

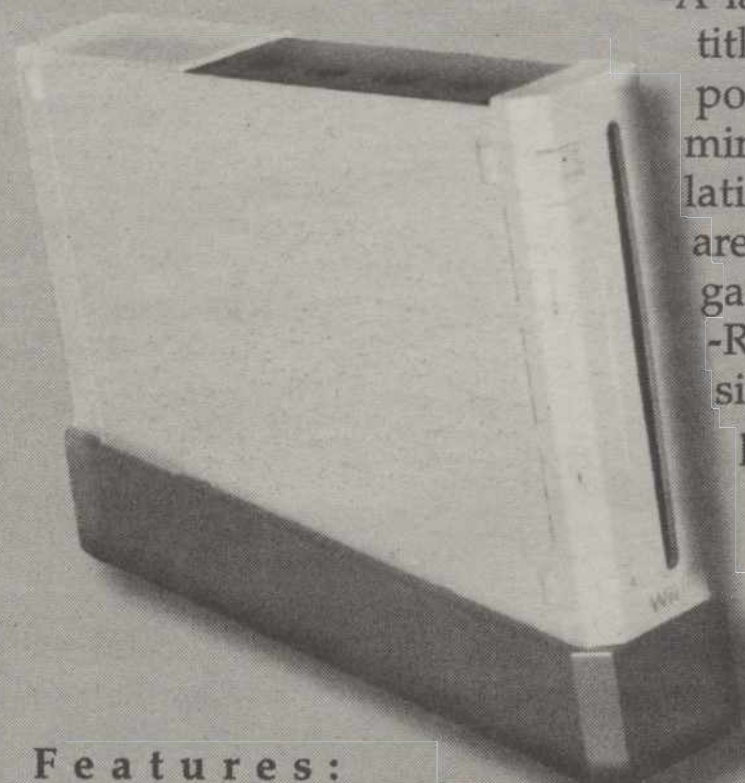
Consoles compete for your cash

In the video game world, the "console wars" have remained fierce. Three companies have been trying hard to win over customers for their game hardware and software despite these tough times, and each company has had to suffer as a result of the recession. How do each of the video game consoles stack up after being out for a couple years, and which is best for you when you have the extra money?

BENJAMIN MANN

Wii

Created by: Nintendo
Price: \$200 (includes Wii Sports)



Features:

Controller is remote for more interactivity, plays Gamecube games, contains many different "channels" such as the Weather Channel.

Notable games: Wii Sports, Wii Fit, Super Mario Galaxy, Super Smash Bros. Brawl, The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess

Pros:

+Strong downloadable library: many older titles can be played from Virtual Console as well as new ones through WiiWare.
+Family-oriented. Many games are designed for both young and old.
+Least expensive of the

consoles.

+Home to many of the most popular Nintendo series.

Cons:

-Least graphically advanced.

-A large amount of titles, but many are poor quality and mini-game compilations, and there are few "hardcore" games.

-Requires excessive amounts of peripherals.

-No downloadable content for Wii games from discs. Most online games are weak and require "friend codes."

The verdict: Began strong, but shows its age. Decent quality games have been few and far between lately, making it's worth questionable. Still, it contains some decent titles and can be good, wholesome fun for the family.

Playstation 3

Created by: Sony
Prices: \$500, (20 GB)
\$600 (60 GB)

Features: Blu-Ray, ability to connect to PSP, many things you can do such as listening to music on the internet; controller provides tilt

sensitivity, contains the Playstation Network for online play.

Notable games: Metal Gear Solid 4, LittleBigPlanet, Uncharted/2, Ratchet and Clank Future: A Crack in Time

Pros:

+Uses Blu-Ray discs which allow for very high definition and games with very large file size.

+Unlike the Xbox 360, Playstation Network is free and does not require a subscription.

+Some of the strongest graphics and speaker quality.

+Contains many features such as a web browser.

Cons:

-Very expensive: Consoles and games cost a large amount of money.

-Not a ton of exclusives compared to other consoles: many PS3 games are also available on Xbox 360.

-Bulky, heavy and somewhat clunky



design, though the Slim version is a bit better.

The verdict: An extremely ambