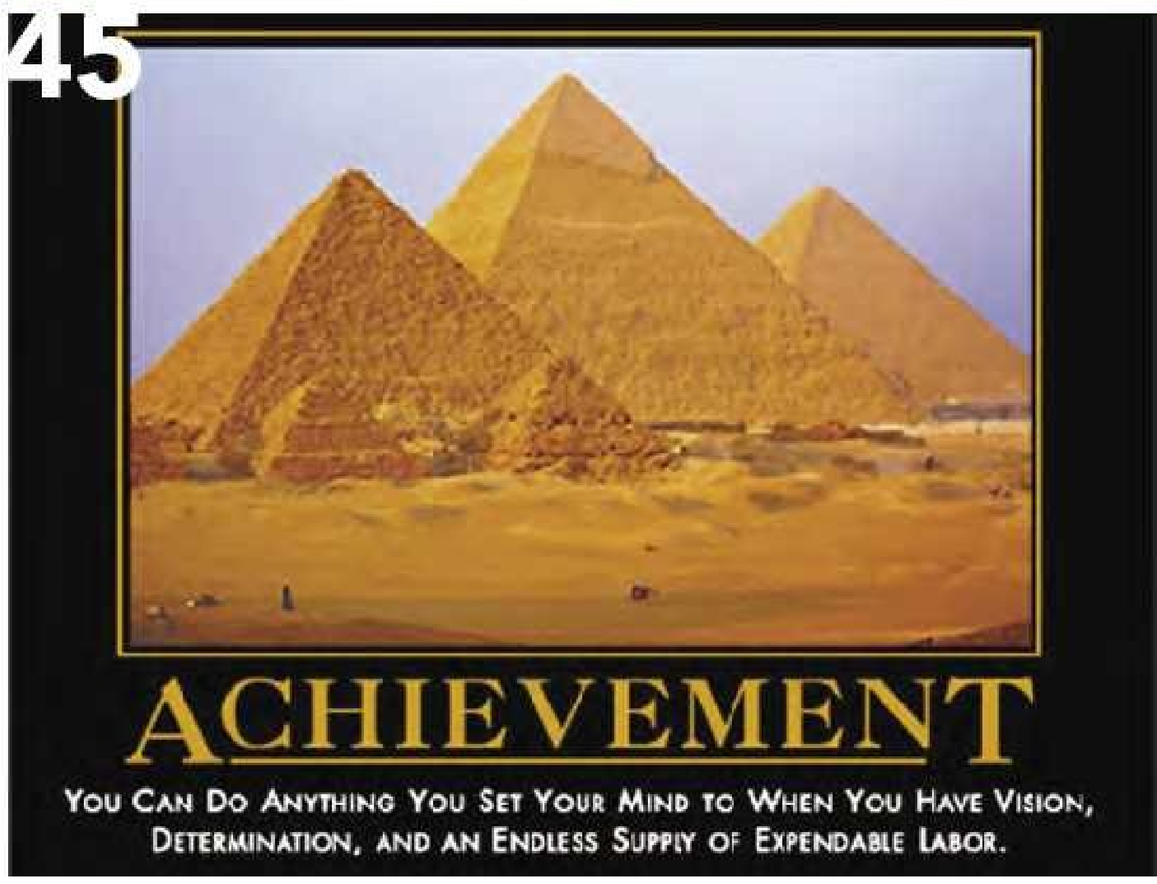
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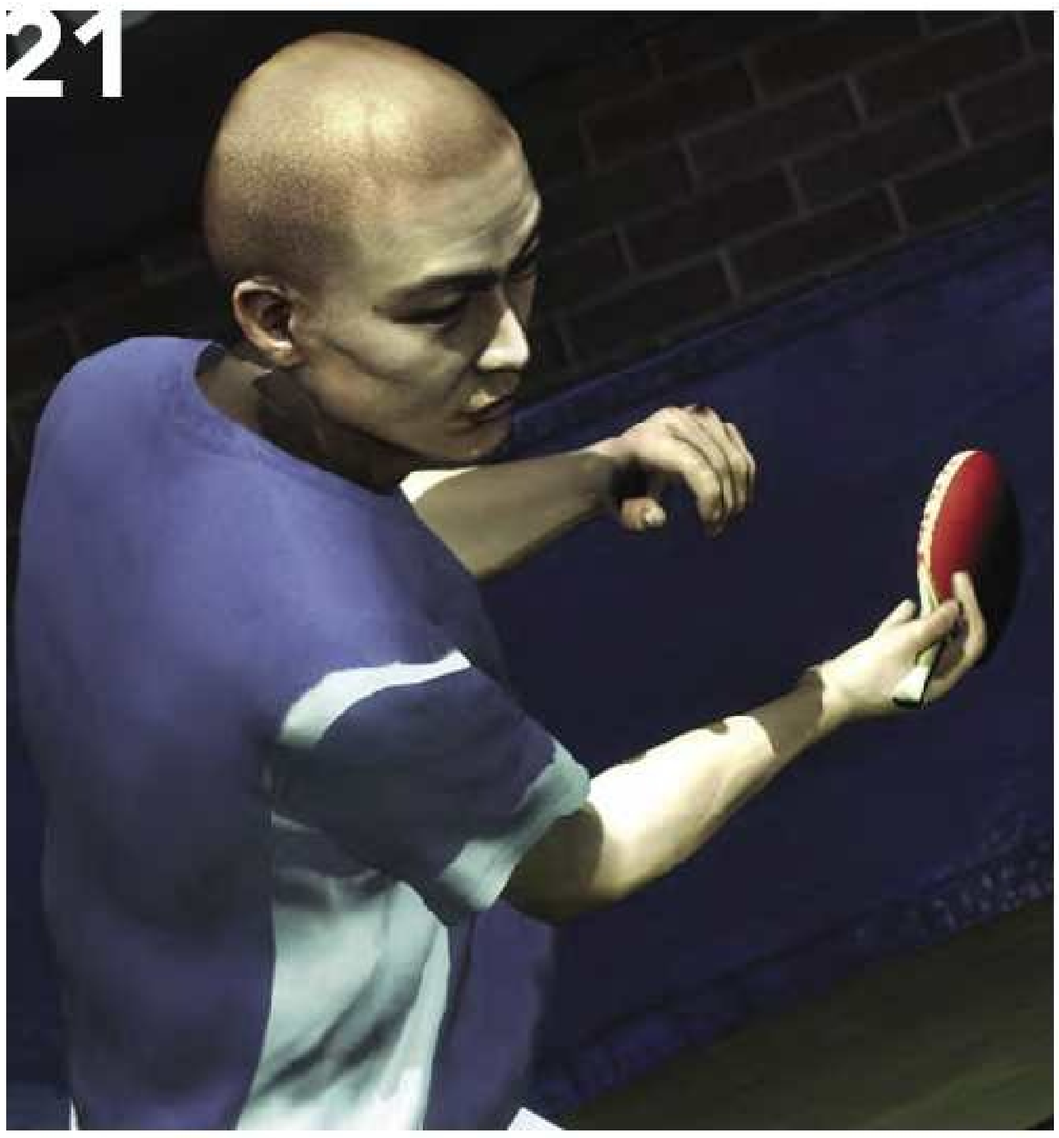
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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Wikipedia.org for providing some facts and figures for information. It is nice to find a group of great people that are driving to collect all the facts of the world.

RETRO IS THE NEW OLD

by CodeMonkey



I simply cannot believe how fast Retro-gaming is coming back from the dusty basement of console gaming. Many of us old gamers want to relive our memories and bring back what we once had. Of course, it's just a dream. This is a different time and a different place, but we can try, right? Playing *The Legend of Zelda* is definitely still fun, but it lacks a little bit of magic. It is like the first time one finds out Santa Claus is not real. Every year from that point on, you enjoy your gifts; but, it just *feels* different. Less…innocent?

The market is capitalizing on our dreams and recollections. Many of us will spend $20.00 on games we may already once have paid for. My T-Mobile *Sidekick II* has the option to download *Pac-Man, Mrs. Pac-Man, Dig Dug, Galaga, Space Invaders, Frogger,* and more. Namco is trying to hook me again with $5.99 purchases. They just might succeed. I already own *Dig Dug* and have made it to levels beyond anything I reached as a kid. Next on my list will probably be *Pac-Man*.

As I stated in the *2old2type podcast – episode 26*, I have no doubt I will be purchasing *Street Fighter: Hyper Fighting* on the *Xbox 360 Marketplace* even if I only play it a handful of times. Perhaps it's not worth spending the *Marketplace* points for only a few uses, but I cannot help it. I have to own it. Capcom and Microsoft know it, too. Perhaps this is what the Retro-game movement is all about. Maybe the market knows that gamers will spend "like children" to play games from their past, hoping for just a slight touch of that feeling…?

Is it true old school games are that much better then new games on the *PS2, Xbox, PC, Xbox 360* and *Game Cube?* I believe it is all in our heads. Just like high school, we remember the good times and block out the bad. It is the same with video games. I owned games for my *NES* that I would never download and play for fun. For instance, *Raid on Bungeling Bay* by Brøderbund – this is a game that I would never willingly play again. It was one of my first *NES* games I received for Christmas. I played it because it was one of four other games I owned. *Duck Hunt, Mike Tyson's Punch-Out,* and *Gyromite* did get old after awhile. Although *Raid on Bungeling Bay* may have inspired the making of *SimCity,* it is a game I shut out of my past. I am certain many others exist that I can no longer even name. New games are no different, and not all will be winners.

What one gamer defines as "Retro" may be slightly different from that of another. Some may say that 3D graphics changed gaming forever and all 2D games are "retro" by nature. Others may say that retro games are those that existed before 8-bit console systems. We all share much overlap in our gaming past, and every person can point to at least one specific game that changed their perspective of video entertainment.

I recently picked up a *Nintendo DS Lite*. I am very impressed with the quality of the hardware. The draw of this device, along with other classic Nintendo handhelds, is the retro style gaming. I have always been a fan of side-scroller style games, and I currently only own one DS game: *New Super Mario Bros.* Its classic, yet refurnished graphics are just what I want in a game. I recommend anyone thinking about a *DS* to go out and get this new *Lite* version. It helps you relive your retro past and entertain you on the road.

Our children will someday laugh at us when we talk about "awesome games" like *Excitebike,* and TSR's *Pool of Radiance*. Your child may someday ask you, "Daddy, what were EGA graphics like?" The beauty of getting older and wiser as this industry evolves is that we will have experienced many golden ages in gaming, having seen gaming empires rise and fall and technologies increase in power and shrink in size. Who could ask for more then that?

Thanks,

Derrick Schommer (CodeMonkey)
editor@2old2play.com

G33K SP34K

Helping You Speak Like a Complete Dork

QFT: Quoted For Truth. Used on Internet forums following a quote to make sure that the first 'poster' cannot go back and change what they've already posted.

ACRONYM: Abbreviated Coded Rendition Of Name Yielding Meaning

FUD: Fear, uncertainty, and doubt.

?4U: Question for you.

GGG: Go! Go! Go!

IYOKTPOTDS: If you only knew the power of the dark side.

PUG: "Pick-Up Group", a group of players gathered on the fly without knowing each other.

BBIAB: Be back in a bit.

BBL: Be back later.

BFN: Bye for now.

B/C: Because.

DL: Download.

404: being clueless, from the Internet error message, "404 Not Found," which means the document or web page requested couldn't be found.

QT: Cutie.

VBG: Very big grin.

TOH: Typing one handed.

AYMK: As you may know.

BFMI: Brute for and Massive Ignorance.

References: http://en.wikipedia.org

[MINI] GAMER PROFILE

Name: Matthew James John Lee

Age: 29

Sex: Male

Location: Houston, TX

Occupation: Homemaker/Part time GameStop assistant manager.



WHEN ARE YOU GAMING:

7PM-6AM CST

HOW DID YOU FIND 2OLD2PLAY?

I located 2 old 2 play from another member of seasoned gamers who is a member of 2o2p as well, they came highly recommended for breaking the mold of the standard play that comes with getting stuck in a rut.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE BEST ABOUT 2O2P?

So far the one thing that I've liked the best about 2old2play has been the brotherhood feeling that I missed out on by not attending college, there's always a feeling of the frat night, but then there's the opposite side of the coin of knowing that there are members that are able to give advice on real world issues.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GENRE OF GAME, AND YOUR FAVORITE GAME/WHY?

Favorite genre beyond the shadow of a doubt is FPS. There is nothing out there that pound for pound is more action packed than the fps category. With online play and single player campaign as well, There are a lot of games within the genre, and thankfully, there's a never-ending supply of ideas within this class.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY TO THE MEMBERS OF 2O2P?

The one thing I would like to say to the 2old2players is this; you guys have a killer website and an awesome community. I'm a member of seasoned gamers, married with children, and just joined geezer gamers. No site out there has anywhere near as much supporting features on the website as what you do. Keep going, keep growing, and show no hesitation to expansion. Get as much traffic going as you can as the only thing that I feel is lacking is the same as every good thing, not enough people to enjoy it.

NEXT GEN BUYING

by Tait Lifto
aka "tait" and "allyourbas3"

5/17/06

Roses are Red
Gamers are Blue
Can't find a 360
What do you do?

You go to the store
And wait in a line
Hoping to call
That pro bundle "mine"

But Microsoft made
Enough for just some
In hindsight it seems
Pretty darn dumb

So I'm still in line
Waiting to see if
I'll be the first
To get a PS3

I'll put it on eBay
And make a cool mint
By staring down parents
With eyes made of flint

Capitalist country
Made reselling a dream
And delivered Christmas
With profit Supreme

I'll wait again
To buy my own
Next Gen console
with which to pwn.

GAMING ROOMS AND RIGS

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHOW OFF THEIR GAMING SETUPS

COMBATPANTHER



Here's my set-up. It's not as fancy as say, Buffy's (which is incredible by the way.) But it works.Toshiba Ultravision 48" rear-projection TV...it's not a 16:9 but it was free believe it or not!...

(waiting for the price of LCD/DLP's to go down...Have my eye on a 70" High-def set-up,...heh..heh..)

Sony Dream 5.1 Home Theater system with matching surrounds.... yeah i mounted everything myself,

including running all the wires through the wall studs..can't see anything, but it was a REAL bitch.

Not too fancy, but that little system GETS LOUD. The main splurge was the Sony learning remote...

I hate having 17 or so remotes laying around....I wanted to get another pic in to show some scale,

but my dog "Bronx" had to get his big fat head in the way...He hates it when, the TV says

"flag taken"...he goes nuts...then slobbers all over my controller when I play...

combatpanther,
Tucson, AZ.

GIJOEBOB

Here is the setup in the living room.

GIJoeBob





GAMING ROOMS AND RIGS (CONTINUED)





IBSUTKE

Xbox 360
Xbox (Skinned Apocalypse)
Yamaha 6.1
Klipsch Souround sound
Mistsubishi 65" HD

Audio Aucoustic system selector (in second pic link)
Monster Power conditioner (in second pic link)
Kegorator in garage

Ibsutke,
Orange County, Ca.



Here's my hideout - the table at the lower left is where the guys and I play Hungry Hungry Hippos

After work while sipping on our juiceboxes.

Lurch,
Minneapolis, MN

LURCH

2OLD2TYPE

AUDIO STIMULATION FOR GAMERS OVER 25



This episode consists of three personalities:

Doodirock: *The man with the master plan to bring news and information to the twenty-five and older populous. His opinions can sometimes be extreme but his questions are on target with what a gamer is thinking.*

TwistedCaboose: *A female perspective amongst the mass of podcasting testosterone. TwistedCaboose keeps it real, and sets us straight. Many gamers respect her opinions and like to hear her poke fun at doodirock.*

CodeMonkey: *The man that usually has no clue as to what he's talking about, but will convince you that he's right and you're wrong.*

Episode 26

Brings back the love. Many may be wondering, "where did our 2old2type podcast go?" After a short break due to an equipment (and human) move, the host, doodirock, is now in a new pad. The equipment was not 100% up to the challenge, which led to a few more delays, but we got enough of it working to perform for the masses (or few subscribers J). TwistedCaboose (or Phreaks for short), and CodeMonkey co-hosted the episode. It was a good time.

This episode covers rumors of a World of Warcraft movie, and the crew discuses its chances of success. The chances of a video game "port" to a successful movie is right up there with a successful D&D movie: no chance. But the crew agrees on a few points, and offers their insight into its chances to bring profits.

The Xbox 360 Dashboard update is out, and the team chats a bit about the major updates, and the fact that most of it is a boat load of bug fixes (not features). Site News, LANFest news, and more. This is an episode you don't want to miss.

What is this podcast you speak of?! For those of you new to the world of podcasting or currently own an iPod yet have never subscribed to a podcast, you are missing a good deal of great information. A podcast is a radio show, similar to what you would hear on a radio station in your home town, but typically more focused towards something you actually want to hear. Many podcasts contain zero commercials and can offer hours of entertainment.

Like a radio show on your way to work, you will learn the personalities of the show and begin to relate to their perspectives (or argue against them). Podcasts such as 2old2type focus on the game entertainment genre, but you can find podcasts that cover all topics in all languages. It's simply amazing, and one of the best features of the Apple iPod.

You can obtain the 2old2type podcasts on www.2old2play.com for free by clicking on the episodes directly on the homepage, or through iTunes. If you're new to podcasts, you can download episode 1 through episode 25 from iTunes and start filling up your iPod's disk capacity (episodes usually run about 50-60 minutes).

If you would like to ask the team a question about gaming, you can leave them a message at (733) 527-2961.

[MINI] GAMER PROFILE

Name:	Shawn Schmitz
Age:	41
Sex:	Female
Location:	Lakewood Ca (near Long Beach in So Cal)
Occupation:	Project manager for a construction materials mesting and inspection company.



WHEN ARE YOU GAMING:

Usually from the moment I get to work until I head for home...I may check in at times in the evening with the site.

HOW DID YOU FIND 2OLD2PLAY?

Heard about 2o2p on Xbox.com forums.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE BEST ABOUT 2O2P?

Since I'm fairly new, I like the forums the best (if I have to choose)

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GENRE OF GAME, AND YOUR FAVORITE GAME/WHY?

Favorite Genre: Action/Adventure (like the Splinter Cell series or Metal Gear series) - not sure exactly what genre these fit in....

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GAME:

Do I really have to pick one? Road Rash II (Sega Genesis) - because my husband and I use to play this game until all hours of the morning when we were dating...drinking beers and laughing.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY TO THE MEMBERS OF 2O2P?

I have had xbox live since its' inception and look forward to FINALLY being able to play online and enjoy myself for once. Been too busy tho with Oblivion to put Halo 2 in and join up in the clan I was invited to. Hope the invite is still open. :)

TANK REPORTS

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE FRONT LINES

SONY MARKETING PSP TO TRAVELERS WITH NEW SOFTWARE

Sony is trying to find new avenues to expand the PSP. Hollywood is starting to shun UMD for movies and the games aren't all that great. So where does Sony go from here? Seems like they leverage the device to make it your personal tour guide & translator! Besides playing movies and games as well as facilitate Internet browsing and e-mail, Sony is adding interactive maps (GPS), city guides, VoIP calling and real-time foreign language translation.



Read more about it here: http://www.smh.com.au/news/phones--pdas/the-travellers-handheld-friend/2006/06/14/1149964603523.html

NINTENDO DS LITE AVAILABLE IN BLACK

Looks like a follow up glossy black DS Lite will be available in the near future. The DS Lite sold out on launch and sold out faster than the Gameboy Advance. The black finish may be nice for contrast, but it'll also be a fingerprint magnet.



Pics and info here: http://www.joystiq.com/2006/06/19/the-black-ds-lite-in-the-flesh/

ONLY HAVE 1 HDMI PORT ON YOUR TV? SPLIT IT!

Accell has shipped a very slim 2-to-1 splitter for HDMI, which will let you share your TV's single HDMI port with two devices. The switch also comes with a remote control so you don't even have to get off the couch to switch from one to the other. It is available now for approximately $99.



Info/pics here: http://news.teamxbox.com/xbox/11213/ACCELL-Ships-Worlds-Smallest-HDMI-Switch/

HDMI 1.3 SPECS FINALIZED



The new HDMI specs are finished. This is the port that will be included in the more expensive PS3. HDMI 1.3 doubles the bandwidth and adds support for deeper color, new audio formats, automatic audio/video syncing and an optional smaller port for use in portable electronics.

Full specs here: http://news.teamxbox.com/xbox/11230/HDMI-13-Spec-Finalized/

COMMAND AND CONQUER 3 COMING TO 360

EA has confirmed that it is currently developing C&C3 for the 360. It's being handled by the same team that's porting Lord of the Rings (LoTR) to the 360 from the PC version. It will be designed around the same A button central control scheme similar to that of the LoTR port.

http://www.xboxcircle.com/news/command_and_conquer_3_confirmed_for_360.html

XBOX360 CACHE CLEARING HIDDEN FEATURE EXPLAINED

With the 'spring' dashboard update, a non-documented cache clearing feature was born. Some of you are aware that holding A down while Oblivion boots clears the game cache. This helps the performance of Oblivion that heavily uses the cache. Microsoft has embedded its own version of this within the Dashboard as of the spring update, and here's what it does:

- Will clear out the temporary copies of achievements and gamer tiles on Memory Units or Hard Drives (note these get re-downloaded when re-connected to Xbox Live)
- Will clear out Game Updates stored on Memory Units or Hard Drives. (note these will get re-downloaded when launching that Game while connected to Xbox Live)
- Will not clear out system updates.
- Will not clear out the game areas of the hard drive where game titles cache their own information



Microsoft recommends you only use this hidden feature if you're talking to 1-800-xbox and they ask you to engage the feature. Note: I'm not providing you the button sequence to do this, but you can find instructions in the 360 hardware forum on 2old2play.com if you're interested.

WIRELESS KEYBOARD FOR YOUR XBOX 360

It's a commonly known feature that some USB keyboards will work in your Xbox 360. However there are some wireless ones that work as well. One such keyboard is an older Microsoft keyboard that you can now probably find cheaply.

http://www.xbox360fanboy.com/2006/06/11/ms-wireless-desktop-is-just-360s-type/

VERY FEW 'TOP RATED' XBOX GAMES PLAYABLE ON 360

Remember back when the 360 was being hyped (E3 2005) and Peter Moore said that 'top rated' games would be playable on the 360? Well eight months after launch only 27% of the top 300 reviewed games are actually playable. If you look at the top 50, that goes up to 42% (21 titles). BC is definitely one of the failures of the Xbox 360. Unfortunately they can't work like Sony and just place the previous console's guts into the new console for 100% compatibility.

http://www.cheapassgamer.com/forums/showthread.php?t=97416

DIY XBOX 360 LIQUID COOLING KIT NOW AVAILABLE

Even though this will make your 360 better, it will void your warranty. However, if you want the ultimate cooling system in a box specifically made for your 360 rather than retro-fitting a PC cooling solution, Koolance has a solution for you.



Buy it here: http://www.koolance.com/shop/product_info.php?cPath=28_41&products_id=329

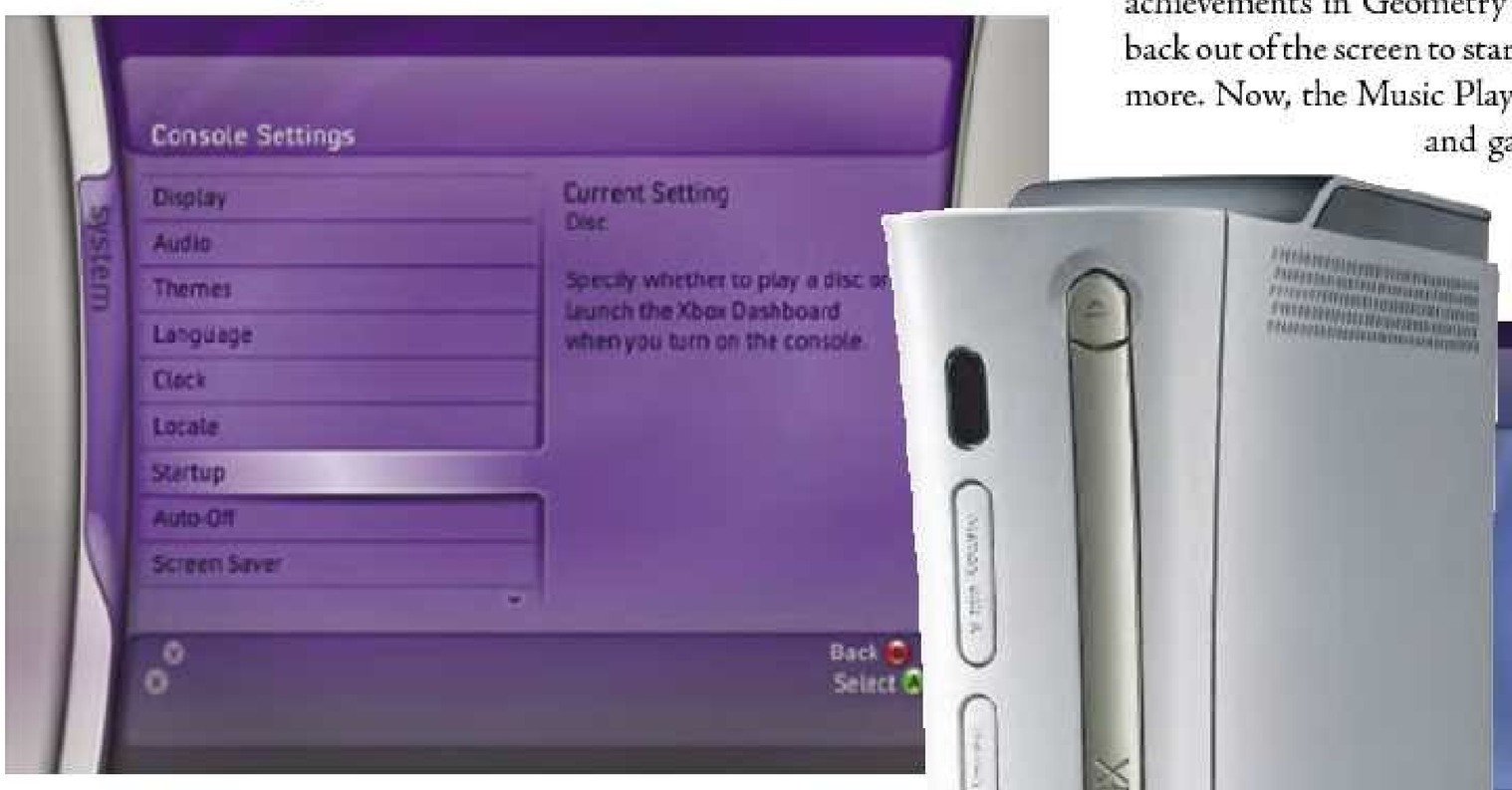
XBOX 360 DASHBOARD UPDATE

By n3rf

Not since the Sega Master System has an empty console brought out my geekiness like the Xbox 360 Dashboard. Don't tell me the ONE kid on your block who owned one of those Sega consoles didn't show you what happened if you turned it on without a catridge loaded!

Anyway, in its ultimate goal of world domination and controlling the wind, Microsoft has made a good thing better with its latest major Xbox 360 Dashboard update. Note that there was a smaller update released a week later, but it only affected the localized Chinese language version of the Dashboard (Source: www.MajorNelson.com). Anyway, the major update boasts an impressive list of 125 new features to the Dashboard user interface (UI). This sounds impressive until you actually go through the list and realize that most of them probably don't even apply to you. You will find that those dozen or so features that do apply will improve your relationships and increase your wealth, or else your money back. So, what are the features that you should definitely know about, Mr. John Q. Controller? For readability's sake, I've grouped them into four categories: "Hell Yeah!" "Why Didn't They Have That To Begin With???" "Oh... That's Kinda Cool," and "The 'Meh' Stuff."

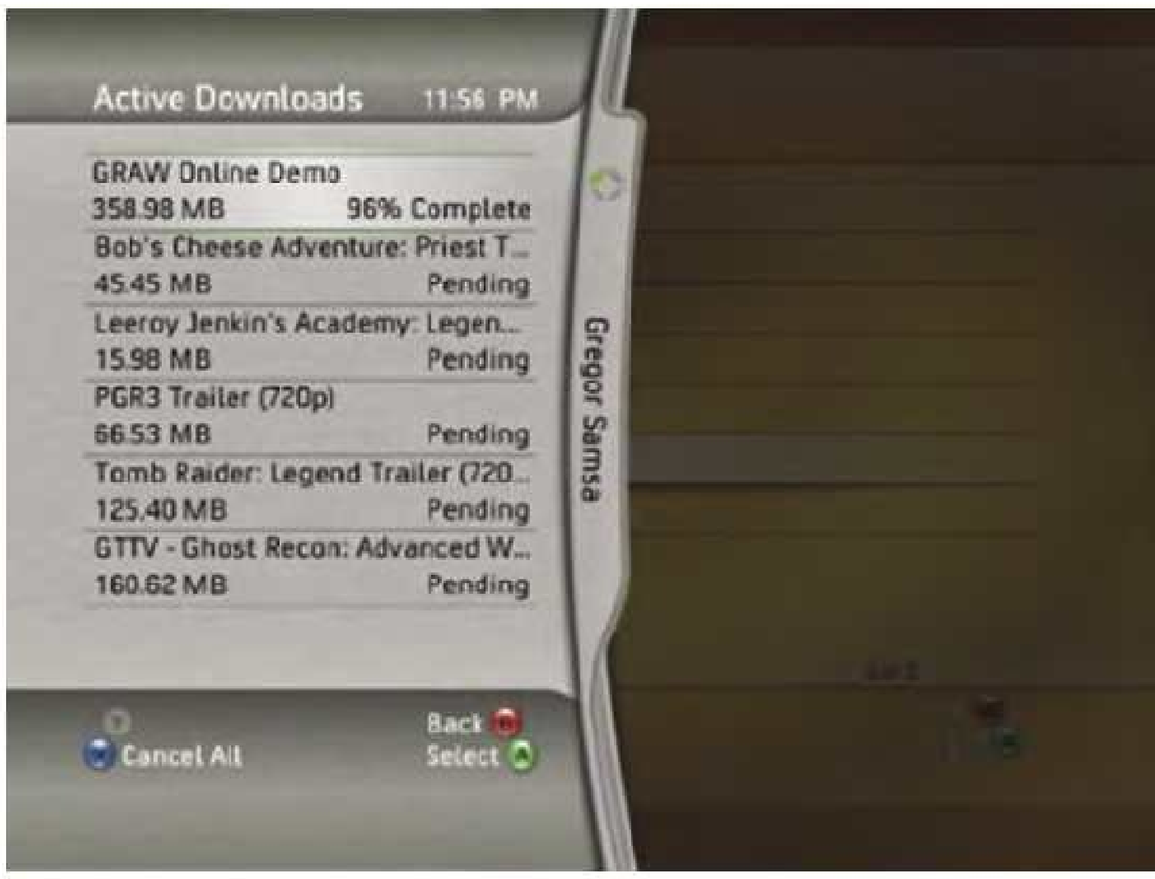
There are some features that mean more to you if you're playing backwards-compatible games or you use a Windows Media Center PC, so go to http://www.xbox.com/en-US/community/news/2006/0605-springrelease-features.htm for the complete list of 125 items.



HELL YEAH!

Perhaps my biggest gripe was that my copy of Battlefield would come exploding through my surround sound every time I booted up the console just to see what was new in the Marketplace. Now you have the option to Boot to Dashboard. This option can be found in the Startup option under the Console Settings button of the System blade. Of course, your game will still automatically boot when you first put the game in the tray.

One option will probably be the most popular with those of us who like to use our 360 to multi-task: the Background Download Manager. Besides allowing you to queue up to five downloads (in addition to your one active download), you can also navigate throughout your Dashboard or play an offline game while you're downloading from the Marketplace. It was really annoying having the 360 held hostage while I wanted to download the latest Jack Black rambling one at a time. Just a note, however, it will pause your download for bandwidth consideration if you try to go online with a multiplayer game.



In the Olden Days, I'd pull up my 1,000+ collection of legal MP3's, and I'd start making my choices as to which songs I wanted to listen to while I put myself through another frustrating endeavor of not earning the remaining achievements in Geometry Wars. As soon as I had them figured out, I'd back out of the screen to start the game and the music would stop?! Not anymore. Now, the Music Player continues to play in between menu changes and game loadings. There are times even when I expect the music to stop because I'm logging in and out of Xbox Live or running system tests but the tunes just keep playing. Awesome.



WHY DIDN'T THEY HAVE THAT TO BEGIN WITH???

So, I'm playing with this new remote I got and it's really cool that I can fast-forward and rewind (up to 16x for both) through the videos that I downloaded from Marketplace. I still can't do that with my MP3 collection, though. So, even though I can get to the end of that 30-second Superman Returns trailer even faster, I still can't fast-forward through the five minutes of miscellaneous noises at the beginning of certain MP3 tracks from Tool.

XBOX 360 DASHBOARD UPDATE (CONTINUED)

Oh, and speaking of MP3 tracks, now you have a graphical representation as to which song is currently playing with an active bar-graph level monitor. I guess this is good for those people that get confused as to which song is currently playing.

It was confusing trying to remember how to get to some things within the Dashboard. One improvement they made was to include more video categories from the Video button of the Media blade. For example, I can go through my TV/Movie videos that I downloaded without having to sift through my game downloads. On the other hand, I can also go through the entire list of Arcade games instead of trying to guess the section in which a game might be listed with the All Arcade Downloads button located in the Xbox Live Arcade screen.



I can now change themes from the System blade of the Dashboard. This is great, because I'd always go there first before realizing I had to use the Guide button to access this option.

I use my 360 for watching DVD's and listening to music as much, if not more, than game playing. It was a nice surprise when I popped in a CD and the track names pulled up (like Windows Media Player has been doing for years), as Dashboard's new player populates music data when no information is present. Guess I should go back and re-rip some of my CD collection so that half of my collection isn't "Untitled."

You have options to switch your themes immediately after downloading them or playing content immediately after it's been downloaded regardless of whether you're in a game or navigating through the Dashboard.

When your screensaver (actually, more like a screen-dimmer) comes on, your status will automatically be displayed as "Away." Too bad there's not an option to put in your own customized "Away" message. "N3rf has fallen asleep on top of his controller, AGAIN."

OH... THAT'S KINDA COOL

While I never noticed any problems, Microsoft says it improved the DVD playback and included VGA support. MS also fixed DVD playback jitters and similar annoyances that I have never experienced.



What I did notice is that you can pause a DVD, eject your disk, put in a game, and your DVD will start playing right from where you left off when you put it back in with Bookmark support. It even worked when I paused the DVD and restarted the Xbox 360. Pretty nice feature to know about the next time somebody interrupts my Arrested Development or 24 marathons for a game of Uno.

One of the items that got the significant other to want to explore the 360 a little more was when I pulled up her pictures from her computer and showed them in bright, glorious high-definition. With this new update, she can quickly start a slideshow from any picture when the in-laws come over.

They also mentioned that certain downloads get priority as they get more and more popular so you won't see a performance hit when you're downloading it.

It seems like access to content is quicker and the interface is smoother, including access to my huge MP3 collection.

THE 'MEH' STUFF

You can navigate through Dashboard without all the TiVo-style bleeps and bloops with the Disable Sound Effects option in the Sound Effects section of the Audio menu from the System blade.

Total USB keyboard support. Of course, my Microsoft Natural Multimedia Keyboard still won't work because it's not a true USB keyboard. So, attaching your keyboard to its USB adapter will not automatically make your keyboard work.

Your music player will remember its "shuffle" and "repeat" settings. Nice.

Oh, yeah, there's a "shuffle/repeat" button that you can toggle for those who like surprises or don't like being told the order in which they listen to their music.

Alzheimer's patients will probably like that the selected device is displayed while you're searching for your content. So, I can quickly confirm that I'm looking at my Windows XP computer when I'm folders deep in search of a particular MP3.

Improved error codes with unplayable content. Honestly, I don't care what the real reason is for the error; I'm still going to spill several expletives.

They added locales, better user-interface, better character recognition, etc. for our friends overseas. It's a big deal to a lot of players in the rest of the world, but it doesn't affect me or anyone I know.

Personal Gamer Picture can be changed from the Xbox Live blade. Select your gamer card, go into the Edit Gamer Profile, and select Gamer Picture. Basically, you can have two gamer pictures: One picture for just the people on your friends list and one for the rest of the world to see. Until the "Xbox Live Vision" Camera comes out, this feature is useless because you can only choose from the list of pictures that you downloaded from Marketplace.

CONCLUSION

As I stated earlier, there are many features more important to some users than others. I encourage readers to visit the link at the beginning of this article and take a quick scan of all of the features to see if there's something in there that would improve your particular situation.

More and more, I find the 360 incorporating itself into my daily routine even if it doesn't include actually playing any games. Plus, it's always nice to see a company working on improving its products by adding features we didn't know we wanted and fixing those that we couldn't live with. This update has made my whole experience a lot more enjoyable and excited about where it's going to take our culture. The mandatory download was easily worth the one-minute time investment.

BEST ORIGINAL PC/CONSOLE GAME

SOUND OFF ON YOUR OWN ALL TIME FAVORITE

I believe Donkey Kong took simple arcade classics to a new level. It was complex enough to not just "shoot an alien," it contained sounds FX that still can be remembered today, and was unique in its Plummer vs. Ape story.

Not only did it get difficult as hell, but its entire character staff went on to become some of the biggest video game icons and legends in the business. Who doesn't remember Donkey Kong, and Mario? C'mon.

CodeMonkey, New Hampshire

The original Castle Wolfenstein, the grandfather of all FPS games.

TANK, CA



Zelda: Ocarina of Time: The story line and complexity of the game made it a long play and gave replay value. I played it several times after beating it to see if I could find something new, and usually did.

My new favorite would be The Shadow of the Colossus. This game is very to-the-point with very little story line. What makes this game is the creation of the beasts. For a new game on an old system it is good on graphics. The beasts are amazing and huge and their reactions, as well as your characters are life like. It is a beautiful game.

Twistedcaboose, Ohio

Magic: The Gathering. It's great to be able to play MTG when you can't find anyone else locally to play with. The few times the demo I laughed my ass off when I could beat someone who spent big bucks on expansion packs and I come in with a pre-made theme deck and beat them.

Goodolplumber, Muldrow, OK

This is a tough one for me as I'm sure it is for a lot of people. I'm having a hard time narrowing it down but basically I have three. Goldeneye on the 64, Halo (definitely not Halo2), and Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion. Since Oblivion is a recent release I'll pass on it even though I've put more hours into that game and truly enjoyed it more than any other I can think of.

It always has some new cool twist and is an amazingly deep game for anyone with an imagination. Between Halo and Goldeneye its pretty much a toss up. I put in tons of hours in both games and would readily pick them both up and play again. Halo definitely changed the face of modern gaming but you'd be hard pressed to find a game that did more than Goldeneye when comes to first person shooters on consoles.

Guapito

There are only two words for this game, F***ing awesome. Side scrolling adventure games were dead as disco when it came out. At first, no one even paid attention to it. Anyone who has played this game can tell you that it's the best Castlevania ever. It still is in my top 3 games of all time. I still have a PlayStation because of it.

Corcki, Providence, RI

For me one is Grim Fandango. Probably one of, if not, the best adventure games ever. It's the first one I ever played and what a good way to be introduced to the genre. Where to start on this game... Great story, awesome soundtrack, stunning visuals, superb voice acting. I would say one of the best features of the game is the audio, everything audio. Soundtrack fits the visuals.

SirPoonga, WI

Intellivision sports games! More realistic than anything that had come before, and not really surpassed until the more modern sports sims. A football game might actually last four hours in the Intellivision,

Otherwise, Archon for melding strategy and action. Seven Cities of Gold for bringing exploration of the world to the 8 bit computer. Maybe any of the original Electronic Arts, back when it was EOA, games that were so different that they set in motion new ideas for what your computer could do. Murder on the Znderneuf. Boy, how EA has changed!

Smithcraft. Seattle WA

Final Fantasy. Granted its style (map roaming random encounters) has been previously done, but this game was huge at its time. The story was amazing, nothing like saving the world from the hugest, meanest, fugly-est monsters ever! Mention this games name today and even the most n00bish gamer knows the name Final Fantasy! The name itself is legendary and will be for a long time to come. By far this game changed my whole attitude to video games and I was sucked in to the RPG world for a really long time.

Lithium, Naugy, CT

All Hail the Duke (Nukem)!

Rock, Virginia

Wow, all those comments, and not even one for quake 2. I have to say quake 2 for pc was the best game online. It's definitely what got me hooked in terms of multiplayer fps games.

ken71, CA

Well Ill give you two answers. Baldurs Gate (PC) and Condemned Criminal Origins (Console). RPGs had been dying, some said were dead, and Bioware which basically released a game that brought the RPG industry back from the dead. Condemned - This game was terrifying for many people because of the sound, and was visceral with combat that you beat people to death with pipes, boards, axes, hammers, etc and sometimes with guns.

Falelorn, CA

BEST ORIGINAL PC/ CONSOLE GAME (CONTINUED)

"Adventure"....text based...I played that game on an old system a neighbor had...I believe it came out 5 or so years before I had a chance to play it. If you played Adventure you probably wont forget Zork. If you played it, you know what I mean.

My biggest RPG influence from my gaming beginnings was the AD&D Forgotten Realms. I had three of the games, including Pool of Radiance, Curse of the Azure Bonds, and Pools of Darkness. These three used the old and severely outdated EGA 16-color, 8-bit game engine. And while the graphics are now quite old, the games, and their plots were amazing.

FadeIntoBlack

PC- Syndicate. That game was the absolute best in my book. Off the coast of Somalia in a nearly retired Naval vessel, we saw the OJ slow speed chase three days after it happened, but we had a PC in the shop. Once working hours were through, I was stuck on that box trying to beat the game over and over. Sucked me in BAD.

UnwashedMass



The Greatest console game of all time IMHO has to be Super Mario Bros. It saved console gaming.

After the demise of Atari, console gaming was dead in the water until Nintendo came along with the NES.

This game was THE GAME everyone played.

Soonerbill, Tulsa,Oklahoma

I would have to say that Dragon Quest was revolutionary for its time. But mostly my nomination comes from the fact that this game is responsible for my love of RPGS.

TheSeeker



Oddworld Strangers Wrath: It took a lot of chances and mashed together a couple of different genres of gameplay. Came up with a few new ones. ("Live" Ammo was one of the funniest things I saw last Gen.) Throw in the best cut scenes and story telling in any game I've ever seen (IMHO). It blew my mind. It blew my mind even further when I found out nobody bought it. Irregardless if anyone asks it's still my favorite game last gen. and probably pretty high up on my all-time list too. Probably just behind Zelda: Ocarina of Time.

Nitemare1

ALPHA TEAM Q&A

ANSWERS TO YOUR HALO 2 QUESTIONS FROM THE PROS

QUESTIONS FROM CAESAR:

Q: My question is, what if you do everything right and still die?

A: You are not doing it right.

Q: Say I BXR someone and then club them a second time and I still die first?

A: See answer to previous question.



Q: I throw a grenade and it explodes on someone and I'm able to one shot them, but 2 minutes later I could do the same thing to the same person and have to almost put a full clip into them. Why?

A: See answer to previous question

Q: How come one human grenade will kill you randomly with full health? I say randomly because I could go 40 games and not die from one single human grenade, then there will be a few games where I do get shafted, seems a bit inconsistent or is there some weird trick?

A: One grenade doesn't kill you, your old eyes are fooling you. There is no weird trick to this. The only thing I can say is that you were either in the process of throwing a grenade or someone else threw a grenade. The only way to throw two grenades at once is with a plasma pistol.

QUESTION FROM LBSUTKE:

Q: Would MLG pros be as good as they are if they did not use/were allowed to use button glitches?

A: I think this affects some of the players but not all. I know Walshy is considered the king of glitch, so it would definitely affect him. The pros are good because of their teamwork and crossfire, not because of the button glitches.



MY BABY

By Lester Ziggs

Since the arrival of my baby on March 29th of this year, my life has been changed forever. I thought that things would be so much more relaxing for me...for you see, that was the day my wife allowed me to go out and purchase my Xbox 360.

As of this writing, one could go ahead and look up the gamer profile of Lester Ziggs and see I've only earned a gamer score of 950. In three months I've only earned what some people earn in a week of gaming! I hang my head in shame.

I own a variety of games ranging from Oblivion to the latest version of Far Cry. I've not even been able to get my golf career going with my copy of Tiger Woods. I tried to get a multi-player session of G.R.A.W. in but as soon as I loaded up the game my wife found another household chore for yours truly.



Far Cry Instincts Predator

If it's not the wife finding something for me to do around the house, there are always other members of the family who can find something for me to do that I don't really want to be doing. Driving my youngest son back and forth to his doctors' appointments, picking up prescriptions for my mother-in-law, watching the step-daughter's four month old son who, odds are, will need to be changed the moment mommy walks out the door. I swear to you all, there is some evil plot my family has devised to keep me from actually enjoying my 360!



Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter

Maybe I've had too much coffee this morning, but I think have devised a plot of my own that might just allow me to spend some quality time with my baby.

I'm going to sit outside one night during a horrible Minnesota lightning storm with the hopes of getting struck by a bolt of lightning that will then render me unconscious for a few hours. When I wake up at the local hospital, I will have learned I gained supernatural mutant-like powers, which will enable me to control the minds of those around me, thus enabling me to do as I wish around the house without being interrupted by those who live here.

Damn, that would be so cool!

Well, looks like my dream just came crashing down on me yet again... there seems to be a small child looking for Grandpa Lester.

I think maybe he's the one with them mutant powers.



[MINI] GAMER PROFILE

Name: Robb Welch
Age: 30
Sex: Male
Location: Lansing Michigan(grew up in Idaho though)
Occupation: Highway Engineer

WHEN ARE YOU GAMING:

In the evenings most any day of the week I can; No set schedule as we have an almost 1 year old who likes to run the show most days



HOW DID YOU FIND 2OLD2PLAY?

I signed up for DSL service last summer and started playing halo on *Xbox Live* and found I was way behind in my abilities. I started to look for ways to get better and I found a reference to the site one day when I was roaming around bungies website. I had all the same frustrations with MM that everyone had and when I saw a site dedicated to older gamers I immediately surfed over and dove into the bounty that is 2o2p. Took your jump class and any other I could to try to learn as much as possible. Joined a clan started to fill up my friends list and the rest is history.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE BEST ABOUT 2O2P?

The thing I like best is the sense of community and the sense of friendship that pervades the site and the forum boards. I mean where else do members take their own time to show or run a class for those who are looking to learn and improve, you can't get that anywhere else that I know. People who are looking to enjoy themselves just as you are.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GENRE OF GAME, AND YOUR FAVORITE GAME/WHY?

I am definitely a shoot'em up kinda guy. Halo 2 is where it is at for me. I don't like the overly tactical games. I do like tactics but in a high octane atmosphere I guess. I enjoy some RPG games Fable was great. I love Dota on battle.net, CIV III and Railroad tycoon are others that I play from time to time.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY TO THE MEMBERS OF 2O2P?

Only thing to say to the community is to jump in and get what you want from the site and the community. While Halo may be the largest representation of players, you can find anything you want pertaining to gaming whether it is a PC or console. Beyond that I have seen others who share their expertise in all walks of life, like if you need to rewire your house, have a car problem I guarantee someone from the site will take the time to lend what they know in order to help you, and you make a lot of new friends along the way.

ARMED & DANGEROUS

BY LUCASARTS ENTERTAINMENT



You play a young man named Roman, on the planet Milola. Roman's great & powerful father was in charge of the Book of Rule, a great holy work. Unfortunately, he stopped to pee at a tree one day, and it was stolen. Now Roman recruits a team of misfits to steal it back, while the world's on the edge of war!



SINGLE PLAYER ASPECT

OK, you must rent this game and try it out. This has got to be one of the funniest comedy games I have seen. If you like off-hand jokes, third person shooters, and British humor then you will love this game. The graphics are lacking, but the smooth game play and awesomely scripted cut scenes make this game a winner. From the Robot named Q who is addicted to his tea-time to the stinky old blind man that proves to be the brains of this operation, you will fall in love with these characters from the moment you begin the first mission. I had never before seen an English robot shove a freezing old codger into a rhino butt for warmth. Yes, you will see that in this game, along with many more things that made me pause it so I could finish laughing without the continued bombardment of oddities from this wonderful adventure. Your mission is to pull off the biggest heist of all time, during a War, by obtaining the all important Book of Rule.

You start off with the normal set of weapons such as an unlimited ammo rifle and some grenades. As you progress you start to get into some very innovative firearms that I never had the pleasure of using before. The Shark Gun comes to mind first. That is the most fun I have ever had with a gun. If you are used to Halo style controls, this game will be a snap. I am starting to enjoy 3rd person shooters more and they did a good job of making this one feel fairly fluid. Of course we have our sniper rifle, rocket launcher and machine gun, too. I mean every shooter has to have those. Oh, and the Black Hole Grenades are fun...a lot of fun.

One of the best allies you have is a small band of psychopathic robot gardeners. These guys are a riot. They actually help you fend off waves and waves of the king's soldiers, who always just happen to be after you. The fact that the soldiers resemble Nazi lunatics makes mowing down row after row of them perfectly enjoyable. If you also enjoy firing thousands of rounds of ammo and blowing up buildings, then you might be a redneck. You might also really enjoy this game, which is what I am trying to imply with that lame joke. So laugh with me -- or not -- but certainly give this game a try.



MULTI PLAYER ASPECT

There is no multi-player, although I had a couple friends over while playing and they said it was just like watching a great comedy. So, for what it's worth, play this with an audience and you will have an evening of entertainment.

WINDUP

Lucas Arts made another kick-ass game that was really only hurt by two things: the lack of any multi player and the less-than-exemplary graphics. They are not what I consider bad, but if you have been playing any games on an Xbox 360 then you will no doubt completely agree. However, this game is a winner on the fact that it excels in comedy and a great storyline. Also, the simplicity of play means pretty much anyone can pick this up and enjoy it.

For the used prices I found, this game is just about a must-buy simply for the worth-per-dollar ratio of the laugh factor. If you want to know why monks are serious about their basket weaving then go get this game.



AVAILABLE ON:

Score for purchase:	9/10
Score for rental:	9/10

PRICE TO PLAY:

eBay:	$1.99 to $4.99
Amazon:	$4.99 to $5.49

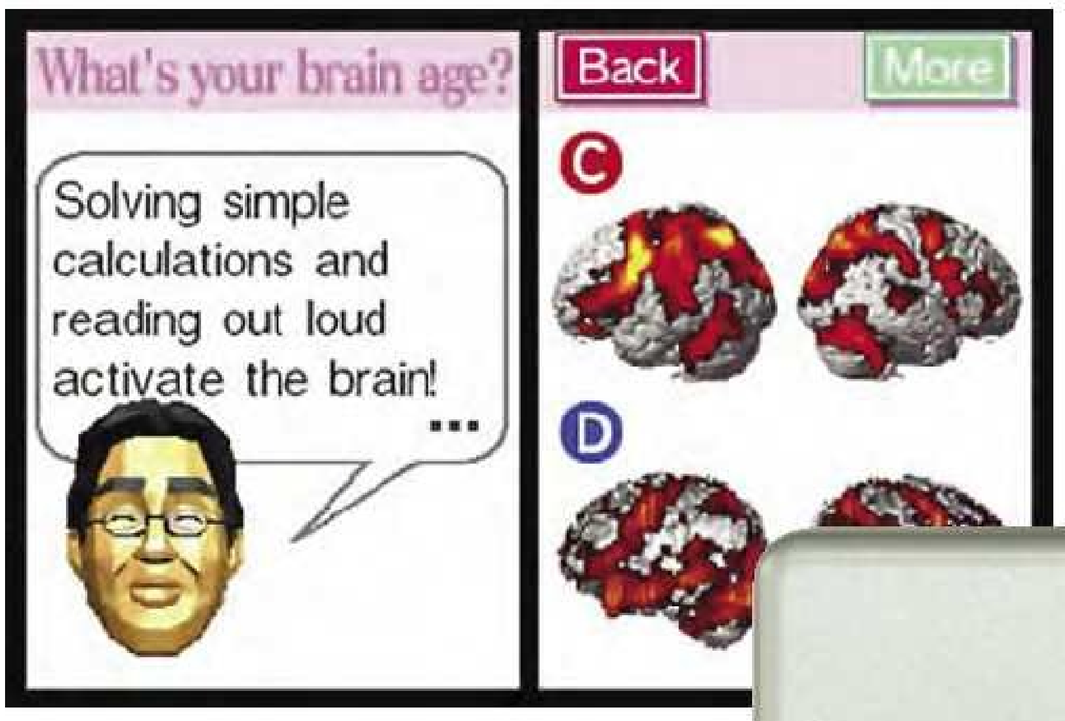
*Not backwards compatible on Xbox 360

BRAIN AGE

NINTENDO DS

By Derf

Brain Age is new game for the Nintendo DS (www.brainage.com/launch/), which gleans inspiration from the work of prominent Japanese neuroscientist Dr. Ryuta Kawashima. His research uses Near Infrared Spectroscopy to determine brain activity. Brain Age is a series of mini-games, each tested to stimulate the brain and improve or maintain its sharpness.



ARE YOU AS SHARP AS YOU USED TO BE?

According to Brain Age, when you are 20 your brain is at its peak performance. From there, you gradually slip down hill. Brain Age claims to be able to test your true brain age and then train you to improve – perhaps even get it back to that 20 year-old state. As a 50 year-old gamer, I will tell you that as you get older you just don't recall things like you used to. You blame it on stress, no idle time to process thoughts, or long hours. My father used to carry a little book around with him to make notes. If somebody spits out a phone number, you just don't trust yourself to remember it anymore. You have a harder time remembering people's names. Brain Age claims it will get you back to that state of sharpness and may even prevent degenerative diseases like Alzheimer's or Senile Dementia.

I PLAY HALO, DOESN'T THAT TRAIN MY BRAIN?

If this were true I'd be a genius by now! While playing traditional video games will stimulate brain activity, the areas stimulated are not all of the areas that need stimulation to increase or maintain intelligence. Note that some research has shown (www.fradical.com/Video_mind_games.htm) traditional video games do stimulate brain activity, create elevated heart rates, and effect long-term memory.

When playing a video game, you are mainly using the right side of your brain and a few other areas. This is probably better than watching TV, which only stimulates a very small portion of your brain. Brain Age is designed to stimulate both right and left hemispheres of the brain and especially the prefrontal cortex. The Brain Age manual states "The prefrontal region (which makes up a large portion of the frontal lobe) is the foundation of creativity, memory, communication, and self control. Its role could be called "the brain within a brain".

The mini games in Brain Age are designed to light up both sides of the brain with a concentration on the prefrontal area. With Brain Age, you are working out your "brain within a brain."



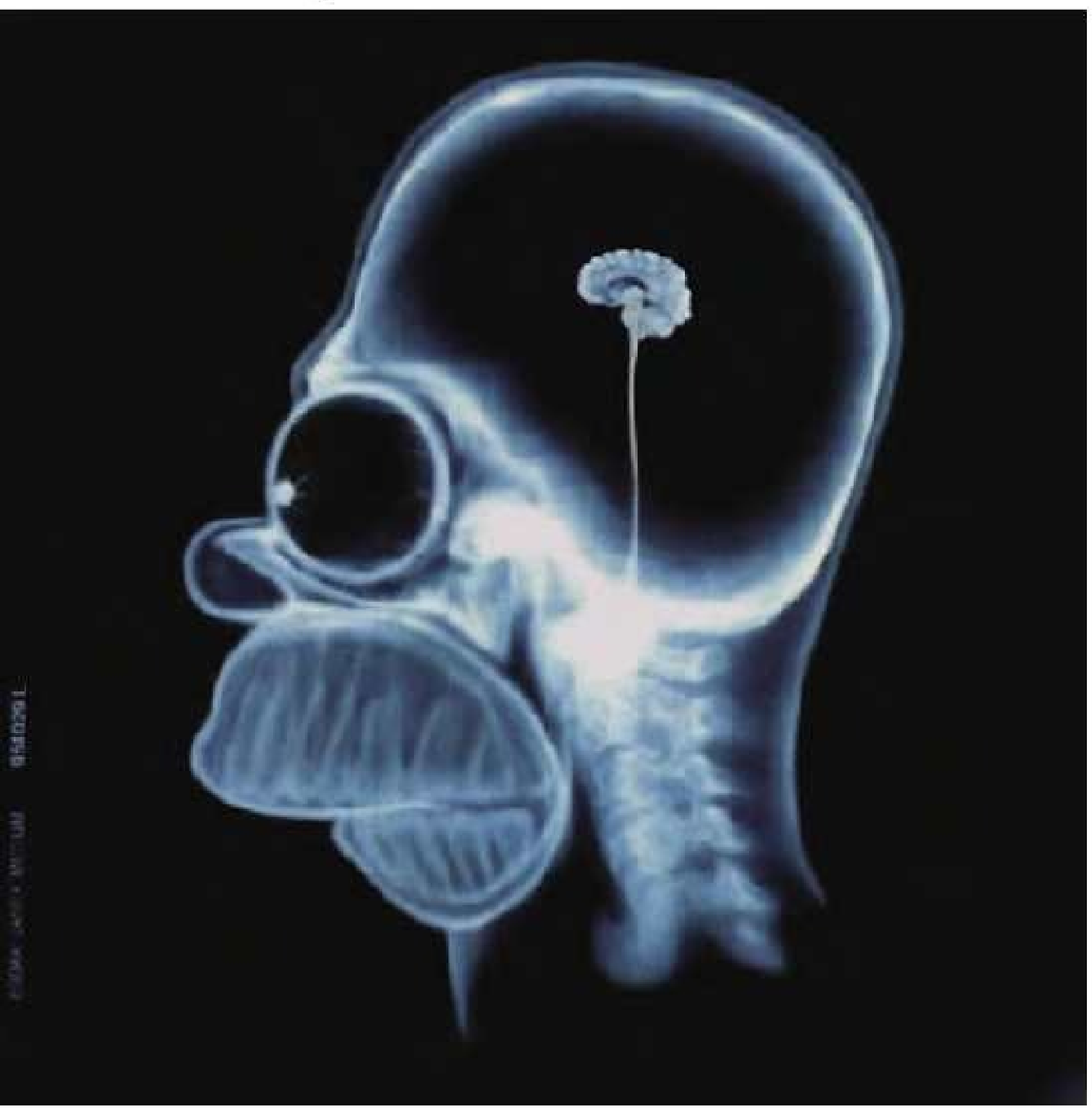
BRAIN AGE (CONTINUED)

THE BRAIN AGE SOFTWARE IS A PERFECT MATCH FOR THE DS

To play Brain Age you need to turn the DS sideways. Brain Age uses the stylus and the microphone for input. When you do arithmetic you write your answer on the touch screen. I was surprised how well the software recognized my terrible hand writing. Occasionally it would misinterpret a number. Seven for instance came out as a 1. Modifying how I drew the seven corrected the problem. Some of the games require you speak a word into the microphone. This seems to be more problematic. The first time the DS had no problem recognizing what I color I was saying. The next time it had trouble discerning between blue and black. It worked the best the third time I tried. My guess is that background noise or distance from the microphone has something to do with the quality of recognition.

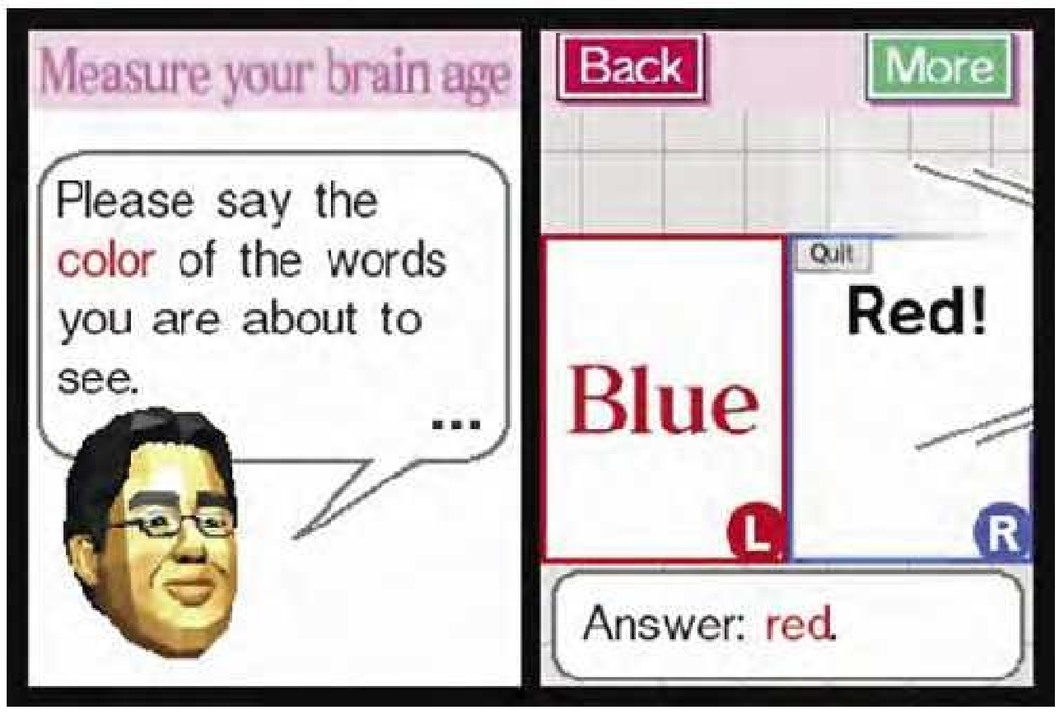


The voice recognition can be frustrating because the first time you determine your Brain Age it uses this system. My wife and son got frustrated from it telling them they were wrong because of this recognition problem. It also artificially made their brain ages in the 80's. I suggest you practice the Stroop (speech recognition) test on quick play a couple of times to make sure the DS is hearing you correctly before you do your initial brain age test. Most of the video games I have played on the DS make me use the old button GameBoy Advanced style of control. Brain Age feels natural with the stylus. In fact, I don't see how you could interact with this game without one.



PLAYING BRAIN AGE

The first time you play the game you will conduct a brain age test. The three of us all did the Stroop test, which is where you speak the color of a word. I thought it would be easy till I tried it. After that your brain age is recorded along with your birth date. Next you can do exercises to train your brain. Videos of the exercises can be found here: www.brain-age.com/launch/howto.jsp. The goal is to train your brain for about 10 minutes a day. Once a day you can calculate your brain age. Only the first test of the day will count. These results are graphed so you can monitor your progress. The training exercises are cleverly disguised as games and I have been looking forward to my daily training sessions.



THE SODOKU GAME IS EXCELLENT!

If you haven't heard of Sodoku yet then perhaps you may need to double up on your brain training! This number grid game has swept the nation and quite fun to play. I have Soduko on the PSP as well and both versions have their pluses. The version in Brain Age has a great stylus writing recognition interface and you are timed and graded in much the same way the brain training is scored. The only drawback I can think of to the Sodoku game is that there are not that many puzzles to solve.

FINAL THOUGHTS

My wife, who has never played a single video game, asked me to get this for her. After all, if there is a chance that playing this game will keep our minds sharp late into life – why not play it! Like exercising your body, you just feel good about working out your mind. As a gamer, I consider this game a nice change from tension-charged video games. A relaxing game of Sodoku is a great way to end the day. Nintendo has really hit the jackpot in targeting this game to Baby Boomers. Perhaps a new crop of "extremely too old to play gamers" are in the making.

I have noticed improvements as I have played the game. Is my brain smarter or am I just learning the nuances of the program? I'd have to say both. At the start, my brain age was really bad because of handwriting and speech recognition errors. After I fixed those problems my scores moved up rapidly. I have also noticed my memory is working better in doing the training games. Will this translate to everyday life or will it prevent senility? Research can't answer those questions yet, but at least I have a fun game based on solid data to play until it can.



TASTE THE RAINBOW, B!#@$!*

UNO FOR XBOX 360'S XBOX LIVE ARCADE

BY DROST



Out of the conflagration of wireless controllers, slick interfaces, high-def visuals and "next-gen" games, one title has risen from the flames: UNO!

It's on everyone's fingers.

JBELDAR: "I just sent Pulsaris a message from Xbox.com. That douchebag is playing *UNO*. Who plays *UNO*?!"

Who, indeed? The better question to be asking is who isn't playing *UNO*, aside from non-360 owners. Okay, sure, so it's not in the top-10 most played games on Xbox Live, according to Major Nelson. But it will be. It will be. World domination is mere cards away…

The *UNO* ladder has a lot of activity in the 2o2p community. In fact, the *UNO* ladder may have the quickest turnaround time from challenge to match. There are teams with five victories on the *UNO* ladder. You don't see that on the Halo 2 ladders.

I know what you're thinking. "Drost, dude, that's a card game. A 35-year-old card game." And you're correct. It is a 35-year-old card game. They don't call 'em classics for nothing.

I remember playing *UNO* the first time with my parents. I think we stayed up until midnight or later, which was a big deal for my sister and me. I think I was all of 10 years old. That same night my sister learned to cheat at *UNO*, a "strategy" she utilizes even today.



The cheating won't work on Xbox 360 *UNO*, of course. They fixed that bug when they translated it to code. So, it's got that going for it, which is nice.

Okay, seriously. *UNO?* Sounds hinky. We're all hardcore gamers. We don't want to play a card game on our $400 next-gen console, do we? You're damn right we do. *UNO* represents a nice change from the frenetic pace of first-person shooters and MMORPGs I hear some of the kids play these days.

I suppose I should cover *UNO* as though you've never heard of it, never played it, have no clue what a Draw Two card is… I weep for you if such is the case. However, I'm sure there are some of you out there who've never played *UNO*, so here goes.



An *UNO* deck has a bunch of cards with four "suits" if you will: red, blue, yellow and green (just like Halo 2, kids!). Each suit has the numbers zero through nine, Reverse cards, Skip Cards and Draw Two cards. A Reverse card lets you change the direction of play, clockwise vs. counter-clockwise. A Skip card "skips" the next players turn. A Draw Two card forces the next player to draw two cards, which is bad.

To play a card, you have to match the color of the card or the number/type of the card. There are two other cards, the Wild card and the Wild Draw Four card. You can play those regardless of color or type of card showing on the pile. When you play a Wild card or a WD4, you get to choose the color the hand will continue in. For instance, you slap down a WD4 and say, "Red! Now, Draw four, douche!"

The object of a hand of *UNO* is to be the first "out;" i.e. have no cards. Each card has a numeric value associated with it. Number cards are equal to their face value. Skip, Reverse and D2 cards come in at 20 points each. Wild and WD4 weigh in at a hefty 50 points.

Depending upon how you're scoring the game, you either want to have the fewest points when someone hits 500, or you want to get to 500 before everyone else. If you're scoring the previous way, you get no points when you are the first to go out. If you're scoring the latter method, you get the points in the losing players' hands.

Obviously, the name of the game is "screw thy neighbor." You want them, one way or another, to have as many cards in their hands as possible when you pwn them and yell "*UNO!*" Easy as that.

TASTE THE RAINBOW, B!#@$!* (CONTINUED)

The Live version is exactly the same as the card game with one notable exception; you don't have to mess with holding your own cards. Or shuffling. Or keeping the damn discard pile neat. Or the body odor of your opponents. Okay, there are a lot of exceptions.



Music is another. In real life, you either don't have music playing or you're jamming to something cool. With the Standard Deck, you get music that sounds like it was made by Kenny G with a stoned, naked Matthew McConaughey playing the bongos.

You're going to want to become friendly with the music player portion of your Xbox 360 dashboard. Hit that big silver-n-green button in the middle of your controller, pop up your menu and select some tunes from your HDD. Personally, I like to listen to Metallica's *Kill 'Em All*.

UNO has some of the same attractions as other popular Live games. For instance, the leaderboards record your every *UNO* play and stack you up against the world's card sharks.

There's a Single Player leaderboard, which shows your single player glory. There's a Player Match leaderboard, which is essentially a record of your custom game glory. A Ranked Match leaderboard shows your skills versus the random timmies of the world. And lastly, the TrueSkill™ board shows your TrueSkill™ rank. Because that's your true skill level in *UNO*.



Personally, as of this writing, I was ranked 22,455th in the world for Single Player *UNO*, which I might add is higher up than Jolly. I can't compete, however, with Pulsaris' TrueSkill ranking of 5,108 (rank 23). Why we need to know these things, I've no idea.

That brings us to Achievements. You can possibly capture all 12 *UNO* achievements in a single gaming session. If, that is, your gaming session lasts at least four hours. Here's the lot of 'em:

Skip to my Lou: play 40 skip cards.

Twister: Play 40 reverse cards.

High Noon: Play 40 Draw Two cards.

Wild Thing: "Successfully" play 40 Wild or WD4 cards.

Multiplayer: Complete a four-player game of *UNO* in any mode on Live.

Wild Abandon: Go out with a Wild or WD4.

Ace!: Go out without ever drawing a card.

UNO!: duh.

Quick Change Artist: Change the color of the discard pile five or more times in a single round.

Bluff: Successfully bluff on a WD4 twice in the same game.

Devotee: Win 40 games of *UNO*.

UNO Shark: Win 10 four-player games of *UNO* in any mode on Live.

You'll notice the "Bluff" achievement. Apparently, in *UNO* for Xbox, it's bad form to play a WD4 when you have something nicer in your hand. If you play one and someone thinks you're just trying to screw them, they can "challenge." They don't get to see your cards, but if they're right, you draw six cards. If they're wrong, they draw six.



You can turn bluffing on and off in the "House Rules" options. House rules are where *UNO* gets interesting. Here you can change the game from single player to partners, change scoring methods, game score, cards decks… the whole shebang.

Penalties are the coolest House Rules to mess with. What you want to do is set them to "Progressive." This means when someone plays a D2 or a WD4 and you have a D2 or WD4 in your hand, you can play that puppy and pass the penalty to the next poor bastard. If he or she doesn't have a D2 or WD4, depending on which was played, they have to draw the cumulative amount. This goes on until someone can't pass the buck. If four WD4s are played, the sap that can't play draws 16 cards.

You can also change stuff like "Draw Type." It can be set to "Draw One," "Draw One and Play" or "Draw Until Play." Don't select the last one. It sucks.

Also, having to call "*UNO*!" when you get down to one card can be turned off, which is lame. Might not've mentioned that earlier. When you get down to two cards and are about to play one of them, you have to yell "*UNO*!" before you're challenged. If you don't and someone challenges you, you'll have to draw two cards. That's bad.

If you want to play with a downloaded deck, such as the free 35th Anniversary deck, you change that in the House Rules section. Right now, there's not much of a reason to switch decks.

The 35th Anniversary deck is lame. It includes a 35th Anniversary card, which is kind of like a Wild card, only when you play it you don't get to change the color. In order for the next person to play, they have to have a three or five card or they draw. The 35th anniversary cards are worth 75 pts, so get rid of those turds.

The deck comes with a new background and new music. The background looks like a New Year's party, complete with confetti and streamers, only without the alcohol or a desperate search for a New Year's kiss. The music sounds like really bad 1950s Cuban nightclub music. Again, the personal soundtrack option on the 360 comes in handy.

TASTE THE RAINBOW, B!#@$!* (CONTINUED)

What else? I could talk about the camera, I guess. As of right now, *UNO* stands as the only game with Live Camera capabilities. The camera doesn't debut until this fall (in the northern hemisphere), so that's currently meaningless. However, you do get to stare at your fellow players Live avatars. Live photos will no doubt go in those places. In the words of Penny Arcade, "Behold! My junk!"



That just leaves us with gameplay. Easiest game ever. You can flip through your fan of cards with the D-pad or the left stick, then hit A to play the card of your choice. That's pretty much it. From time to time, you'll be able to hit the Y button to challenge an uncalled *UNO* or a WD4 play. Other than that, it's a one-button/one stick game. You could play this with an old 2600 joystick.

If it were just that, *UNO* would suck. It wouldn't suck, it'd just be okay. *UNO* shines as a Live game when you play with people you know. Nevermind that matchmaking stuff. Ranked games? Whatever. Round up four from your friends list and go to war.

My first experience was with TaxiSquad27, Speedbmp and Oklahoma Jerm. It was a bit challenging getting everyone in the same lobby. It's Because they're all retarded and the Invite system for the 360 is not as intuitive as, say, Halo 2.

I monkeyed with the house rules, made sure Progressive penalties were on, and we were off. Over the course of three and a half hours, we must've played 30 or 40 hands (got the nine achievements I have in *UNO* that night) and smack talked until we ceased to be witty or even nice.



At one point, Speedbmp fell asleep and passed the controller to my sister (his wife) and she filled in for him, which is good -- because he wasn't. Amidst her cries of foul and her bemoaning her inability to cheat, we could hear Bmp snoring in the background.

It was the best night on Live I've ever had. Now shut up and deal the cards.



*"Taste the Rainbow" © Team PWNO.

ROCKSTAR PRESENTS: TABLE TENNIS

ROCKSTAR GAMES

by CodeMonkey



Table tennis has its origins in England as an after dinner amusement for upper class Victorians in the 1880s. Mimicking the game of tennis in an indoor environment, everyday objects were originally enlisted to act as the equipment. A line of books would be the net, a rounded top of a Champagne cork or knot of string as the ball, and a cigar box lid as the paddle.

–Wikipedia.org



The concept of table tennis as a video game could probably be dated back to 1972 with the creation of *Pong* as a video game title. One could even stretch their imagination back to 1958 when *Tennis for Two* was developed on an oscilloscope. These historic games did not contain enough detail to determine if the game was truly on a "table" or a tennis court. By today's standards we now realize just how truly awesome our video game systems have become.

Rockstar Games presents Table Tennis, an Olympic style table tennis simulation. Rockstar lives up to their abilities to create truly unique works of art and imagination. The game is simple, enjoyable, and cheaper than most *Xbox 360* video games hitting the market. At a price of USD $39.99, it is hard to pass up a game packed with fun for twenty dollars less than most other *Xbox 360* games.

LACKING GAME FEATURES – SO?

The only criticism from the gaming community is the game's lack of features. You cannot "create a player," nor can you play doubles, and there is no career mode. However, these features are often simply check-mark criteria for a standard $60 game.

How many careers do most gamers create? Most gamers only need one career because they are, after all, just one person. Having a career mode for a single human player is pointless if the game itself *is* the career mode. The lack of career mode simply means that you cannot save the state of more then one game at a time. Career mode is really only useful for customers that have multiple people in the household playing the same game at different times throughout the day. A career mode -- just to have one -- is silly, and Table Tennis does not need one. Bottom line, career mode in this game is not a drastic feature loss. The game plays fine without one.

You cannot create a custom player in Table Tennis. This is an overrated feature where you can tweak your character's statistics to better them over time, and to create a unique look and feel to your character. Half of this feature is entertaining eye candy that adds no value to a forty dollar game. The fact that one cannot build better statistics over time is a missing addition, but considering that this often ruins online play (see *Fight Night Round 3*'s poor implementation on this), this benefit is not a huge concern to gamers that want to take *Table Tennis* online as all players have equal stats.

The lack of doubles play is the only true missing feature. Singles play is enjoyable, but having four humans playing at the same time would be a great experience. Given the camera angles and fast pace of this game, it is understandable as to why this feature did not make the cut. It is often better to have no feature at all, than a hard-to-use feature that takes away from the fast-paced nature of the game.



UNLOCKABLES

A game with few goals will contain minimal hours of game play. Challenging a player with difficult match-ups, along with difficult secondary goals creates more value in the game. All eleven characters have a set of shirt "costumes" that the player can unlock over time. To unlock these shirts, you must succeed in winning a match in several different ways.

ROCKSTAR PRESENTS: TABLE TENNIS (CONTINUED)

A soft shot, an ace serve, an abundance of wins, a focus shot, and others will unlock the outfits for the characters.

Characters themselves are locked when the game is initially played. You begin the game with four characters and there are an additional seven characters that you must unlock by defeating opponents in progressively harder tournaments, or simply by winning a large number of matches.



New table locations are also available by completing a few measured tasks. The tables are one of the easier locked features you can enjoy by playing the character a few times in an exhibition or tournament match. The hints the game provides to unlock items makes your goal clear, and all you must do is pull off the win as stated in the hint to receive your unlocked reward.

FOCUS

As in real life, your character will slowly build up focus while it plays the match. The more time you spend trying to apply spin on the ball and scoring points, the more focus your character receives. Focus causes you to shoot more accurately, faster, and with harder spin. A player that has complete focus against a player with minimal or no focus will find the match getting easier as their character "gets into the action."

The "focus" idea is not overdone, and does not last forever. The ability is shared by both players and does not cause the balance to sway in either direction for long. However, when you are looking at a match point in your advantage, you would be much better off if you have more focus than your opponent.

ACHIEVEMENTS

An *Xbox 360* game is not complete without its number of possible achievements to increase your gamer score. *Table Tennis* contains twenty-nine unique achievements that you can obtain over hours of game play. Unlike some sports games, *Table Tennis* does not give away all of its achievements in one or two sessions. The balance of online and offline achievements are done well, and the points obtained are big enough to make you happy, but small enough to make you strive for the next set of achievements.

An average achievement will net you 10 to 20 gamer points, and the extreme achievements can bring you 60+ gamer points. Each new character you unlock will bring you 5 to 20 gamer points with smaller point values for initial unlockables and higher point values for the ones that require more time and effort.

No good game would be complete without at least one extremely difficult achievement. The achievement known as "The G.O.A.T." is a task which requires you to obtain the highest *True Skill* rating possible in an online game. This is for the hardcore ping-pong gamer extraordinaire.

The good news: achievements requiring constant extended periods of play (i.e. *Ghost Recon: Advanced Warrior*) are absent. Each achievement in question states "(non-consecutive)" in its description text to make this clear. You can gain achievements for ten hours of game play, but you do not (and should not) have to play it in one sitting.

TOURNAMENTS

The multiplayer and the single player modes of *Table Tennis* offer a bracket tournament system. The single player tournament is more complete and drawn out, with many levels of difficulty to achieve. The online tournaments are timed and are much shorter in length. Both methods offer a challenge to all player levels. The human challenge is obviously the most difficult, and the computer challenge, at times, can make you want to snap your controller into small pieces and flush them down the toilet. The harder levels in *Table Tennis* are definitely for the strong willed, persistent players.

Single player tournaments can be saved by simply quitting the match. You will lose the progress of that specific match, but you do not have to start the tournament at the first bracket again. This isn't as obvious during game play as one might think. Most video games have a "save and quit" option. *Table Tennis* will notify you if you select the "quit" option. It is usually preferable, from a user interface standpoint, to label the option "save and quit" so that the user isn't afraid of the repercussions of hitting "quit."



EXHIBITIONS

An exhibition, by default, is a two–out-of-three match with you and an opponent. This feature exists in both multiplayer and single player modes. In single player mode, exhibitions against the computer can be boring at times but are good for quick practice.

ROCKSTAR PRESENTS: TABLE TENNIS (CONTINUED)



These can also assist you in unlocking shirts and tables when you just do not have time to play through the tournaments.

Multiplayer exhibitions probably work, but when attempting a ranked exhibition, the game said there were no exhibitions available and that one could be created. Feeling like instant action, this was not the route taken. However, a timed tournament was immediately available.

GAME PLAY

On easy levels of difficulty, the game plays gently and predictably. As you increase your difficulty with harder tournament challenges you will find yourself hopping, skipping and jumping around the floor to catch some of the most amazing shots on record. The gameplay is very similar to a real table tennis match and this game is labeled as a real simulation. The ball follows the rules of physics as you would expect in a real-life match, and the characters exhibit many of the frustrating looks, paddle waves, and wipe their sweaty faces with their shirt sleeves just like a real player.



Once you attempt more difficult challenges, you will find your control over this game has yet to be mastered. Making good contact with the ball will call your real skills into question. As you try to hold down one or more of your buttons (or right-stick) to focus on a spin direction, chances are the ball is screaming towards you. You then move your left-stick to position the ball in a specific area of your opponent's table section. If you perform the operations out of order you may find your player walking away from the table as if to go grab a soda when, in reality, you wanted to position *the ball* in that direction. After a few hours of play you learn how to apply spin types and then apply direction.



Some gamers say that the players appear a bit sluggish when returning difficult shots. This seems to be magnified by the slow sidestepping you find your character doing as you're attempting to put direction on the ball rather then on the character themselves. After a few games of online play you will realize that most of the sluggish nature is the person holding the joystick and not the character representing an Olympic table tennis player. This game is less about running to return shots and more about perfect placement with the correct spin and great timing to throw your opponent off center.

GRAPHICS

This $40.00 game does not lack in the graphics department. The players act as if they are real, and although a bit stiff at times, seem to be modeled after real players from their oddities and taunts. Liu Ping will cool himself off using his paddle as a fan, while Haley will stomp off like a spoiled little girl.

ROCKSTAR PRESENTS: TABLE TENNIS (CONTINUED)

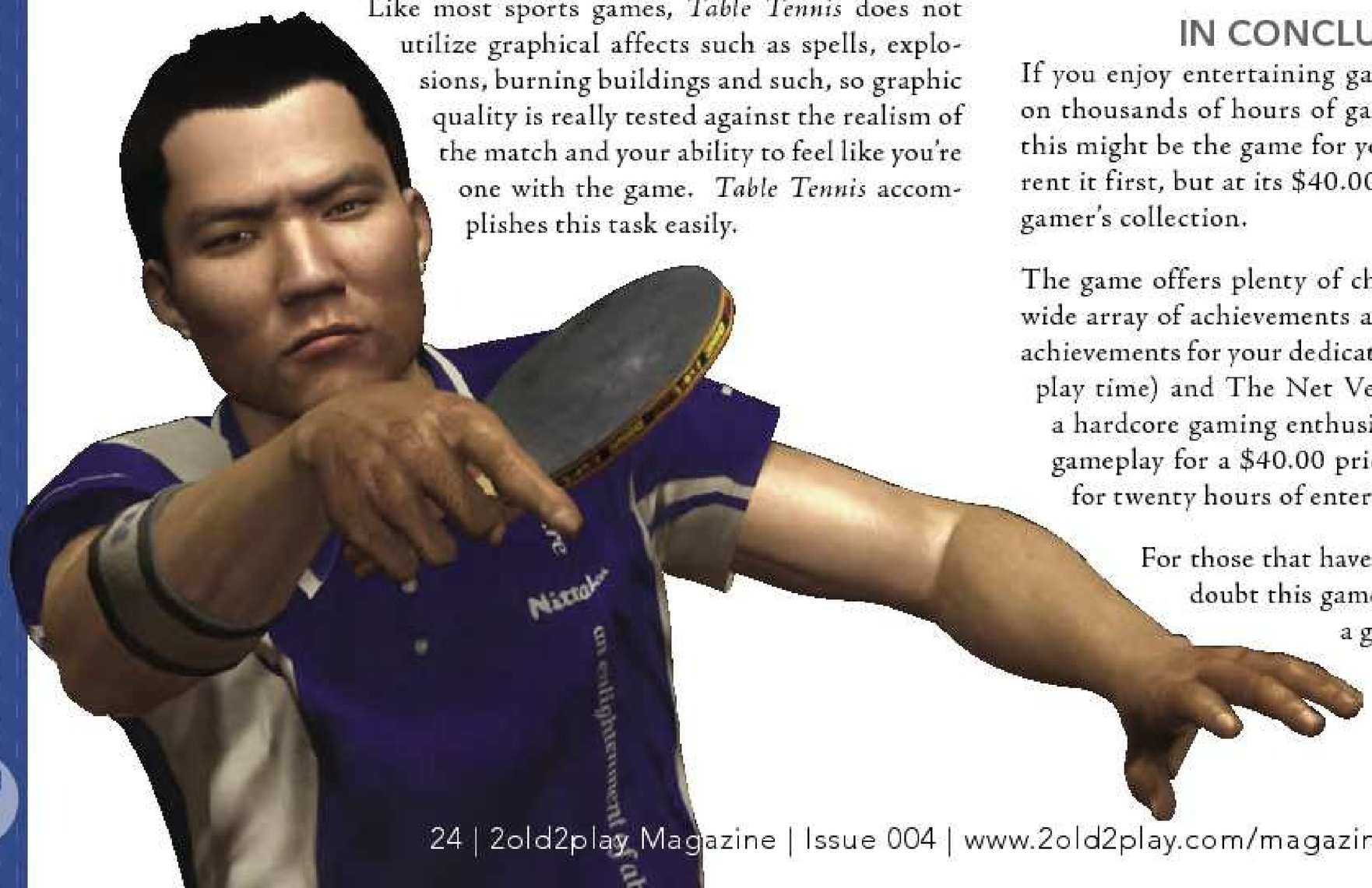


The game environments are basic but do look like real table tennis arenas. Some recreation levels take place in gyms and other populated places. As you're playing the match, you may catch a glimpse of some random stranger walking down the hall or passing by a window. This makes you feel that you are not the only ones in the building at the time of the match.

One standout feature comes from the environment changes that occur when both players are at peak performance and in focus. The lights dim around the stadium and light up around the table, leaving a circular spotlight on you, the table and your opponent. The sound fades off into the distance and all you will hear is the crack of the ball as you struggle to return every shot.



Like most sports games, *Table Tennis* does not utilize graphical affects such as spells, explosions, burning buildings and such, so graphic quality is really tested against the realism of the match and your ability to feel like you're one with the game. *Table Tennis* accomplishes this task easily.



THE SOUND

The game sounds are just what you would expect from a ping-pong match. The players' occasional huffing and puffing, some retort from a few of the characters when they miss a shot, and the sound of the little white ball clicking off the table and paddles.

The soundtrack is simple yet effective. Unlike almost every Electronic Arts sports game, *Rockstar Table Tennis* does not contain a hip-hop rap score that sounds like nails grating down a chalk board. The music is good, unique, and has a beat that will stay with you throughout the day.

The character voices could have been a bit better. It seems the only characters that do any speaking are the English ones, although I believe I've heard some non-English character speaking English. Luc, the French player, should curse in French while Juergen, the German player, could mumble in German, but that does not seem to happen.

IN CONCLUSION

If you enjoy entertaining games that do not make any guarantee on thousands of hours of game time by adding "busy work," then this might be the game for you. You can always avoid the risk and rent it first, but at its $40.00 price it's a well loved addition to any gamer's collection.

The game offers plenty of challenge, an Xbox Live online mode, a wide array of achievements and unlockable items. You receive two achievements for your dedication: The Veteran (10+ hours of offline play time) and The Net Veteran (10+ hour of online play). For a hardcore gaming enthusiast, that alone means twenty hours of gameplay for a $40.00 price. Where else can you spend $40.00 for twenty hours of entertainment?

For those that have no interest in table tennis as a sport, I doubt this game is going to change your mind. This is a great simulation for those that love table tennis but cannot fit a table in their house or have allergic reactions to real exercise. Buy it.

DELL XPS 1710 GAMING LAPTOP

By Derf



It happened just the other day. That nauseating feeling you get when your laptop will no longer play the games you want. My Alienware held up well. Two and-a-half years for any laptop is admirable. The inevitable occurred. While playing Guild Wars, the laptop overheated three times. The kiss of gaming death! The Alienware will now find a place at my office running my business software and typing letters. Time to buy a new laptop! This time it's a Dell XPS 1710.



ALIENWARE VS. DELL

I'm going to compare my experiences with both Dell and Alienware since many consumers consider the Alienware one of the best gaming laptops in the marketplace.

DISCLAIMER!!! My decision is based upon a two year old experience and may not reflect the Alienware Company today. I have recently heard that Dell has bought Alienware, so perhaps these issues no longer occur.

Two years ago, when I bought my Alienware machine, I wanted a new laptop upon which to play games during the Christmas Holidays. I ordered my laptop from Alienware by the cut-off date for shipment before Christmas, only to be disappointed when it showed up almost a month later. The model was touted to have an upgradeable video board, which is extremely desirable with new games pushing your video board's limits. However, a year later when I wanted to upgrade, I come to find that they were "no longer supporting the laptop model" and had no upgrades for it. I would think that a year isn't an unreasonable amount of time to wait, but they were very short with me when I confronted them about it. Many consumers, including myself, found the built-in WiFi had horrible range. The range was so bad that I bought a WiFi card to compensate for the built-in card's shortcomings.



My Dell experience was different from the start. In the past I have ordered many computers through Dell, both for home and work, and they have been consistent with service. I went to the website (www.dell.com) and clicked on the home and home office section and headed over to the gaming laptop section. Prices on the new Dell and Alienware Laptops were comparable, with the exception that Dell offered the new 512 MB nVidia GeForce Go where Alienware offered the 256 MB version. I applied for Dell credit and in thirty seconds I was approved; plus, I qualified for 18-month no-interest financing. I chose the Dell XPS 1710, which included a 100 GB drive with the Intel duo core T2500 processor running at 2.0 GHz. I thought the extra $400 – $500 bucks for a 2.16GHz wasn't worth it at this time. I then ordered a spare battery and checked out. At checkout, the expected ship date was nine days. As contrasted to Alienware's six week wait, my Dell XPS arrived at my front door exactly seven days from ordering. This isn't unusual for Dell orders.

DELL XPS 1710 GAMING LAPTOP (CONTINUED)

IS IT A FERRARI?

Taking it out of the box, the first thing I thought was, "wow, this thing looks like a Ferrari." From the polished sliver with the red top, this is the nicest Laptop I have ever seen. The case is incredibly sturdy. It feels rock-solid and the keyboard is the best I have ever used on a laptop. The keys have just enough spring and a slight click. The support areas for your hands while you type are much better than on my previous laptops, letting you type more comfortably. The accent lighting is cool. Lights come out from speaker and vent ports. The XPS branding under the touch pad is lit as is the cover. You are able to change the color of the lights through the software if you feel you must. It's a fine looking laptop and a pleasure on which to type.

7200 RPM 100GB HARD DRIVE SPEEDS UP THIS SYSTEM

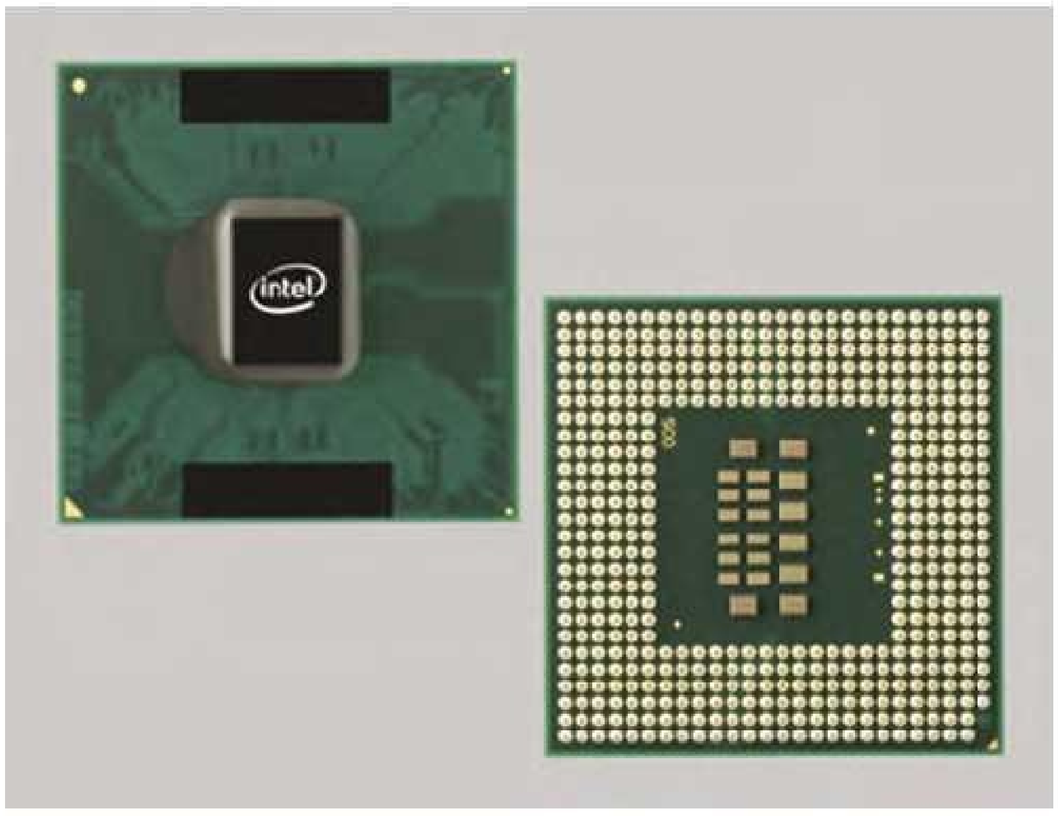
It really doesn't matter how fast your processor or video card is when you have wait for the dang hard drive to load the game, level, or graphics. The hard drive is a common bottleneck in laptop system performance. The Dell's 7200 RPM SATA hard drive zips along at a nice pace, eliminating that long wait at boot up or load. The Hard Drive is mounted on an internal shock absorber as part of Dell's "RoadReady" technology.

17 INCH WIDESCREEN IS GORGEOUS

Dell Says "The WUXGA display supports an ultra-high resolution of 1920x1200 and features TrueLifeTM technology, promising rich, vibrant color with crisp clear text and up to a 10% higher contrast ratio versus the same display with an anti-glare coating. The M1710 also boasts a maximum brightness of 250 nits, making it 30% brighter than the previous generation XPS gaming notebook. Right out of the box I was considering decreasing the brightness. The display reminds me of the beautiful widescreens you see with the new Apple Macintoshes. The larger viewing area gives you a cinematic feeling when playing games.

INTEL CORE DUO

Tests have shown that the dual processor architecture will make your overall system performance 27% faster and multimedia 49% faster. My experience is that this laptop is extremely fast. With multiple windows open and downloads running in the background I noticed a speed increase over my other computers, including my Athlon 64 desktops.





NVIDIA GEFORCE™ GO 7900 GTX WITH 512 MB OF VIDEO MEMORY

My Alienware ran on an ATI mobile with 128 megs of memory, and up until recently it did an admirable job of running games. The nVidia is truly a mobile gamer's dream video card. Heck, none of my desktops have that much video memory. The speed rivals SLI systems. Go here: http://www.notebookreview.com/default.asp?newsID=2887&review=Dell+XPS+M1710 for another review and benchmarks on this video and system performance.

PORTS ABOUND!

- 4-pin IEEE 1394 integrated port (1394 cable and software sold separately)
- 6-USB 2.0 (Universal Serial Bus) compliant 4-pin connectors
- Express Card Slot
- RJ11 Modem port
- Video: Digital Video Interface (DVI)
- Video: 15-pin monitor connector
- S-Video: 7-pin mini-DIN connector
- Component Video and S/PDIF digital audio out
- 5-in-1 removable memory card reader
- Audio jacks: Stereo headphones/speakers miniconnector (same as line-out), microphone miniconnector

The Express Card slot is a new design, so your old PCMIA cards will not work in the XPS.

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THIS – IT'S MADE TO PLAY GAMES!

Since my Alienware was overheating running Guild Wars on minimal graphics, I thought I would try Guild Wars on the new Laptop to see how it runs. I set the resolution to 1900 x 1200, all video settings on the highest quality, with anti-aliasing turned on. I was blown away by how great the graphics were. As I said before, the widescreen gives you the feeling you are in a movie. After 2 hours of playing I found no visible slowdown in the graphics engine. Only an occasional hiccup now and then occurred (most likely a lag issue).

QUIET COOLNESS

My desktop here at work and my Alienware laptop both kick in a noisy fan when you start running any graphics-intensive application. The bottom of the Alienware actually gets hot enough to burn your legs when playing a modern video game. I purchased a laptop fan to protect the components for that excessive heat. After my two hour session with the Dell XPS 1710 the bottom back was warm but not nearly enough to be uncomfortable. The fans were whisper quiet. I had to feel the vents to know that they were working. Dell has put a lot of thought into the cooling systems on its new laptops.

INTERNAL WIRELESS

I mentioned before that the range on the wireless in the Alienware was so bad that I had to purchase an add-on card. In the XPS, the wireless performs great. I have not seen any dropped connections or reduction

DELL XPS 1710 GAMING LAPTOP (CONTINUED)



in connection strength anywhere in the house. However, speed tests run from DSL Reports (www.dslreports.com) show a reduction in throughput with XPS over the Alienware with its PCMIA card. I'll need to check drivers and run a tweak test to see if the XPS is properly set up to for broadband. Speed reduction, although significant, is not enough to affect game play.

DELL'S MEDIA DIRECT BUTTON

Another innovation that Dell has placed in the XPS is the Media Direct Button. This button above the keyboard has a dual function. If Windows is running, it launches the Media center application from the Windows Media Center Edition. This is nice, but the real surprise comes if you hit the Media Direct Button instead of powering up the XPS with the power button. Hitting the Media Direct Button without power boots Dell's Media Center, which is a Linux application. In a few seconds you can play your music, watch videos, or watch DVDs avoiding the wait for Windows and then Media Center to boot. DVDs and video look great in both Windows Media Center and Dell's Media Center. Handy controls on the front edge of the XPS allow you to do the usual Play, Fast Forward, Rewind, Next Chapter, Mute, Pause and Adjust Volume. You can also use the mouse if you wish for playback control.



DELL XPS 1710 SPECS

Size 15.5 x 11.3 x 1.7 inches

Weight 8.8 pounds

XPS M1710, Intel Core Duo Processor T2500 (2GHz/667MHz FSB)

17 inch UltraSharp TrueLife Wide-screen WUXGA with Red LCD Cover

1GB, DDR2, 667MHz 2 Dimm, for XPS

512MB NVIDIA GeForce Go 7900 GTX

7200RPM SATA 100 GB Hard Drive

Optical Drive: 8x CD/DVD burner (DVD+/-RW/+R) with Dual-Layer

OS: Microsoft MCE 2005

Wireless Card: Intel 3945 (802.11b/g)

Battery: 9-cell lithium ion rechargeable battery

Ports / Slots: 5-in-1 Memory Card Reader, DVI-D, VGA video output, S-Video, IEEE 1394 (Firewire), 6 USB 2.0, Express Card slot, Modem, Ethernet/LAN, Microphone in, Headphone out

Integrated Subwoofer



SPEAKERS ARE SURPRISINGLY GOOD

Most of us don't expect good sound from our laptop speakers. The XPS once again surprised me with its sound. Dell has placed a subwoofer on the bottom of the unit and -- with a little tweaking of speaker settings -- I am quite satisfied with the sound. The surround sound works quite well in games. It sounds so good that I am considering not hooking up my USB 5.1 surrounds that I used on the Alienware Laptop.

XPS IS A FINE GAMING LAPTOP

Before I purchased the Dell I read the reviews, and I now agree. Dell has made a great gaming laptop. That, coupled with Dell's service, makes this purchase well worth it. As for price, expect to pay around $4,000 for the latest, fastest processors. By dropping down one level in processor from 2.16GHz to the 2.00 I was able to save about $400. If you drop processors even further, you should be able get an XPS in the $2,000 range. The comparable Alienware laptop did not have the new 512 nVidia board available at the time of ordering. That, along with my previous experiences with the Alienware Company, swayed my decision firmly to the XPS. However, if Alienware would like to send me its latest laptop to test – I would certainly give an up-to-date review of their product J.

NEWS RELEASE

Alienware just released its new dual SLI 256 GeForce systems. Benchmarks on desktop systems show the 2 - 256 MB SLI cards slightly out perform the single 512MB card (http://www.bjorn3d.com/read_pf.php?cID=855). Whether this is true with the mobility laptop cards is undetermined. I guess the race never ends!

BLIZNOT

2OLD2PLAY.COM COMMUNITY MEMBER SHOWCASE

Name: **Mike**

GamerTag: **Bliznot Estevez**

Location: **Chicago**

Age: **27**

Status: **Single**

Children: **0**

Occupation: **I am a district manager for a merchandizing/marketing company that works with home depot, and other hardware retailers.**

FAVORITE DRINK:

Mountain Dew, Vodka Tonic, Fat Tire beer, whole milk

FAVORITE FOOD:

Braised lamb with rice and potato's.

FAVORITE MUSIC GROUP:

Greatful Dead, Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Funkedelic (p-funk), Miles Davis, many more

FAVORITE TV SERIES:

Battlestar Galactia (new version), then Lost

FAVORITE MOVIE:

Life of Brian, Clockwork Orange, Full Metal Jacket, MASH, Platoon, God Father, and many more. I can't really pick a favorite one. Kubric is my favorite director.

FAVORITE SOLO MUSIC ARTIST THAT YOU WOULD ALMOST BE EMBARRASSED TO SAY YOU ENJOYED HEARING?

Phil Collins, but not the sappy shit, and I really don't like it all that much. But there are a few songs there that kicked a medium amount of ass.

WHAT BROUGHT YOU TO 2OLD2PLAY.COM AS A MEMBER?

Doodi and I have been buds for a long time, and I was involved at the earliest point that I could be.

IF YOU WON 5 MILLION DOLLARS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH IT?

Have an outlandish party, buy a house, and possibly open a restaurant/bar. Fund the site, invest the rest.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT MOST PLAYED VIDEO GAME?

World of Warcrack

WHAT GAME CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO YOU BECOMING A GAMER?

Hunt the Wumpus for the TI-99

WHAT VIDEO GAME CHARACTER BEST PORTRAYS YOURSELF?

I feel the most alive when playing Halo 2 with friends while wasted.

WILL YOU BE BUYING A WII, PLAYSTATION 3, OR BOTH?

I will only keep the Wii.

WHAT DEVELOPMENT GROUP/ PUBLISHER DO YOU BELIEVE HAS HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON THE GAMING WORLD, AND WHY?

ID for basically inventing the FPS genre. Without Wolfenstein there would be no Halo. ID started the FPS craze in my opinion, and drove it to what it is today. Although, I feel that Bungie Studios is the best FPS maker at the moment. I know that Warcraft is still the leading title and has hooked more people then all others, but I think that they have not really changed the face of gaming. Just have the most subscribers.

ID [had the biggest impact on the gaming world] for basically inventing the FPS genre. Without Wolfenstein there would be no Halo.

OLD SCHOOL GAMER OR GRAPHIC GAMING ENTHUSIAST?

Probably 70/30 on that. Graphics are important but the game play is everything.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD MASSIVELY MULTIPLAYER ONLINE GAME, RPG OR OTHERWISE?

I would say that Balance is the key to MMO, along with being able to interact with the most aspects of the world. That type of game needs the most emersion possible. I also think that you need to have a lot of interaction with others, and team based type stuff. For me, I have the most fun when I'm on a team with my droog's.

WHAT DOES "BLIZNOT" MEAN? HOW DID YOU CREATE THAT GAMER TAG?

It's from high school and I don't really want to get into it.

IF YOU HAD TO GIVE A YOUNGER KID ADVICE ABOUT GAMING WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I would say to remember that you're playing for fun, and tell your mom to give me a call.



THE CONSOLE WARS ON THE STOCK MARKET

By DanLeCrinque



I liked their products so much that I bought the company. Why do you think the console war is a reality? Are these industry leaders creating and distributing gaming platforms to better answer your gaming habit needs? I have a little secret for you, but don't tell anyone... they are not! They are after your money. They are applying a business model designed to maximize profit by capturing market shares versus the competition to the benefit of their shareholders.

Ok, maybe it's not such a big secret after all, and maybe they do have a compelling product offering worth mentioning. Let's dive deep into a stock report for the big three of console gaming. This article is designed to provide a different look at these familiar names, an investor's point of view. After reading the following, you should be able to make your own decision as to whether you should buy, hold or sell these stocks in your own investment portfolio. It's tailored for an adult community of investors/gamers... what a coincidence, it's posted on 2old2play.com.

THE CONSOLE WARS ON THE STOCK MARKET (CONTINUED)

Microsoft

Microsoft Corporation (NASDAQ : MSFT) is an international computer technology corporation with 2005 global annual sales of US$ 42.64 billion and 63,564 employees in 102 countries and regions that develop, manufacture, license, and support a wide range of software products for computing devices. Headquartered in Redmond, Washington, USA, its most popular products are the Microsoft Windows operating system and the *Microsoft Office* suite of productivity software, each of which has achieved near ubiquity in the desktop computer market. Microsoft possesses footholds in other markets, with assets such as the MSNBC cable television network, the MSN Internet Portal, and the Microsoft *Encarta* multimedia encyclopedia. The company also markets home entertainment products, such as the *Xbox*, *Xbox 360* and *MSN TV*.



Bill Gates isn't leaving Microsoft; he's just leaving his day-to-day responsibilities there. That was the message Microsoft Corp. sought to send when it announced that Gates planned to step back from his regular duties in July 2008, while still continuing to be chairman of the company he co-founded. Gates' decision comes at a difficult time for Microsoft. The company recently said it was delaying the new version of its Windows operating system yet again, and it is struggling to compete with Internet rivals such as Google Inc. (GOOG) and Yahoo Inc. (YHOO). Investors also were caught off guard this spring when Microsoft announced plans to substantially increase overall research and development costs, and sent share prices tumbling.

My risk assessment reflects Microsoft's ongoing antitrust related issues, the risk that its applications and operating systems may lose market share to open source rivals, potential difficulties releasing new products in a timely manner mitigated by the company's leading market positions and financial strength.

I believe that Microsoft's notable cash and short-term investment balance, amounting to $35 billion as of March 2006, with no debt, provides flexibility for the company to continue to announce stock buybacks and significant increases in its dividend. I expect PC sales to remain healthy in FY 06 and FY 07, driven by solid corporate and consumer demand.

Recommendation: Strong buy

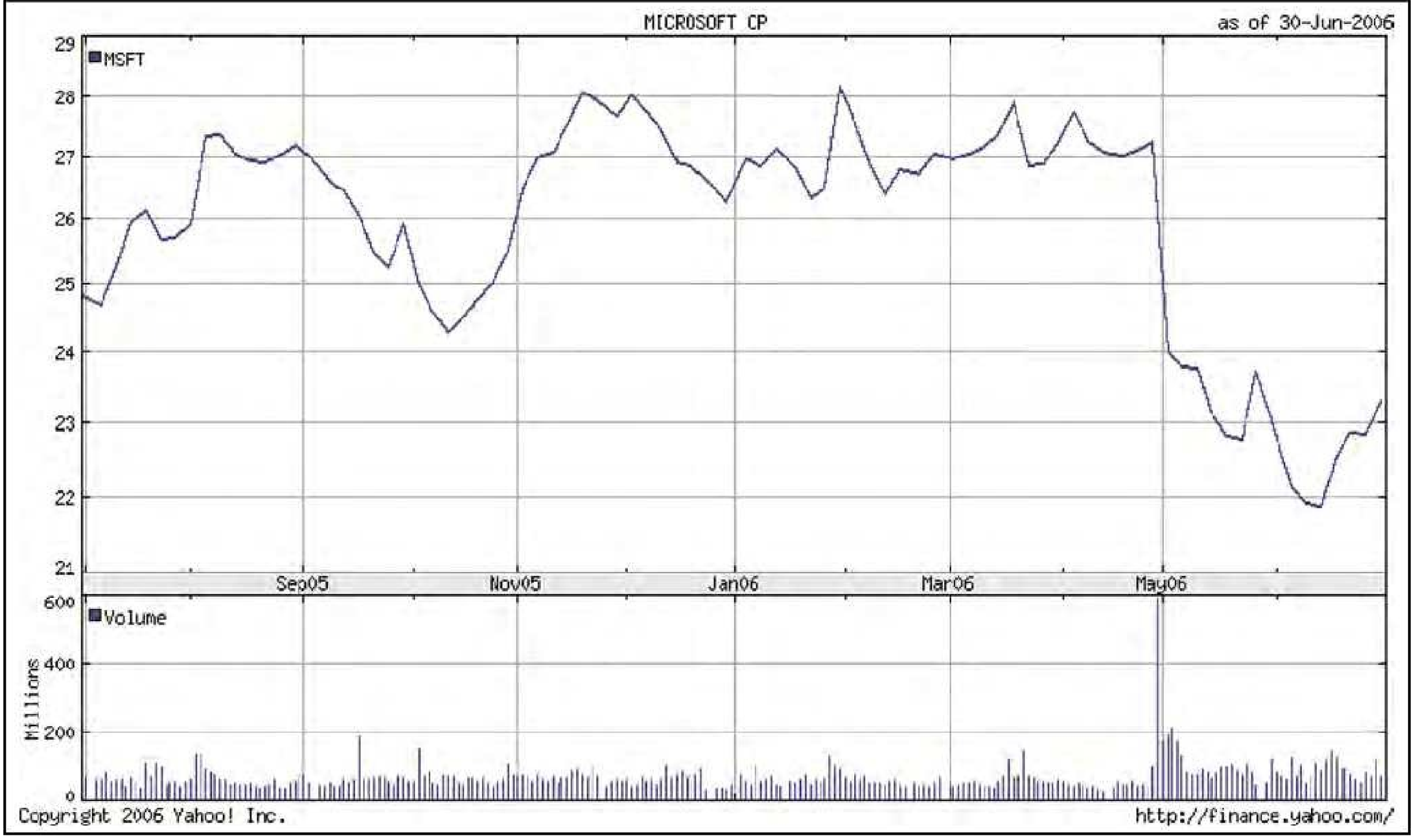
12-month target price: $31.00

The risk to my opinion and target price include a highly competitive software industry, developments in a rapidly changing technology arena, such as a more rapid adoption of open-source software than I currently anticipate, and the possibility of additional antitrust legal issues.

The 12-month target price of $31.00 is based on a blend of DCF and relative analyses. The DCF model includes assumptions of a weighted average cost of capital of 0.4%, a 11% five-year growth for free cash flow, and a 3% terminal growth rate. Recently, Microsoft's P/E was 12% below, and its P/E-to-growth rate was 10% lower than the S&P 500 Software industry.



CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW TO GO ONLINE AND VIEW MORE DETAILED STOCK INFORMATION!



THE CONSOLE WARS ON THE STOCK MARKET (CONTINUED)

Nintendo

Nintendo Company, Limited (NASDAQ : NTDOY.PK) is a multinational corporation founded on November 6, 1889 in Kyoto, Japan by Fusajiro Yamauchi to produce handmade hanafuda cards, for use in a Japanese playing card game of the same name. In the mid-twentieth century, the company tried several small niche businesses, such as a love hotel and a taxi company. Over the years, it became a video game company, growing into one of the most powerful in the industry. Aside from video games, Nintendo is also the majority owner of the Seattle Mariners. Nintendo has the reputation of historically being both the oldest intact company in the video game console market and the one of the most influential and well-known console manufacturers, as well as being the most dominant entity in the handheld console market.

Over time Nintendo has manufactured five "Color TV Brand" dedicated consoles, as well as five other home video game consoles — *NES*, the *Super NES*, the *Nintendo 64*, the present *GameCube* and the upcoming *Wii*. This is in addition to a plethora of different handheld portables, as well as seven versions of their popular *Game Boy*, the *Game & Watch*, the *Pokémon Mini*, the *Nintendo DS* and the ill-fated *Virtual-Boy*.

They have published over 250 games for their own consoles (and produced two games for the Atari 2600), directly developing at least 180 of them. In Nintendo's history they have sold over two billion games worldwide. Nintendo is known for its loyal fan base, similar in dedication to the following of Apple computer. Nintendo Company, Ltd. stocks are traded in the Nikkei Stock Exchange. In the United States, investors can purchase ADR's (American Depository Receipts) as a form of investment.



Nintendo's chief exec, Satoru Iwata, is a confident man. Earlier in June, he went before the media to declare that the company's name for its next-generation video game console, *Wii* (pronounced "we"), would stand the test of time. I guess the company has taken its share of lumps since announcing the new name in late April. Many analysts have portrayed Nintendo's soon-to-be-released machine as likely to come in a distant third to Microsoft's *Xbox 360* and Sony's *PlayStation 3*. But Nintendo has proved it can't be written off: Its *DS* handheld console is kicking the pants off Sony's *PlayStation Portable* thanks to great games. If Nintendo can repeat that success, most people will probably forget that there ever was a debate over the *Wii*'s unusual name.

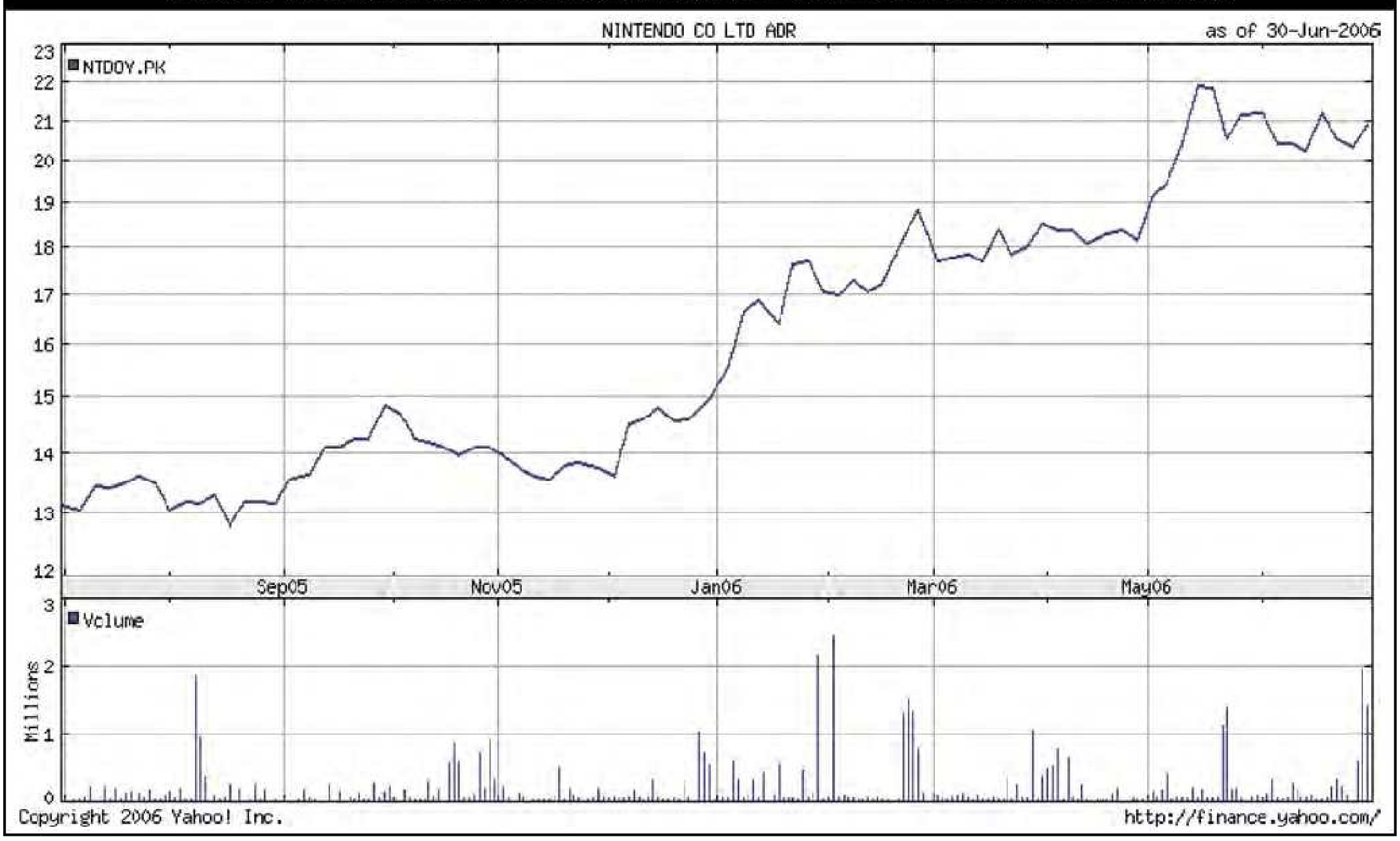
Since last year, Nintendo has doubled its dividend payout for shareholders (which are payment per share distributed to stockholders in return for money they invested) to 2.2%, which is over Sony's expected .6% and Microsoft's expected 1.3%, in an effort to make shareholders happy; it will pay a record 270 yen per stock to shareholders.7. As of December, Nintendo held a war chest of 780 billion yen, or about 7.2 billion USD, in cash and deposits.

Recommendation: Buy

12-month target price: $26.00

The risk to my opinion and target price include a highly competitive gaming console industry, developments in a rapidly changing technology arena, ability of delivering *Wii* consoles just-in-time and supply the demand.

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THE CONSOLE WARS ON THE STOCK MARKET (CONTINUED)

Sony

Sony Corporation (NYSE: SNE) is one of the world's largest media conglomerates founded in Tokyo, Japan. One of its divisions Sony Electronics is one of the leading manufacturers of electronics, video, communications, and information technology products for the consumer and professional markets. Sony Corporation is the parent company of the Sony Group and is engaged in business through its six operating segments - electronics, music, games, pictures, financial services and other. These make Sony one of the most comprehensive entertainment companies in the world. Sony's principal U.S. businesses include Sony Electronics Inc., Sony Pictures Entertainment, Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc., and a 50% interest in Sony BMG Music Entertainment, the second-largest record company in the world. Sony recorded consolidated annual sales of approximately $67 billion for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2005, and it employs 151,400 people worldwide. Sony's consolidated sales in the U.S. for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2005 were $18.4 billion. As a semiconductor maker, Sony is among the Worldwide Top 20 Semiconductor Sales Leaders



Sony offers a medium risk assessment reflected by an intensely competitive market, a volatile filmed entertainment businesses, and uncertainties concerning the launch of the *PS3* game console, offset by strides with the Bravia TV brand, what I view as a strong balance sheet and average stock price volatility.

Recommendation: Hold

12-month target price: $44.00

My hold opinion reflects the recent share price weakness, after management provided what I saw as disappointing FY 07 (Mar.) guidance. The company projects an operating loss of about $875 million at the games division, mainly due to expenses associated with a delayed launch of its *PS3* title, which is currently scheduled for November 06, versus competition from Microsoft's *Xbox 360*. However, I expect the consumer electronics segment to benefit from the S-LCD joint venture with Samsung, which could generate significant cost savings for the Bravia LCD TV.

Risk to my recommendation and target price include a weak performance of the *PS3*, a sharp decline in selling prices of large-sized TV sets, uncertainties concerning the S-LCD joint venture, weak film performance, and currency exposure. The 12-month target price of $44.00 is based on a price to book of 1.5X, above trough levels, but recently revised from 2.4X to reflect my concerns about the attainment of near-term financial targets.

CONCLUSION:

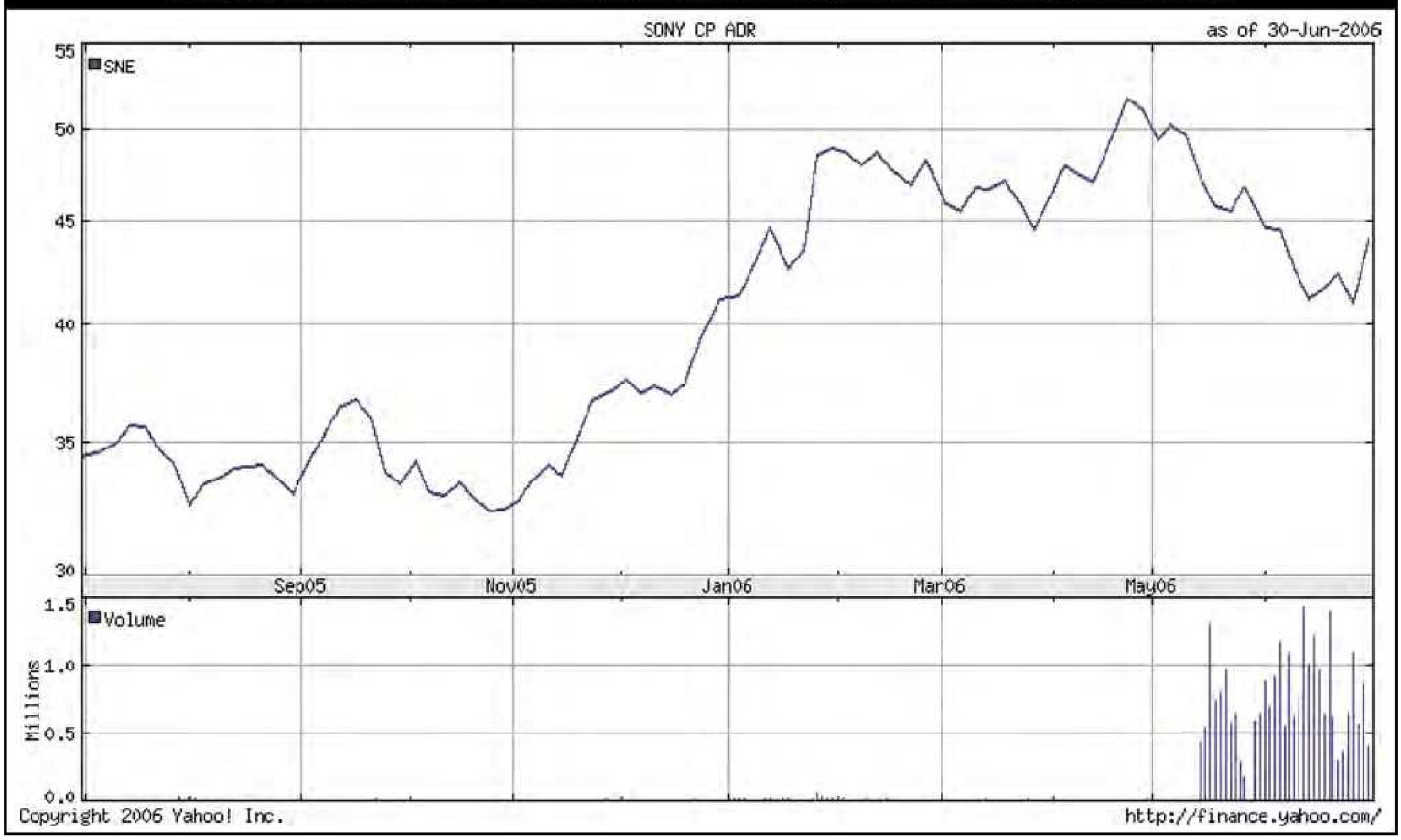
You made room for their products in your household; is there room for one or more of these stocks in your portfolio's tech weighting? Why not be on the list of dividend and returns earners the next time you buy a console. It just might be justified. After all, you do believe they make good products, don't you?

Investors who adhere to the recommendation of keeping a diversified portfolio may panic when markets trade in step, and that step is down. But I believe it's better to stay the course, because, like any phenomenon, this one will pass.

Recommendations provided by the most recent S&P, Morningstar and Yahoo finance Stock reports.

Company bios provided by Wikipedia.

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RENTALS: THE NEXT GENERATION

PART II

By Tank

This is a follow up to my article in *2o2p Magazine - issue* #3 where I discussed why renting is going to become more mainstream in the age of $60 titles. In this article I'm going to review five rental methods I have personally used. They are the in-store options: Blockbuster and Hollywood Video, and the online options: *Gamefly.com*, *Gameznflix.com* and *Gotaplay.com*.



HOLLYWOOD VIDEO AND BLOCKBUSTER



My experience with *Hollywood* Video and *Blockbuster* were similar, so I lump these stores together. Each shop has a very limited selection of titles and small quantities of the titles they do have stocked. *Blockbuster* is a good alternative if you are a member of their online movie rental service because you get two free rentals a month that can be used for games. Rental duration was the same for both companies in my area: seven days outstanding. This time limit is good for a disposable game (the type you're probably renting anyway, otherwise you probably own it.) Overall the selection of titles you can rent is so poor that, unless you frequently go there to rent movies, I wouldn't waste the gas to go to *Blockbuster* or *Hollywood Video* to rent an *Xbox 360* game.

GOTAPLAY.COM

Gotaplay.com looks good on the surface. It's got a cheap plan starting at $12.95/month and has six distribution centers across the USA. It also offers a money-back guarantee if you're not happy with the service. The service is just like similar online movie rental places; you browse through the catalog and place things in your queue. It ships you the first games that are available from your queue. The games arrive in a sleeve which you also use to return the game, and you can keep the game as long as you're paying your monthly fees. It offers three plans:

GOTTAPLAY
THE ONLY PLACE TO PLAY

- **One game outstanding: $12.95/mo.**
- **Two games outstanding: $20.95/mo.**
- **Three games outstanding: $28.95/mo.**

This all seems well and good until you actually create an account. Instead of giving you a 14-day free trial, you're billed the first month on signup and given a 'grace period' to back out of the service. Your money will be refunded. I personally don't like that, but there were no problems getting the refund processed when I did back out.

My biggest complaint was where I had a queue of about ten *360* games and **the site didn't ship me a single game!** I had a good mixture of launch titles and new releases. I didn't get anything during my 'grace period' at all! So I absolutely cannot recommend this service. You could pay monthly fees and not get anything for your money. I'm not sure how this failure could occur other than its inventory isn't large enough to satisfy demand.

GAMEZNFLIX.COM

This store rents both games and movies, which is great. I had visions of rolling my online movie rental service and online video game service into one vendor.

GameznFlix

This site has a variety of plans, one of which includes the cheapest I've seen for a one-outstanding-rental-at-a-time service:

- **One disc outstanding: $8.99/mo.**
- **Two discs outstanding: $12.99/mo.**
- **Three discs outstanding: $16.99/mo.**
- **Six discs outstanding: $249.00/year.**

Gameznflix.com also has four distribution centers across the USA to help get titles to you faster.

There are some quirks with this service, though. The 14-day free trial only lets you rent certain titles, so I had to sign up to be a paying member to rent any *360* games. This vendor limits the number of titles that can be in your queue based upon the type of account you have. I rarely see a title in my queue that's available because they're all on 'short wait.' The plus side to this service is that something usually ships within a few days of your returning a movie or game. I find the shipping times are pretty long, though, since titles ship from whatever warehouse has your title, which is not necessarily the warehouse closest to you.

The queue management for keeping a mix of movies and games is a bit of a challenge. If you want to use the service strictly for video games or movies then this single queue system works perfectly. If you have a three-disc service and want two movies and one game out at all times, it can take a lot of queue tweaking and a bit of luck to get this to occur. Games, typically, are out much longer than movies so it's hard to predict if you will get a game after your next return. It would be better for a service that offers both games and movies to let you divide your queue up into both categories and set a ratio of what you want out.

Gameznflix.com offers a 'buy' option. This allows the renter to purchase the game from them - used - for $64 a game. Why someone would pay more money for a used copy than a new copy is beyond me. Someone with too much spare money, I suppose.

RENTALS: THE NEXT GENERATION - PART II (CONTINUED)

[MINI] GAMER PROFILE

Name: Dustin Cobb
Age: 25
Sex: Male
Location: Oklahoma
Occupation: Production Planner

WHEN ARE YOU GAMING:

After 7PM-11PM CST for various amounts of time.

HOW DID YOU FIND 2OLD2PLAY?

Magic The Gathering: Online Forum under the Clans & Recruitment message boards had a very interesting post by Dan

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE BEST ABOUT 2O2P?

Attitude.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GENRE OF GAME, AND YOUR FAVORITE GAME/WHY?

RPG/Fantasy Adventure. I haven't played a decent RPG since FFX. I'm a fool for anything fantasy related. That was my main attraction to MTG ive been hooked since.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY TO THE MEMBERS OF 2O2P?

Greatest community EVER!!

Name: Derek Attenborough
Age: 40
Sex: Male
Location: Morrisville, Pennsylvania
Occupation: Office Furniture Guy
Gamer Tag: ol DMAN lo



WHEN ARE YOU GAMING:

After 8PM EDT until around 11PM, 2-4 times a week.

HOW DID YOU FIND 2OLD2PLAY?

I stumbled across 2o2p at Bungie. Too old too play? That's me!

WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE BEST ABOUT 2O2P?

I like 2o2p because the people here are dealing with real life issues, we have mortgages, children, and somewhat similar experiences. People understand if you can't make a Tourney because your son or daughter has a concert or a soccer game.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE GENRE OF GAME, AND YOUR FAVORITE GAME/WHY?

I prefer FPS games, I'm currently a HALO2 junkie and really don't have a lot of time to spread out into other games. I guess I like the FPS games because they're so visceral and engaging. Kill or be killed! At my age I can't get into Mario and Company as much as I used to.

GAMEFLY.COM

This is the 'Netflix' of online game rentals. *Gamefly*, by far, spends more money on advertising and inventory than any of its competition. This is also reflected in membership prices.

Gamefly works like the rest of the online rental stores. You add games to your queue from the catalog and Gamefly ships it to you in the same envelope you use to return the game. This service offers four plans:

- **One game outstanding: $14.95/mo.**
- **Two games outstanding: $21.95/mo**
- **Three games outstanding: $28.95/mo.**
- **Four games outstanding: $35.95/mo.**

Gamefly also offers a 10-day or 14-day free trial so you can test drive the service before you buy. The 10-day trial seems to be the standard, but you can pretty easily find promotional codes online for a 14-day trial. Judging by the speed of availability and how quickly titles ship, Gamefly also appears to have the largest game inventory. I had 10 games in my queue which were a mix of old and new titles. I got *FightNight Round 3* the day it came out and two older games (*King Kong* and *College Hoops*) during my free trial period, which I considered impressive. All three titles shipped right away.

I also really liked the Gamefly feature that allows you to buy the rental from them at a discount. The discount is way better than you'd find at *EB* or *GameStop*. I had *FightNight Round 3* for a week and I was the first one to rent it. The 'keep it' price was $47.95. So that would have been a great deal on a pre-owned game that was only rented by me. If you choose to buy a game, they will ship you, as a member, the case and booklet free of charge. You can also buy used games on Gamefly if you're not a member at great prices, but shipping is around $2.00.

There are a few downsides to the Gamefly service. This is the most expensive option for online game rentals. Someone has to pay for all the advertising and the larger quantity of stocked titles. Gamefly ships out of California, so if you're on the East Coast somewhere, it can take seven days to get your discs. To help combat this issue, it has a 'fast return' shipping method. Theoretically, your return is scanned at the post office and Gamefly ships you the next available title right away rather than waiting for it to be physically returned. The problem is that a lot of post offices either don't have the equipment or just don't bother scanning the discs. But it's a nice idea when it works.

CONCLUSION

Which service did I choose? I use Gameznflix.com even though it does not offer the highest quality services. I use it because it is the cheapest option for one outstanding game at a time. I only play disposable games on rental, so usually a Friday to Sunday gaming session on a game will yield most, if not all, the 360 achievement points. The three-disk service doesn't seem to be worthwhile given Gameznflix.com has so few 360 titles along with an unusually long ship time. With those lacking features, the three-disk service seems to be a rip-off.

If you are going to totally rely on renting most games then you should go with the Gamefly service. Gamefly has the selection and quantity to get the games in your hands. The 'Keep It' and 'Fast Shipping' features are miles ahead of the competition. Gamefly is the current market leader in this space right now. Be prepared to spend a few bucks more a month to help them keep it that way.

NINTENDO'S WII

WILL THIS LITTLE CONSOLE GO WII WII WII WII ALL THE WAY TO YOUR HOME?

By WebMonkee

For those of us who grew up watching Nintendo redefine gaming, it's often hard for us to think of them as "that other company that makes a console." One thing you can say for Big N is that they keep on making them. Is their latest console going to redefine gaming again? No one can say for sure, but we can make some educated guesses based on what is already known.

Let's start with the name. I can't exactly give props to Big Blue and Sony for their imaginative name choices this generation, but I also can't say Nintendo has picked a winner either. Although I really liked the project name *Revolution*, the production name *Wii* leaves me a little unfulfilled.

I'm sure the name will be a boon to both comedians and marketers. Comedians will love *Wii*'ing all over the place with their witty pee-related and/or sexual organ-related banter. Think that will get old? But marketers can also use the concept of "we" quite well. *Wii* game. *Wii* enjoy. *Wii* gather together. *Wii* play. But will *Wii* buy one? *Wii* don't know yet. Maybe some history will help answer that question.

Nintendo has never lost money on a console. Think about that for a moment. For 22 years and four generations of consoles, Nintendo has never lost money. When you add in their total dominance of handheld gaming, it's easy to see why very few people are counting the *Wii* out. The question to ask, however, is why? Why has Nintendo always made money on their consoles, and, more to the point, why will the *Wii* make money too?



There's always their philosophy for this generation. Nintendo's goal is for the *Wii* to be accessible. Not just to gamers, but to their parents, grandparents and children, too. When they say *Wii*, they mean it. To that end, their design speaks to simplicity. A small, clean looking piece of hardware first greets the eye. Then comes a much-simplified controller that looks an awful lot like a piece of technology most people are comfortable with – a remote control. Next, make sure true gamers can play all their favorite games from the past. Finally, don't have many wires to mess with. If you're trying to move machines to the masses, that's a damn fine philosophy to have, and the *Wii* appears to be a very good execution of this strategy.

Since we've mentioned the hardware, let's take a closer look. The console itself happily admits to falling short of the powerful specs posted by *360* and the *Playstation 3*. For starters, no one is sure how much RAM it will have, but speculation and "confirmed" rumors put it at 104 MB, which is far below the 512 MB for the *360* and *Playstation 3*.



Since the *Wii* will not support High Definition, it is quite possible the lower RAM spec will not really matter. The bigger question is if the world will care about a lack of HD. The *Wii* will support 480p, which is a step above standard resolution, but a big step below HD. Every game developed for the *Wii* will support 480p, as Nintendo has always been good at making sure its developers conform to standards. My opinion is that a lack of HD is not going to make or break the *Wii*. With or without HD, *Wii* games will be the best looking games Nintendo has ever produced, and that's not too shabby.

Processing power will help determine how smooth your gameplay will be. The *Wii* will sport an IBM PowerPC CPU and an ATI GPU, but their actual speeds have not been released. However, it is very clear that the *Wii* will be nowhere near as powerful as the *360* or *Playstation 3*. Since Nintendo is hanging its hat on gameplay, it is inconceivable that the *Wii* will not be at least powerful enough to flawlessly display its games. But, you never know. Once again, I say that processing power is not going to hurt the *Wii*. It will be powerful enough to do everything it needs to do.

As for connectivity, the key word is wireless. Wireless controllers, wireless internet (Wi-Fi) and (potentially) a wireless connection to the *Nintendo DS* are all to be found on the *Wii*. You do still have to plug it into an electrical outlet. I don't *think* they've figured out how to do that wirelessly yet, at least not without killing

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

A NEW EXPERIENCE IS COMING

Nintendo

NINTENDO'S WII (CONTINUED)

all their users with microwaves. Wireless may not seem like a big deal anymore, but it fits in very well with Nintendo's philosophy of accessibility. You won't have to be in the AV club to set this puppy up. And, since the Wi-Fi connection will always be up (and will reportedly trickle downloads to your machine when you are not using it), you may not have to spend much time downloading updates either.

The specs are always interesting, but they don't tell the tale of the *Wii*. The item that has created more speculation than any other is the *Wii*'s controller. If you are a regular 2old2play reader, then you know that I have already written an article full of strong opinions about my dislike for the *Wii* controller, having admittedly never used one. Now that we know a bit more, I won't say I'm ready to retract that opinion, but I am at least willing to wait and see.



In the meantime, Nintendo also unveiled a "Classic *Wii* Controller," which looks – surprise! – like every other controller out there. Well, maybe a little different. It actually looks like they had Apple Computer's engineers take a swipe at the *SNES* controller. The part that is still unclear is if the Classic Controller will be bundled with the system, or if you'll have to buy it separately. Also, it's possible it will only be used for playing classic games that require such a configuration. My assumption is that, regardless of whatever Nintendo's plans may be to have every game use the *Wii*-mote, developers will want to use the Classic Controller when it makes sense to do so. Either way, since we will assume that the Classic Controller will do everything we're used to a controller doing, the only controller worth talking about here is the *Wii*-mote.

Now, "*Wii*-mote" is not an official name, but, it's already being used so much it would not surprise me to see Nintendo adopt it. As mentioned before, it looks like a Remote Control, only with a lot fewer buttons. In fact, other than a trigger-style button, the *Wii*-mote only has one other button you'll use with any regularity. It should be noted that the *Wii*-mote has already undergone design changes since it was first shown to the world. The most notable difference is the addition of a speaker grill to the front of the controller. Also added is a wrist strap so that you can use the Wii-mote without dropping it.

Why might you drop it? Well, because you will be moving that bad boy around, that's why. The *Wii*-mote uses, supposedly, a very refined system to properly and instantly determine its position in 3-D space relative to the television. This allows the *Wii*-mote to be used as an actual game item. It can be a baseball bat, it can aim and point a gun, and it can cast a reel at the ol' fishin' hole. At least, that's what Nintendo claims. New technologies are always iffy, so we'll have to see how well it works. The reviews on it from E3 were pretty positive, so if it does work well, can you tell me it wouldn't be seriously cool to use it as your bow in the next Link game? Especially when the speaker could make the actual sound of a bow-string? Come on, you know you want that!



As cool as 3-D positioning might prove to be, the *Wii*-mote can do even more with add-ons. We know that you'll be able to add a "nunchuk" interface to it to gain an analog joystick and extra buttons. We also know the nunchuk itself will have 3D positioning in it as well, so that you can use its position to perform tasks independently of button mashing. Other potential add-ons have been hinted at, but no actual hardware has been described. However, it seems possible some games may come with their own peripheral add-on.



So here is the first item that will help make or break the *Wii* – the *Wii*-mote. If it is everything Nintendo claims and more, then it may very well be so much fun the gaming world will completely embrace it. If this peripheral doesn't work well, it could lead to big problems for the *Wii*.

So, you've got a console, and you've got a fancy new controller – how about some games? I'll start with the part that has many gamers salivating: The *Wii* is backwards compatible with all four previous Nintendo consoles. That's right; you can play *Super Mario Brothers* on the *Wii*. *GameCube* game discs will load directly into the *Wii* for instant action (and may be the real reason for the *Wii* Classic Controller). If you want to play games for the *N64*, *SNES* or *NES*, you'll need to download them from the *Wii*'s Virtual Console (marketplace). You'll also have downloadable access to many of the games for the *TurboGrafx-16* and *Sega Genesis*. That's an insanely large library of games, and makes for another reason why the *Wii* will most likely succeed.

NINTENDO'S WII (CONTINUED)



The *Wii* only comes with 512 MB of Flash memory onboard, so it's possible you'll fill it up with downloaded games. But, considering that *NES* games are roughly 50k apiece, you should be able to get plenty of old school gaming goodness packed in there. And if you need more room, there are SD memory slots available, so you'll be able to download as much as your wallet can stand.

Finally, let's look at games built for the *Wii*. After only 341 years of development, *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* will release concurrently for the *Gamecube* and the *Wii*. The game mechanics will obviously be very different between those two platforms, but the game itself will be quite similar. Because Nintendo learned their lesson about launching a new console without a new *Mario* game, the *Wii* will have *Super Mario Galaxy*, but not right at launch. The buzz on this game is that it will be worth the wait. Third party development support for the launch of the *Wii* is actually pretty strong, but we'll have to wait and see if that continues past launch or not. Here is a sampling of other games that will be ready at or near launch:

- ***Blitz: The League***
- ***Call of Duty 3***
- ***Cars***
- ***Dragon Quest Swords***
- ***Excite Truck***
- ***Final Fantasy Crystal Chronicles: the Crystal Bearers***
- ***Madden NFL 07***
- ***Marvel: Ultimate Alliance***
- ***Metroid Prime 3: Corruption***
- ***Red Steel***
- ***Wii Sports***

That is not a complete list, but rather a sampling of the games that will most likely be generating buzz.



To close out this detailed examination of the *Wii* (man, the jokes just flow out in a strong, steady stream, don't they?), it's time to look at other factors: price, developer support and gameplay.

Price is a factor in the *Wii*'s favor. Although an exact price had not been released by the time of this printing, we do know it will be less than $250 USD. We don't know what that price will get you in terms of hardware (Nunchuk? Classic controller?), but we will assume you will be able to get your game on right out of the box. At $250 or less, the *Wii* may very well find its niche as the second system for those who buy one of the other, pricier new consoles. If so, that may position the *Wii* very well to move a bunch of units. So price is definitely a check in the "why the *Wii* will succeed" column.

Developer support is largely unknown. For launch, developers like Ubisoft, SEGA, Square Enix and Rainbow Studios are well represented, but will that continue? My guess is that will depend on how many of you go out and buy a *Wii*.



There is no doubt developers are not fond of having to develop for multiple platforms, but in most cases, at least the control schemes for the various consoles are pretty similar. With the *Wii*'s unique controller, developers will have to invest time and money into creating game mechanics that take advantage of the *Wii*-mote's abilities. It's simply too early to tell if they will be willing to do that.

On the plus side, developers have, so far, not had much to complain about in developing for the *Wii* – at least not out loud. But will the *Wii* get many (or any) third-party exclusives? To truly break out, the *Wii* will need strong third-party support. We'll have to wait and see if it gets the air-cover.

That leaves gameplay. Will you love or hate using actual 3D space in your games? I don't know, and neither do you. You may love it for a week and then hate it forever. Or you may use it once and wonder why you ever used that two-handed behemoth on the other consoles.

There is no bigger issue for the *Wii* than gameplay. Early reviews for *Wii* games are pretty good, and this is not meant as a slam to anyone who got hands-on time at E3, but it's always possible the early reviewers were simply struck by the novelty of it all as opposed to being genuinely impressed. Ultimately, let's face it, if Nintendo or a third party developer comes up with a few games for the *Wii* that are instant classics and take gameplay to amazing places it's never been, you'll go buy one and so will I.

The success of the *Wii* mostly hangs on how much you enjoy playing its games. No big surprise there. To my mind, the *Wii* has enough pluses to succeed. Will it be number one? Highly doubtful.

Will it be number two? Many would say no, but its potential as a second console to both *360* and *PlayStation 3* owners makes a number two spot not out of the question (Side note: This assumes, of course, that *Playstation 3* owners have any money left at all). Will it be profitable? Yes, very likely.

Finally, will you buy one? There's a whole bunch of people at Nintendo who can't wait to find out.



CASTLEVANIA

NORTH AMERICAN 2D RELEASES (1986-1997)

By Corcki

Konami released Castlevania for the Nintendo Entertainment System to North America in 1986. It was an 8-bit, 2D, platform-style game that created the premise of all Castlevanias to follow: find and kill Dracula at all costs.



Castlevania (NES)

The story took place in 1691, a time when darkness ruled the land and Simon Belmont continued his family's ongoing quest to rid Transylvania of Dracula and his entire ilk. Donning his leather armor and trusty whip named "Vampire Killer," he set off to stop evil one lash at a time. As the whip-wielding Belmont, you could find upgrades to increase the strength and reach of your primary attack. Along with your whip, you had multiple weapons in which to unleash pain upon your enemies. You could only carry one secondary at a time, so choosing one was a matter of personal preference. My favorite was the watch that stopped time. The speedy dagger, arcing axe, and boomerang were a few of the other weapons Simon could wield. Hearts fueled the secondary weapons and could be found by killing enemies or striking candelabra. Enemies and candelabra also hid food to replenish energy, money for score, and other helpful items. The journey through Dracula's castle consisted of seven levels infested with zombies, flying medusa heads, crows, mermen, panthers, and skeletons. At the end of every level you squared off against a monster-movie inspired boss. You were pitted against the likes of a giant bat, mummies, Frankenstein & Igor, the controller flinging difficulty of the Grim Reaper and, finally, Dracula himself. Thankfully, there were infinite continues, because I still don't think it's possible to beat the game in one life.

Two years later, Konami made the second *Castlevania* installment for *NES*. Developers decided to change the gameplay and give it more of an RPG feel. Instead of a traditional side-scrolling game, they made *Castlevania 2: Simon's Quest* an open world where areas could be revisited. *Simon's Quest* picked up in 1698, seven years after vanquishing Dracula. Before the final stroke, Simon was cursed by the Count, and, in order to lift it, had to find a way to resurrect the Vampire Lord. Grabbing "Vampire Killer" and wearing red and black rather than brown, Simon started his mission to find all five of Dracula's parts. Instead of running straight through each level, you had to visit various parts of Transylvania in search of Dracula's Heart, Nail, Eye, Rib, and Ring. Each part was hidden in a dark mansion that had to be found by helping denizens of the seven towns scattered around the game. Along the way, other changes from the original game could be noticed. There were no more candelabra; you had to kill enemies to find hearts for secondary weapons. No more giving up one weapon for another, either. Everything was kept in an inventory menu for use at any time. Developers also made enemies tougher at night and weaker in the day. Leveling up was possible, but all it really was was a larger health meter. When all of Dracula's parts were collected, you made your way to his mansion. Once there, you resurrected him, but he was not very grateful. Upon killing Dracula, you were shown the ending you earned. There were three endings and each one depended upon how long it took you to finish.



Castlevania 2 (NES)

CASTLEVANIA: NORTH AMERICAN 2D RELEASES (CONTINUED)

Nintendo made *Castlevania* portable for the *GameBoy* in 1989. This installment, called *Castlevania: The Adventure*, was set 115 years before the original game. It featured Christopher Belmont as the hero, one of Simon Belmont's ancestors. It had a sluggish pace due to the technology at the time. There were no secondary weapons or hearts. You could find whip upgrades, but once hit by an enemy or trap, you lost them. Altogether there were four stages, with a boss battle at the end of each stage. I'm sure you've already guessed that Dracula was the final boss. I regard this as the worst *Castlevania* ever and wouldn't own it even to complete my collection. I don't even like to include it in the *Castlevania* timeline.

Castlevania 3: Dracula's Curse is considered the best of the original *NES* versions by many Castlevania fans, with which I agree. In 1990, the series returned to its platform style after the change in Simon's Quest. A century before Simon's birth, Trevor Belmont began his own Dracula Crusade. Instead of just linearly flowing through the game, you were able to choose the next direction in which you wanted to go. Along the way, you would find secondary weapons and friends to help you, of which there were three different characters to help. First you had to find and defeat their spirit, and then it would give you the option of assistance. Sypha was a sorceress who wasn't physically strong, but was a magical powerhouse. Grant was a nimble pirate who could climb walls and change direction mid-jump. Alucard, Dracula's disloyal son, had the ability to shape shift into a bat and shoot fireballs. Each character had their pros and cons. At any point by pressing the select button you could change between Trevor and each character. You were only allowed to have one sidekick at a time, so choosing one was sometimes a difficult thing. Once defeating Dracula, the specific character with you determined the ending. You could also refuse any help and view a different ending for defeating Dracula alone.



In 1991, Nintendo shipped their new console called the *Super NES*. With a new 16-bit system on the market came a new *Castlevania*. *Super Castlevania IV* was supposed to take place after *Simon's Quest*, but was actually only an updated version of the original including a few added tweaks. Most of these enhancements were more levels, larger and better graphics, and the ability to swing Simon's whip in eight different directions. Along with the directional attacks, you could hold the attack, keeping it extended, and flail it about. It wasn't as strong as a normal attack, but it was very handy to deflect enemies' projectiles. One added feature I thought to be really sweet was the ability to use the whip like Indiana Jones and swing across chasms. It came in handy now and then, but was more fun that practical. I just liked making the Pitfall noise when using the whip. Secondary weapons were controlled by a separate button since the directional pad and attack button controlled the whip direction. I really liked that configuration. It was significantly better than the traditional "up-and-attack" on the NES versions. Being a remake of the original, there wasn't much difference in game play or level clearing. Instead of only seven levels, there were twelve. After you beat the game, you could restart with a higher difficulty.



Konami tried again to port a worthy *Castlevania* to the *GameBoy* in 1991. This time, they did a much better job. *Castlevania 2: Belmont's Revenge* put you in Christopher Belmont's boots as he tried to save his son from Dracula. Improved graphics, good music, the addition of secondary weapons, and seven levels made this a fun little handheld game. Konami gave players the option of which area to conquer instead of forcing us to run through each board. You had the choice between plant, earth, air, and crystal-themed castles to take on in any order. No one board was better or worse to complete than the others, so it made no real difference. The only downside was that there were only two secondary weapons. On the other hand, two weapons were better than none.

Sega finally got a taste of the Count with Konami's *Castlevania: Bloodlines* for the Genesis in 1994. Instead of using the Belmont clan, you played as John Morris or his friend Eric Lecarde. Set in 1917, John and Eric set off to stop Dracula's resurrection by his deranged niece Elizabeth Barkley. *Bloodlines* was a melding of the Castlevania series with Bram Stoker's book Dracula. John's father, Quincey Morris, sacrificed himself in order to defeat Count Dracula in the novel. John played the Belmont role wielding a whip. He was able to use the whip, *Super Castlevania*-style, to swing from overhead objects. Instead, Eric used a spear with which he could pole-vault. Each character's weapon could be upgraded and, took on a new look with each upgrade. There were only three secondary weapons, consisting of the axe, boomerang, and holy water. Instead of hearts, they were gem-powered. Not really a big change. You traveled to six different countries/stages, like Greece, Italy, France, and England, instead of just running around Castle Dracula the whole time. *Bloodlines* also gave you the ability to change the difficulty rating, becoming the first of the series to do so. Each difficulty setting determined your game's ending. Interestingly, it was the first *Castlevania* to show blood and gore in North America.

Super Nintendo owners waited four years before Konami made *Castlevania: Dracula X* in 1995. Let's just say it was the most mediocre of the 2D games made. Playing as Richter Belmont, you were tasked with saving your girlfriend, Annette Renard, from the evil clutches of Count Dracula. The year: 1788. The mission: Return to Castle Dracula and stake the vampire lord (I told you it was a reoccurring theme from the beginning). Richter used "Vampire Slayer" as his main weapon, with

CASTLEVANIA: NORTH AMERICAN 2D RELEASES (CONTINUED)

all the secondary weapons you've come to love and hear about in every game. The one really cool thing was the item crash ability. Each secondary weapon could be used for a super attack powered by huge heart consumption. You couldn't use the whip multi-directionally or keep it extended like in *Super Castlevania IV*. *Dracula X*, for some reason, also had worse graphics than *SC4*. This game boasted that it was the hardest and most aggravating *Castlevania* to date, which isn't all that good. Richter slogged along through the seven main levels and two hidden levels of the game. You had to find the hidden levels in order to rescue Annette and her sister Maria. There were different endings depending upon who you rescued, all of which were pretty lame.



Dracula X (SNES)

Finally, we come to the best, most innovative and visually stunning of all the 2D Castlevanias. You know and love it; the crown jewel of the series, *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* (SOTN). Released in 1997 for the Playstation, the game opens where *Dracula X* ends, with Richter slaying the Count. Four years later, Castle Dracula reappears unexpectedly and Richter is nowhere to be found. Alucard, who was in a self-imposed sleep, returns to his father's castle to find Richter's whereabouts and why the castle happens to be back. *SOTN* took on the best parts of previous *Castlevania* games and then some. It broke the mold by taking on a multitude of aspects from role-playing, adventure, problem-solving, and fighting games. The castle is an open world in which you could return to previous areas throughout the game. Alucard gained experience and up-leveled to increase his stats. The item menu returned and you could keep every item and weapon you found, but the traditional secondary weapon scheme was back. You could only carry one at a time.

Along with all the different primary weapons, familiars could be found. Each familiar up-leveled and became more powerful with greater usage. Alucard could also shape-shift into three other forms on command once you found the corresponding power orb. The bat, wolf, and mist were the different forms. Each form had power-ups to improve them. If you keyed the correct button configuration, Alucard would unleash one of his many special attacks, magic spells, or advanced abilities. Learning or finding them all wasn't necessary, but it made the game that much easier. The castle was actually comprised of two smaller, mirror-imaged castles. Each castle had 14 areas that contained puzzles, enemies, mini-bosses, secret areas, and larger sub-bosses. The inverted castle was much more difficult than the regular one. You enjoyed one of four endings determined by your actions and how much of the castle you explored. The more you uncovered, the better the ending.

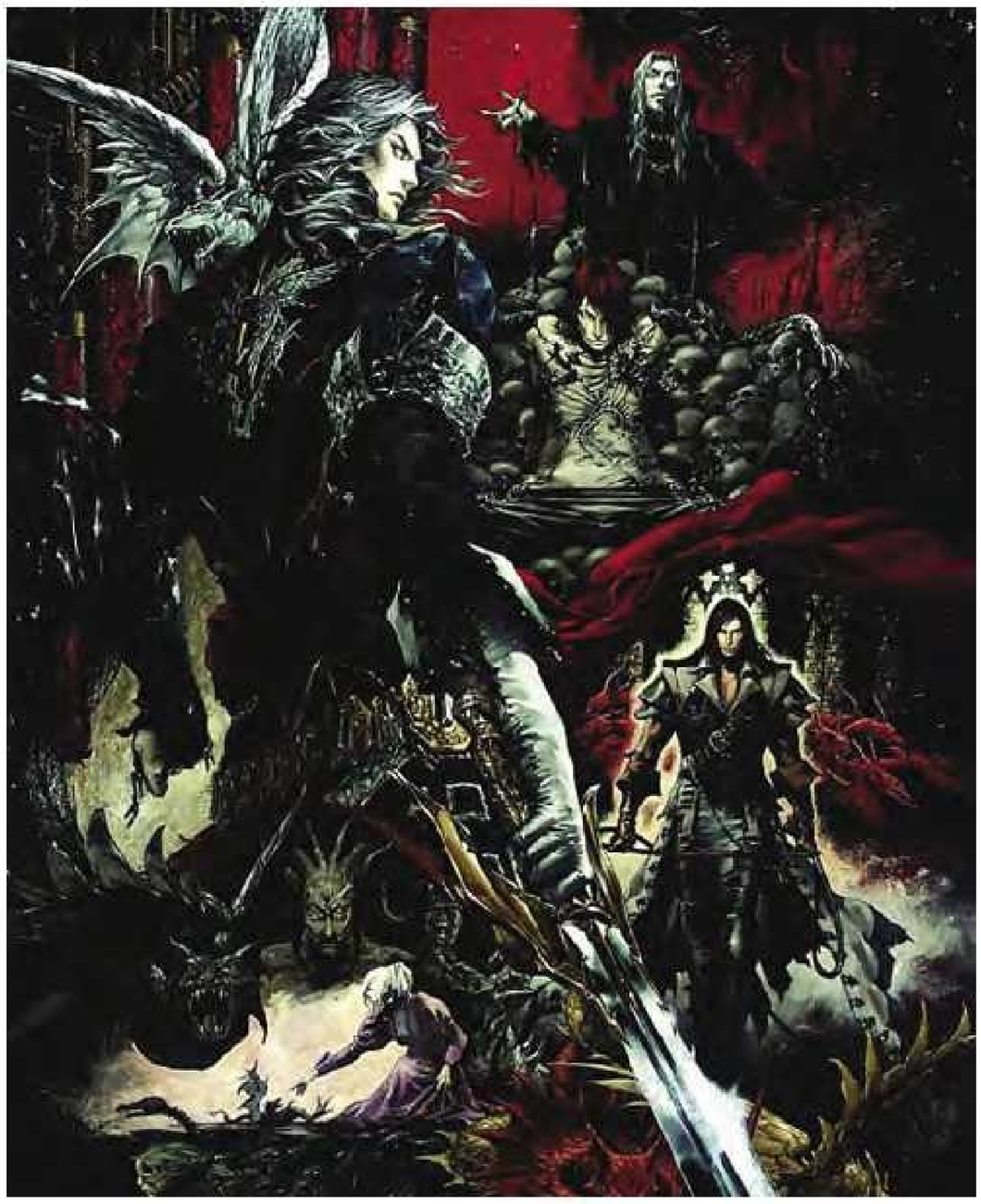


Symphony of the Night (Playstation)

Altogether, there are 24 games in or related to the series. Japan had many that were never released in the States, so there could be considered a number of timeline discrepancies. I did not cover them because I never got to play them; I am sure most of you didn't either. *Symphony of the Night* pretty much closed the curtain on the 2D side of *Castlevania*. Talk about going out with a bang. The handheld releases stayed with 2D, but every game released for home console has since been 3D. I could have spent more time with each game, but there just isn't enough space for me to put it all in a concise article. So, I tried to convey a decent idea of the game with a little opinion thrown in for color. Will Konami keep making new volumes to the Castlevania saga? I think so. As long as Dracula keeps coming back, a Belmont or slayer will always be there to take up arms against him.

"Indeed. But you must always remember that the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing..."

-Alucard



UNO TIP SHEET

By Sha



I will not deny that there is luck involved, but if you follow these rules you will have a better chance of winning.

TIP #1: REMEMBER THAT AS LONG AS EVERYBODY ELSE HAS CARDS YOU STILL HAVE A CHANCE.

This sounds simple, but I see so many people not grasping this concept. They are only worried about getting rid of *their* cards. Say you're playing a game; you draw and get one of the wild cards. Rather than playing that card and picking a color that you have, hold on to it. This does two things for you: First it allows you to change the color if another player throws down a wild draw4 and calls *UNO*. Secondly, if the color doesn't change to something you have, you have still will have the wild card at your beckoning.



TIP #2: CALL A COLOR YOU DON'T HAVE ON A WILD.

When throwing a normal wild card it may be beneficial for you to call the current color on the board if you don't have that color. Say the last card thrown by you was RED and everybody since then had to draw. If you throw the wild card and change the color you may be helping everybody else. Whose is to say that the color you started with is going to be the same color when it comes back to you? So throw the wild card, call RED (which nobody else has either) and let the other players continue to draw.

Now one of them will eventually pick up another wild card, the same color or a matching number. You may be thinking "what if one of the people receives a wild draw-4 card?" Well, when it comes back to you, if you have that color you can throw it, or if that person only has two cards left, you would probably want to change it back to RED and force them to draw. That all goes back to *tip #1*.

TIP #3: PAY ATTENTION!

Simple concept but so few do it. I have seen to many people challenge on wild draw-4 cards when their opponent drew it from the draw pile because they had no other playable cards.

Another scenario, the person across from you calls *UNO* and throws a draw-2 card. You don't have that color and have to draw. When you draw you pick up the color that is on board. Do not throw that card! The person that plays after you may have another draw-2 card, but if you change the color they may not be able to throw it. So you keep the draw-2 in hand and let them throw theirs.

TIP #4: JUST BECAUSE IT'S HIGHLIGHTED DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO PLAY IT.

Don't just throw the first card that is highlighted. Do you have multiple cards with the same number? Do you have more of one color then another? First throw should be the cards that you have multiple numbers of. The second card should be the color you have more of.

TIP #5: 0-POINT CARDS – PLAY ON UNO HOLD OTHERWISE.

If you have an *UNO* but have to draw and pick end up with a 0-point card and you can throw it then you should. If I have two or more cards and I pick up a 0-point card on a draw then I will hold it. That is really just my preference since there are no points involved, but it could stop you from going out later in the game.

TIP #6: IT'S A GAME.

Don't feel bad for feeding somebody draw-2 after draw-2, its just part of the game

TIP #7: HELP PEOPLE WHEN IT BENEFITS YOU.

This one is fairly straight forward. If you know your card will help someone and you can foresee it benefiting you then help them out.

PRESS RECOVERY

WHAT CAN SONY DO TO RECOVER FROM E3?

By Derf



Sony was unprepared for the competition at the 2006 E3 convention. Both Nintendo and Microsoft have their sights set on the lead and can claim a victory in the E3 public relations war. To recover from the E3 fiasco, Sony is going to need to address a few issues.

ISSUE #1: SONY NEEDS AN "EXTREME IMAGE MAKEOVER!"

Today, I asked on the forums (http://www.2old2play.com/modules.php?name=Forums&file=viewtopic&t=15429), "what do you think of Sony?" Most of the answers were quite negative. If you were to compare these answers to a year ago or in the pre *Xbox* days at the height of the *Playstation 2*, the answers would be quite different.



Sony has an image problem. Whether Sony believes it or not, it is perceived as the giant corporation that thinks it can drive the marketplace. Lately, Sony's rootkit copy protection scheme furnished further evidence. Rootkits permanently alter your computer's operating system and are difficult, if not impossible to remove without wiping and reinstalling the entire OS. Sony released audio CDs that, without your permission, installed a rootkit copy protection program. The rookits have been shown to cause problems in other areas on your PC.

Although a nuisance at first, Sony's insistence on proprietary hardware has increasingly displeased consumers. If you buy a Sony product, you need to use their memory stick format or their UMD disk for your PSP. Likewise, marrying the *PS3* to the Blu Ray HD-DVD system will further divide the gaming community. Is the *PS3* being made to push the Blu ray format? Ultimately, if Blu Ray wins the fight for HD-DVD, Sony will make more from sales of players than they will on *PlayStations*.

Sony's products are traditionally highly priced. The expected costs of the PS3 ($499 for a 20 Gig Hard Drive or $599 for a 60 Gig hard Drive) are significantly higher than its competitors. Sony needs to hire a good public relations firm and launch an advertising campaign to reconstruct its image. I truly believe that Sony does not grasp the size of this problem.

ISSUE #2: NINTENDO

Nintendo is on a roll. It started when "Nintendogs" came out for the *DS* and continued into E3 with spectacular demonstrations of the new *Wii* system. Nintendo targeted its device for the casual gamer on an average budget but with enough guts to please hardcore gamers.

The image Nintendo portrayed and conveyed at E3 is that Nintendo is about having fun in new and creative ways. Sony's *PS3* was touted as a gaming machine with superior processing capabilities that also does HD-DVD and has media capabilities. Sony failed to show any creativity in the way you play *PS3* games. The games look nicer, but in essence play the same as *PS2* games. Nintendo's controller will make the *Wii* unique.

How do you rebound from this dilemma? Is it time to go back to the drawing board and rethink the user interface? The *PS3* controller can sense motion but doesn't allow you to point and aim at the TV like Nintendo's wand. Perhaps an innovative add-on controller could be released later but marketed at launch. By touting the high end processing and graphics of the *PS3*, Sony seems to be targeting the hardcore gamer. Nintendo is targeting new, casual and hardcore gamers. This is a tough issue for Sony. In fact, both Sony and Microsoft have said that they would be the second console in each household after Nintendo.

ISSUE #3: MICROSOFT

Microsoft has a master plan to grab the market from Sony. The earlier release date of the *Xbox 360* was timed to get a jump on the next generation console market. Sony responded by putting together a more powerful machine but with each day, especially here in the US, Sony is slowly loosing the battle.

Sony's advantage with exclusive titles is slowly being devoured by Microsoft. Most notably, Rockstar's *Grand Theft Auto* series has now jumped ship to Microsoft. Although Microsoft has a somewhat dubious image, the company has worked hard to gain the respect of gamers. Sony will be hard pressed to put together anything close to Microsoft's *Xbox Live*. Microsoft unveiled *"Xbox Live Anywhere"* at E3, which allows you would have one gamer tag across Windows Vista, *Xbox 360* and Windows Mobile. It will be possible to start a game on the *Xbox 360*, play it on your phone on the way to work and then on your office PC. Microsoft's OS advantage is huge!

Sony needs to get the *PS3* out as soon as possible in order to rebound from this position. If Sony misses Christmas, 2006, and Nintendo goes ahead with their launch as scheduled, Sony will be in trouble. The PS3 has to come out by Christmas for them to have a chance of catching Microsoft. Additionally, Sony may have to lower their price in order to compete.

ISSUE#4: WHERE IS THE WOW FACTOR?

"WOW factor" is what I call seeing something and thinking, "WOW, I got to have that." Nintendo's *Wii* has WOW factor with its controller. Microsoft's *Xbox 360* has already given gamers the WOW factor graphically and with its seamless integration into *Xbox Live*.

So far I have seen no WOW from Sony. Even the *PS3*'s interface is much the same as the *PSP*'s. I have no doubt Sony's hype machine will crank up full speed as launch nears, but what will the company tout to give the *PS3* the WOW factor? Sony needs to find something to generate that "I got to have it" mentality in gamers.

Sony is in a tight spot. They only have five months to fix their image, combat both Nintendo's and Microsoft's superior positions, and get that "WOW factor." If Blu-ray catches on and becomes the dominant format, many may buy the *PS3* just to watch movies. Even though Blu-ray has more storage, history has shown that superior technology doesn't always win. Sony should know this from the Beta/VHS format war.

Perhaps Sony and Microsoft concentrated on each other and forgot about Nintendo. Although Nintendo's strong showing has damaged both companies' positions in the gaming market, Sony is going to be hurt the most since they have no product on the shelves.

As gamers, we reap the benefits of the three-way competition for our dollars. If Sony fails, then perhaps the next generation of consoles will not be as imaginative, innovative or exciting.

XBOX 360 ACHIEVEMENTS

REINVENTING THE GAMING ADDICTION

By CodeMonkey

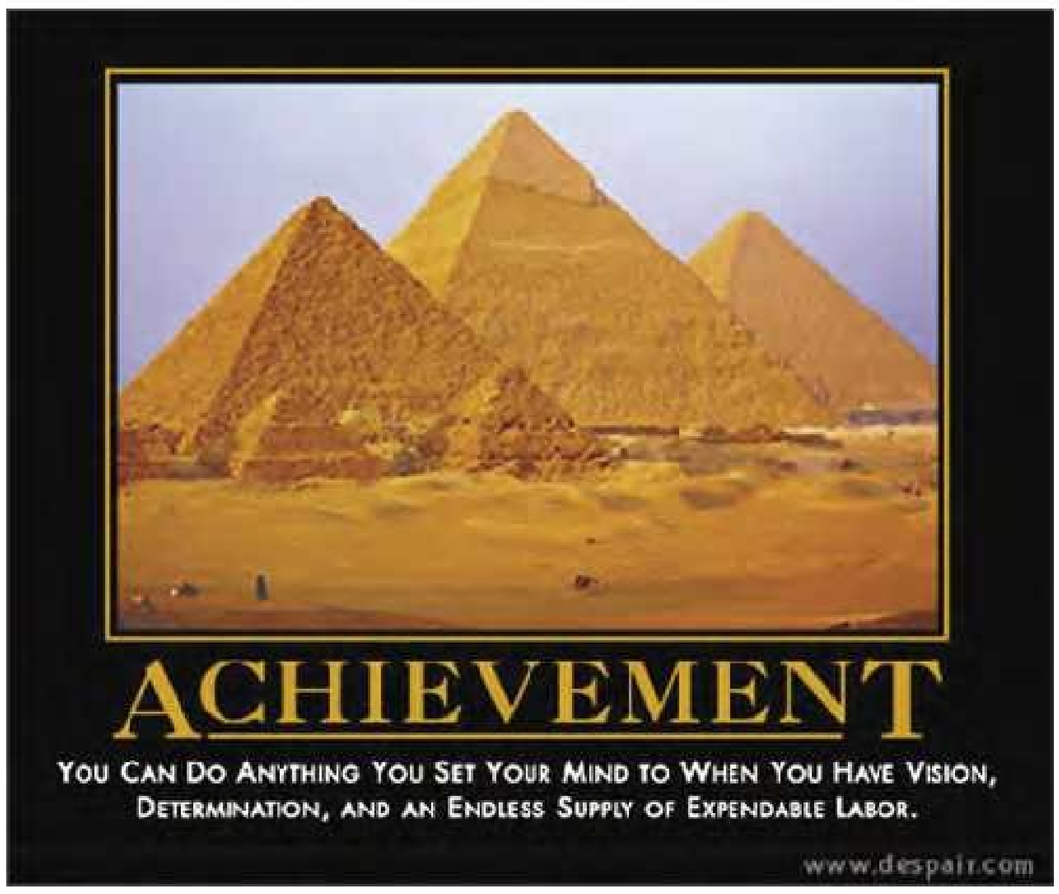


Until now we have been playing games just long enough to defeat them so that we can feel a strong sense of satisfaction and accomplishment. In single player gaming environments we have learned that once the game has been beaten and we've seen the scrolling credits, its time to shelf the game or sell it off to our local EB Games, GameStop, or other game outlet. The *360* achievement system gives the casual gamers and the hardcore gamers one more outlet for their addiction. For years I have been playing games and occasionally beating them, but the end result is always the same: shelf the game for life. The *360* achievement system changes all that by making games' full feature set more desirable. The game, of course, will not last forever but the reply value increases and thus the money spent will become more justifiable.

This system also gives the hardcore gamer who lives for "stats" a reason to exist. Let's start with the basics, what exactly is a gamer score and *360* achievements for those that have yet to obtain the mystical *Xbox 360* at local stores?

The *360* achievement system is a set of 1000 gamer points (GP) or 200 GP for downloadable arcade games that a developer can program into their game. You can achieve these points in many ways. Here is a breakdown of different gamer point distributions:

- Defeating the game: Almost all games for the *Xbox 360* give some number of achievement points for finishing a game on regular, hard, and/or hardcore. For example, *Madden NFL '06* gives you a set number of achievements for winning a Franchise Super Bowl, *Project Gotham Racing 3* gives you a varying number of gamer points for winning the championship on its varying levels of difficulty, and *Call of Duty 2* gives you either 150GP for defeating the Axis on Easy thru Regular and 200GP for defeating the Axis on 'veteran' or 'hardened' difficulty. You also get all GP for every level of difficulty if you started the game on hard. In the case of *Call of Duty 2* you would get 200GP + 150GP instantly by beating the game on veteran/hardcore level the first time around.



- Level Accomplishment: Each level you beat may give you a smaller value of GP, such as Condemned which hands you 10GP every time you win a chapter in the game, or *Call of Duty 2* which shells out 60GP every time you win a mission on Veteran difficulty (0 GP for completing it on any other level of difficulty!).

- Exploration: Developers put a lot of time and effort into game level design and they reward you for searching it all out with gamer points. *Kameo* will hand out varying degrees of gamer points for finding certain items hidden in the game. These *360* achievements are can be unlocked (they do not give you the cause and effect for obtaining the achievements... you have to figure them out on your own or buy the strategy guide). *Condemned* has very extensive (albeit dark) scenarios that can hide many secrets (and enemies). Gain 10GP if you find the "*Static TV Xbox 360*" that's sitting on a desk in a subway system behind a hidden entrance blocked by a large desk. You gain another 10GP every time you find a dead bird in each chapter. In *Project Gotham Racing 3* you can become an "Arcade Player" (worth 15GP) if you find the two hidden games of *Geometry Wars* and play them each once.



- Persistence: Games like *Quake* and *Condemned* have scenarios that give you gamer points if you complete a certain level with a specific type of item. Perhaps you have to finish three levels of *Condemned* with only a melee weapon to unlock "Silver Melee Master Award" or complete a level using only the nail gun in *Quake* to receive 10GP for the "Tooth and Nail" achievement. Not only must you master a game, but you must master it with all weapons, all types of battle, and multiple times. *Project Gotham Racing 3* serves up some gamer points every time you collect a series of vehicles (i.e. all the Lamborghini's in the game, the entire Ferrari's collection and all the Exotic Cars). In order to buy all the vehicles needed to gain all achievements in this area you must continue to play the game and build up a bank roll to spend on cars you may or may never actually use.

- Continues Play: Some games reward you for playing their game for a long period of time. *Project Gotham Racing 3* has an achievement known as "Gotham Hero" in which you gain 30GP if you play online and are selected to be on *PGR3*'s *Gotham TV*. You cannot simply go into the game click a button and get 30GP; you have to continue to play until you're randomly chosen for TV time. *Madden NFL '06* has an achievement known as "Complete 30 Years of Franchise" and it requires you to play the game for a long extended period of time (even simulating the 30 years of game play takes hours).

XBOX 360 ACHIEVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

- Milestones: The easiest gamer points to receive are those based on gaming milestones. *Kameo* gives you 20GP for finding different Elemental Warriors throughout the game, and 100GP for saving key characters from the arms of the enemy. These milestones are not avoidable if you play the game through to the end. They simply give you a reward for doing your job and saving the world from the clutches of evil.



- Online Play: Some gamer points can only be gained if you play online with other people or Co-Op with friends. This is true with *Project Gotham Racing 3*, *Kameo*, *Joust*, *Dead or Alive* and others. A very creative marketing idea to pressure users into buying an *Xbox Live* account! This also pressures the reclusive gamer to try their hand against other humans and become an interactive semi-social being.

- Developer Satisfaction: The developers have invested time and energy into each part of the game and they want you to invest time and energy playing it even if you do not find it exactly interesting. This category covers all parts of a game that a normal gamer probably doesn't care about but will play simply to gain achievements. This is true in *Project Gotham Racing 3* where they make you run time trial races against yourself to get a top lap score (which occurs 100% of the time if you've never run the track before). Or by taking photographs in different towns on different tracks. Realistically nobody cares to do all this "grunt work" but if it fetches you 20GP then you'll do it just to do it, right? I did.

I believe at least 60% of all *Xbox 360* achievements can be gained by the casual gamer. You will find that certain games make it easier or require less skill to fetch a large number of gamer points (i.e. *Madden NFL '06* all achievements can be unlocked on 'easy' if you so desire). Other games like *Call of Duty 2* give you 2 whole achievements for completing the game on regular mode. A hardcore and persistent gamer can complete all *Call of Duty 2* achievements by running the game in "veteran" mode from start to finish. It's all about the stat's baby!

Let's focus on the gamer that goes out of their way to have the best statistics in any game they play. They want to be a master of the game and they want the world to know it. The *Xbox 360* achievement system is perfect for this because it lets you compare apples to oranges!

Joe Bob may have 4,000 GP and his buddy Billy Bob only has 3,400 GP. Joe Bob is a master gamer and Billy bob is just a wanna-be, right? Wrong! Considering Joe Bob is a sports genre gamer and can obtain almost 3,000 GP by playing through three EA Sports games and then rents another five games and achieves only 20% all the given achievements for each game. Joe Bob only owns four games and has completed all the achievements on his first three and recently went out and purchased a new game and has 400GP on that one. The magic of "apple to orange" comparison is that it simply does not matter because statistics are statistics and Joe Bob has more numbers.

The *Xbox 360* website (http://www.xbox.com/) allows you to view your achievements and compare your achievements to other gamers. This allows you to see game per game breakdowns to how you stack up against the competition. If your buddy has the "Platinum Champion" achievement in Project Gotham Racing 3 and you only have "Bronze Champion" the chances are he/she will destroy you in an online racing competition because he has invested much more of his/her blood sweat and tears into the game.

THE ADDICTION

Most casual gamers like me will probably find the *360* achievement system as baseline for deciding if a game is "complete" or not. You can win *Call of Duty 2* in regular mode and be satisfied with this lofty task. On any other gaming platform I would call the game "beat" by achieving the end of game credits. But not so with the *360* achievement system! Why? Because 2 out of 13 achievements (finisheing "training camp" and beating the game on normal gives you 2 achievements) is not, in my mind, considered "beat" by any stretch of the imagination. If I master this game on veteran level I will have truly defeated this game and would feel proud and satisfied with my gaming experience.

This new gamer score system allows one to remove the concept of "beat" based on playing a game until there is no more game to play. Your replay value rises, your need to find all the hidden secrets goes up, and finding challenge where there was never a challenge (try defeating a hard level with a pistol rather then a chain gun and you'll see the difficulty). All this extra effort is applied simply because a development team has put goals and milestones on a game that go far beyond simply "beating it."

You cannot always put a game on the shelf to collect dust knowing you have only satisfied 10% of its expectations!



HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION

How many of us can say to others: *"Zelda?* Oh yeah, I beat that back in '87." A true gamer has spent countless hours toiling through the dark depths of gaming. Beaten Mother Brain, saved Princess Peach, or found the Red Ring. Yet all we have now are recollections of such great victory. Fireside talk and great stories of challenges overcome and victories obtained. All that is in the past…

…until now. The *Xbox 360* achievements are part of your *Xbox 360* profile (even for silver account holders). You can look back and see your "Bankshot Champion" achievement in *Bankshot Billiards 2*, or your "Bling" achievement from collecting 10 treasure chests on *Xbox Live* in *Gauntlet*. You can show your friends and compare your past experiences with one another. You have documented proof of your victories with a web browser in hand, and in years you can look back at your twenty games and say to yourself "1000 of 1000 and 20,000 gamer points – I am a true gaming master."

"JEDI MASTER YOU WILL BE WHEN HIGH GAMER SCORE YOU HAVE." –MASTER YODA

A true gamer is one that masters all game genres and has defeated all challenges. In past years you could simply talk the talk now you can provide evidence of your masterful gaming prowess, your aptitude to overcome all obstructions, and documented evidence of achievements! To stand up and scream "I am the übergamer and you are simply my pawn!!"

STREET FIGHTER: THE SERIES

By CodeMonkey



In 1987, the arcade game *Street Fighter* came to market. The name *Street Fighter* is known by the gaming community as one of the founding fathers of fighting games. The characters this franchise birthed are known throughout the gaming industry and share a special spot in the hearts of fans. *Street Fighter* was not a simple set of sequels, but a huge franchise of game releases with a new arrival every year for over eight years.



Street Fighter was a straight-up fighting tournament where Ryu would fly through different countries and battle two of the nations' top fighters in a two-out-of-three 'winner takes all' match. Once defeating a nation's fighter, Ryu went through a bonus round, and then off to another country for his next challenge. The last two opponents were met in Thailand, and the game finished once Ryu defeated that challenge.

The original *Street Fighter* had limited features. The game's character selection was simple: Player-1 was Ryu and Player-2 was Ken. One of the hit characteristics of the fighting genre is character selection. The character you played in the arcade release depended on which side of the machine you selected; this differentiated player-1 from player-2. *Street Fighter* lacked the character selection and made very little impact in the industry during its first release.

The game controls for the original *Street Fighter* were pressure-sensitive and only contained two large buttons that used hydraulics to determine attack power. Capcom soon realized just how hard gamers smash buttons and many of the original arcade systems would go offline with broken buttons. The result of this innovative game control system failure was the evolution into the six button control layout. That six button layout became the *Street Fighter* series' standard configuration.

One design from the original game that has pervaded all in the series is the series of secret moves performed by Ryu and Ken. *Hadouken*, *Shouryuken*, and *Tatsumaki Senpu Kyaku* were the three signature screams synonymous with Fireball, Dragon Punch, and Hurricane Kick. These secret moves were re-used in all the *Street Fighter* sequels and have been spoofed in movies, videos, and by friends pretending to battle each other. One way to test if your friends are retro gamers is to pretend to shoot a fireball at them while yelling "Hadouken!" If they stare blankly at you, then they've never truly lived.

When people think *Street Fighter*, most are really talking about the 1991 *Street Fighter II* arcade classic. Even Capcom plays down the fact they produced the original *Street* Fighter; all anniversary collection *Street Fighter* series start with *Street Fighter II*. This version of *Street Fighter* resuscitated into a dying arcade industry. This release offered eight unique characters to complete the game with fighter combos, complex moves and fast paced well-timed fighting. This game was a hit because of all of the great features, and continued to be mastered by gamers of all ages due to its intense action and fluid attacking style. A player could perfect combinations that allowed no breath from their opponent and could put them down in seconds. A veteran *Street Fighter II* player was an extremely hard person to defeat.



As *Street Fighter II* was created by Japanese company, a few character names were "lost in translation." The three characters in question are: Vega, M. Bison, and Balrog. In Japan, Mike Bison (known as M. Bison in the US) was a boxing character with a similar resemblance to Mike Tyson. Capcom did not want to start any li-


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STREET FIGHTER: THE SERIES (CONTINUED)

censing issues with the popular US boxer of the same time, so they renamed Mike Bison to Balrog. Unfortunately, Balrog was already a character within the game, so they renamed the original Balrog to Vega. Yet again, Vega was a pre-existing character so they renamed him to the shortened name M. Bison. This causes confusion when speaking about a specific character in a specific country in which this arcade series existed. When the Japanese talk of Vega, they are actually talking about the character in a red military uniform (the US version of M. Bison). When a US gamer talks of Vega they are speaking about the character wearing a mask and a sharp metal claw (the Japanese version of Balrog). Confused yet?



Street Fighter 3 (Arcade)

The biggest impact *Street Fighter II* had on the gaming industry was the new desire for competitive fighting games. The *Street Fighter* series was not the first fighting game to hit the arcade. Data East created a fighting game in 1984 known as *Karate Champ*, but it did not inspire as many companies to jump on the fighter bandwagon as *Street Fighter II* did. The second release of *Street Fighter* was the culmination of all fighting style games before it, and brought to the table new features and new creative battle styles that elevated video game battles and sheer violence to new levels. *Street Fighter II* was a great influence in one of the most well known fighters of that century: *Mortal Kombat*.

A year after *Street Fighter II*, a new release called *Street Fighter II': Championship Edition* hit the market. The apostrophe in the title was used to represent the word *Dash*, so the full name, in Japan, would be *Street Fighter II Dash: Championship Edition*. This release allowed players to use the four bosses as characters and also addressed a few game balance issues with the original arcade hit. The last big update was the ability to have two players select the same character and alter the character's costume to differentiate the combatants. The costume coloring system and "same character combatants" would be copied in many future fighting games.

Once *Street Fighter II': Championship Edition* became a staple arcade smash hit it would be ported to the *Super Nintendo Entertainment System* (SNES) as *Street Fighter II*. By the middle of 1992, home console owners would be able to participate in this coin-op classic. The cartridge based *Street Fighter II* was heavier than all other games at that time because of its high storage density, weighing in at 16-megabits (or 2-megabytes). Regardless of physical game size it was still a stripped-down arcade version lacking some frames of animation, graphic detail and was 17% slower than the arcade iteration. The home release was not a perfect representation of the original coin-op because the older slower SNES hardware of that time just could not keep up, but it was a must-buy for home console fighter enthusiasts.

Street Fighter II' Turbo: Hyper Fighting was released at the tail end of 1992. This version of the game was complete with special air attack techniques, new moves for some characters, bug fixes, game balances and the popular 'turbo' mode. The turbo mode increased the overall speed of the game, which created a more intense battle and was a favored feature by gamers. In 1993, Capcom released yet another *Street Fighter* game in the series with *Super Street Fighter II: The New Challengers*. This included four new characters, a large number of bugs, battle imbalances, and new artwork/animation for all the characters/moves. This was not known to be one of the hotter versions of the franchise. This release was rumored to have shipped too early from development in order to combat the recent release of *Mortal Kombat II*.



Street Fighter 2 (SNES)

To this day, the fan favorite in the *Street Fighter* series was *Super Street Fighter II Turbo*, which made its first appearance in 1994. This colossal release contained all the best parts of the past three games in the series with the best set of fighter balances, air juggles and overhead throws. Each one of these new features assisted in combating "cheap moves," or moves that players would repeat over and over to avoid retaliation. Above all, the game contained the additional 'turbo' speed and graphical enhancements from its predecessors. It can be considered the "greatest hits" of *Street Fighter* all rolled into one final release.

STREET FIGHTER: THE SERIES (CONTINUED)



Street Fighter EX (Playstation)

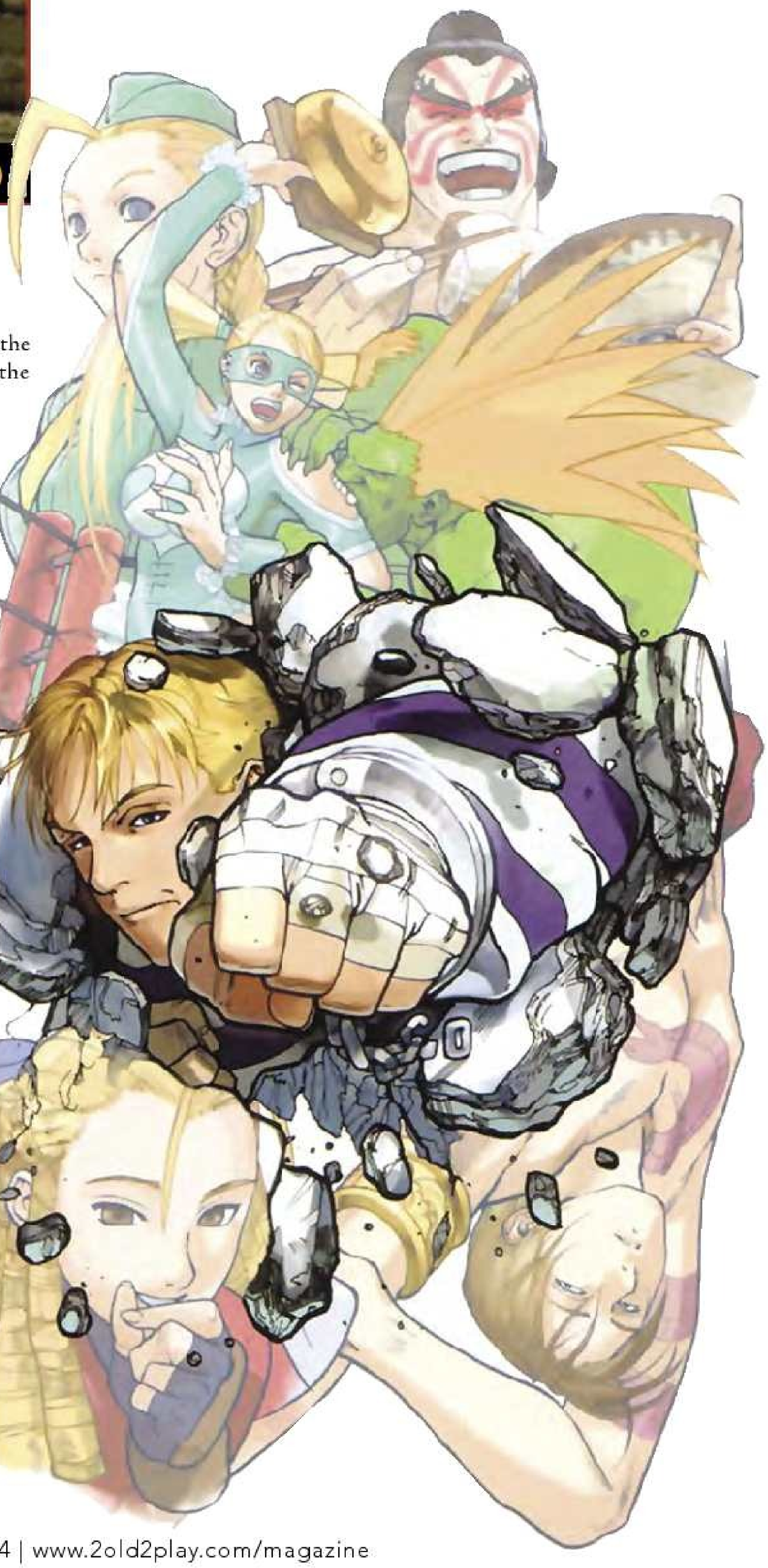
Capcom did not end with *Street Fighter II Turbo*. In 1995, they released *Street Fighter Alpha*, which was a complete re-write in almost all aspects of the series. The game play was entirely different, the graphics were anima style and drawn more youthful than the rest of the series. One major upsetting factor was the game's restriction on allowing the player to select from four of the original cast of characters. The *Alpha* series was a prequel to *Street Fighter* and spawned two game releases: *Alpha* 2 and in 1998 *Street Fighter Alpha* 3. Each new release was a little better and a little more balanced from the last.

Finally, Capcom created *Street Fighter III – The New Generation* in 1998. Although this release was simpler than the *Alpha* series, it contained new parries and more complex combo attacks. The game did not win over all of the *Street Fighter* fans even with its ramped up frames of animation and graphically stunning look. Perhaps the downfall to *Street Fighter III* can be blamed on the rapid decline of the arcade market and the competing 3D fighter games. *Street Fighter* was a 2D game and as times changed to three dimensions. *Street Fighter III* missed the ride and maintained its 2D perspective on life.

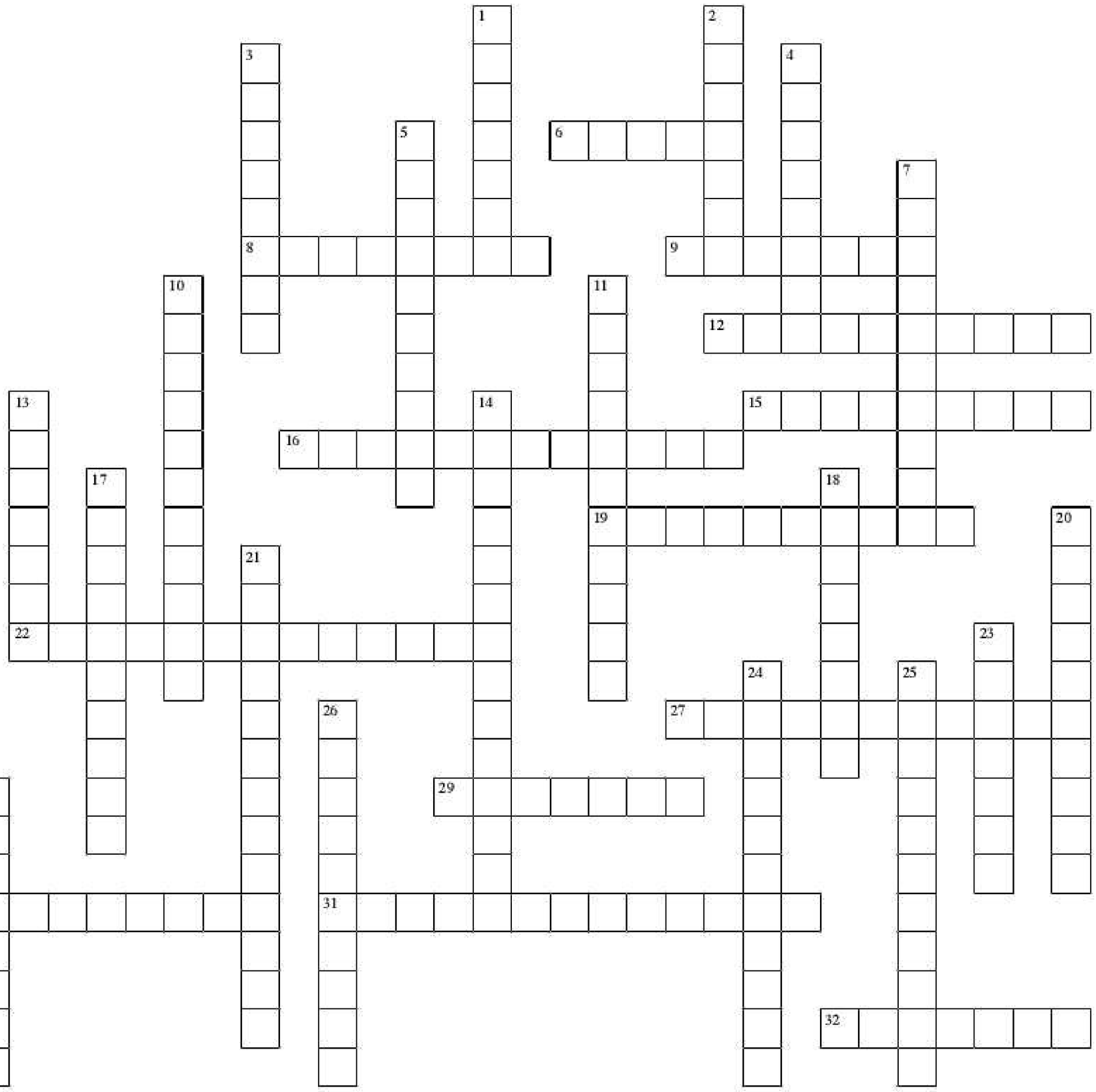
Capcom went on to create *Street Fighter III: 2nd Impact* and *Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike* to round out the 2D series of fighters. Many avid *Street Fighter* fans believe *3rd Strike* was the best in the series, while others consider *Super Street Fighter II Turbo* to own that title. However, the days of *Street Fighter* were numbered, as competing games went full 3D and contained power-house graphics and game play. *Street Fighter EX* was a 3D version of the series but still "played" as a 2D game in a 3D world. This game series is not as memorable as the others, but does demonstrate that Capcom did attempt to get into the 3D world.

Today we await the *Xbox 360 Marketplace* to provide us with our *Street Fighter* fix. Microsoft and Capcom are working to put *Street Fighter II': Hyper Fighting* on the *360* platform in 2006. Although the game release has been plagued with delays, the reasons are clear: it's hard. Porting an original arcade hit to a hardware platform 15 years newer is no easy task. In order to preserve the games unique battle timing and game balance the entire game must be migrated to the new hardware flawlessly. Each release of the *Street Fighter* series was an enhancement from the prior with a typical amount of bug fixing and game balancing. The *360* port must be re-implemented perfectly or the community with be up in arms.

Looking back at the evolution of *Street Fighter* can be difficult because all of the games in the series are slight upgrades from the ones before them and over time become a blur. Die hard *Street Fighter* fans will know exactly which of the series they love the most, but for the majority of us, we are just happy to say we played one or more of the classic *Street Fighter* games.



Games and Names



ACROSS

6 The warriors name translates to "Anger" and was the first part of the title to this SNK classic in1986.
8 Arcade game developed by Taito in 1986 based on Atari's Breakout sixteen years before it.
9 The object of the game: guide your frog home.
12 A poorly designed tank game for the NES.
15 M. Bison, in Japan, was the name of a character in Street Fighter who was originally a spoof on this popular US contender.
16 Namco racing game from 1982.
19 Apparently, from E3 2006, we'll see this game on the PSP!!!!
22 A 3D based fighting game developed by Sega in 1993. It probably made Street Fighter look like a kids toy.
27 A Techmo fighting game.
29 The most widely ported video game in existence. You control castles and cannons.
30 That damn game where the dog always laughs at me!
31 The first issue published in July/August of 1988 covered Super Mario Brothers 2 which was also featured on the front cover.
32 Mario wasn't building a meth lab, but he was working with a large set of drugs.

DOWN

1 A ninja named Joe Musashi has to stop an evil group of men called "Zeed."
2 A ninja-style warrior must defeat a legendary being known as Grandmaster Meio.
3 The title is a combination of the names Famicom and Xanadu, and was a NES RPG.
4 Arcade game released by Midway in 1975 set in the old west.
5 This game was first developed by Sega with the help of Mr. Jackson himself.
7 Your role as Peter Pepper is similar to that of pac-man, but replace pellets with lettuce and meat, hold the mayo.
10 The second game in the "Soul" series.
11 The first ever first-person racing game, created by Atari Inc.
13 The theme of the game involved players competing in a violent gameshow of "the future." The future was the far reaching year of 1999.
14 A forgotten realms RPG epic - volume one, in 1988.
17 Objective seems simple: control your stick figure and collect all the gold in the level while avoiding the robots.
18 It is a classic, but it's unclear why any teenager would like the game given they probably held this job to supplement their allowance. Why play it for fun?
20 Wargame designed by FASA in 1984.
21 This wrestling game offered cut scenes from Ted DiBiase, Andre the Giant, and Virgil. "Mean" Gene Okerlund also made an appearance.
23 Lara Croft is a female archaeologist from this country.
24 This Rockstar Game doesn't have prostitutes.
25 A 1984 fighting game developed by Tecnos Japan Corporation and is known as one of the first fighting games.
26 Round 3.
28 In 1988 this side scroller fighting game put the players in the role of Blade and Stryker bent on saving "President Ronnie."

T G A U D R A C U L A S J O H T H

N H C G F E T U O N R U B K T J E

E H I H J Q C O G E G B G U N D N

D W T E K I O T T I K K L A X K W

D T T W F Z M S G T E L T N U A G

A S T T P O U R R F S R A C R I B

M N M N I B A N D N M R R O O I V

L W Y I T W W O I R A W C W C J I

P W T S S D I D X R D Y H P R Z Y

Z Q O E N E S B B G T D O C O U J

G H T P B O H G R E F Z P N T B F

G X M G K N A T N O R I L V A U F

K K K T U U D E L B A F I G I D D

L Z S M O O R H S U M P F K D U W

N B Y R C R A F Z U I L T V A K W

C K O D D W O R L D C Q E O L N F

N M S L P S H R X Y T V R W G J S

Burnout
Cars
Choplifter
Dracula
Fable
Far Cry
Gauntlet
Ghostbusters
Gladiator
GRAW
Gun
Iron Tank
Klax
Madden
Mushroom
Odd World
The Sims
Thief
UNO
Wario

Q&A WITH MIKEJAMES

ALL THE ANSWERS TO ALL YOUR QUERIES

Dear Mike,

If you pass wind while wearing active camo, does it make a sound? Will it smell? I need to know Bitch!

"FairyFli"

Dear FairyFli,

Hmmm, well, since this person did not put their name in their email to me, I'm going to call him by his first part of his email "FairyFli"
So FairyFli, hahaha, that even sounds stupid. If you pass wind while wearing active camo, it WILL SMELL! It WILL make a sound! Active camo only makes you invisible it doesn't take care of odors. You better go and shower FairyFli! HAHHAHAHAA

-MJ

Dear Mike,

How many miles does your liver have left before it hardens to a crystalline mass of rock salt?

Corcki

Dear Corcki,

I have absolutely no idea how many more miles my liver has left. I have no idea how many miles my liver currently has. Thank you for being so concerned for my health though. I have been considering have "Drunk-Fests" more often. I wanna make sure that my liver is good for winter time and ready to go for 2old2con cause I ain't passin out bitches!

-MJ

Dear Mike,

Did you know I'm a *Halo* 2 god?

Okjason

Dear Okjason,

Let me just say… no. I did not know you're a *Halo* 2 god. In fact, I think that nobody knows you're a *Halo* 2 god. Nowhere in the game does it say anything about Gods. You might be a guardian….but a god…I doubt it. Wait, I don't even think you're a guardian. They kill people in *Halo* 2 and you don't. I think you're probably a NOOB (another loser wanting everyone to think they are good at an almost 2 year old game).

-MJ

Dear Mike,

Are the people that rented your house still paying the rent?

Sha

Dear Sha,

Thanks for asking Sha but no. Those scumbags finally bought my house in Memphis. I'm guessing that what happened is that they popped out another kid and their welfare checks increased. Either that or the house is now being used as a meth-lab and they have become drug dealers. Nothing good is in Memphis or ever came out of Memphis. Yes, Elvis sucks!

-MJ

Dear Mike,

If you could pick anything to take one samurai chop at someone's head with, what would it be? The intent of course would be to do the most damage. I personally say a pick axe. Nothing that you cannot wield in your hands and swing.

P.S. - I am still somewhat confused on a question you danced around like a wh*re in church about last issue…why am I so awesome?

Rabb

Dear Rabb,

You are one messed up person. I think you need to take yourself to a nice quiet corner with a computer. Make sure it's hooked up to the internet and look up "Naked Females". At that point, masturbate. It seems like you have a lot of built up tension that needs to be taken care of.

I have never taken the time to sit and think about what I would use if I were to samurai chop someone's head off. If I had to though, I would pick a flail. If you don't know what it is, look it up. Definitely more damaging than a pick axe.

And for your P.S., I am a wh*re and haven't been to church in a long time cause well, I'm a wh*re. Once again, I must repeat myself for your illiterate ass….YOU ARE NOT AWESOME! You're slag at the bottom of King Drewski's toilet!

-MJ

Dear Mike,

Where do you get off throwing a drunkfest without me?

Taxisquad27

Well Taxi my drunk partner in crime, we didn't have a drunkfest without you. It was supposed to happen but I was too drunk and it was too impromptu to get anyone to play. Read the forums my man! Douche…

-MJ

Dear Mike,

Have you ever played a video game sober? Perhaps as a child?

CodeMonkey

Well Code, that is quite an interesting question. Have I ever played a video game sober. Yes. When I was a child I did not drink. I did not actually drink until I was 18 and in the military. Now if you ask if I've played an *Xbox Live* game sober, I will say Yes, but 1. It was a LONG time ago. I think I was playing with Lady in Red. Well, not that way perverts, like playing *Halo* 2. She asked me, "What are you drinking tonight MJ?" And my response was…water. I think that all my drinking caught up with me and I had to dehydrate. So yes, I have played a video game sober.

-MJ

Now some final thoughts…I have been reading the forum lately and people have been bickering back and forth over who's better at Halo *and the tournaments and such. Well, screw all that. If you want to find out who's better…IT JUST DOESN'T MATTER! People that play to have fun play in a MikeJames Drunkfest. If you don't know what a MikeJames Drunkfest is, check out the next issue of* 2o2p Magazine *cause I'm planning on telling you all about it. Trust me, it's something you won't want to miss!*

Also, if you have any questions you'd like me to answer, please feel free to send them to mike@2old2play.com.

Soon in Stores

RELEASE WATCH

THE ULTIMATE LIST OF GAMING GOODNESS SOON IN STOCK

XBOX 360

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Armored Core 4	1/1/07
Prey (with Bonus)	7/10/06

GAME CUBE

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Backyard baseball 2007	8/8/06
Barnyard	7/25/06
Madden NFL 07	8/22/06
Monster House	7/18/06

XBOX

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
NCAA Football 07	7/18/06
Fuel	7/25/06
Painkiller: Hell Wars	7/11/06
World Racing 2	7/25/06
Xyanide	7/18/06

PLAYSTATION 2

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Backyard Baseball 2007	7/18/06
D1 Grand Prix	7/18/06
Monster House	7/18/06
NCAA Football 07	7/18/06
Super Dragon Ball Z	7/18/06
The Ant Bully (with Bonus)	7/24/06
Ultimate Board Game Classics	7/5/06

NINTENDO DS

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Bubble Bobble Revolution	7/25/06
Freedom Wings	7/11/06
Hardcore Pool	8/1/06
Micro Machines V4	7/25/06
Monster House	7/18/06

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Blade Dancer	7/18/06
Def Jam Fight for NY: The Takeover	7/11/06
Miami Vice	7/18/06
Payout Poker & Casino	7/14/06
Tekken Dark Resurrection	7/25/06

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Barbie Compilation	7/18/06
Barnyard	7/25/06
B-Daman	7/25/06
Hot Wheels Compilation	7/18/06
Monster House	7/18/06
The Ant Bully	7/24/06

WINDOWS

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Big Oil: Build an Oil Empire	7/3/06
First Battalion	7/5/06
Glory of the Roman Empire	7/3/06
Guild Wars: Factions (collectors edition)	7/5/06
Kitty LUV	7/2/06
Outlaw Chopper	7/3/06
Terra Wars: NY Invasion	7/3/06

MACINTOSH

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Black & White 2	Q3 of '06
Call of Duty 2	Q1 of '06
Civilization IV	TBA
Fable: The Lost Chapters	Q1 of '06
Heroes of Might & Magic V	TBA
Quake 4	March 06
The Sims 2: Nightlife	March 06
Unreal Tournament 2007	TBA
World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade	TBA

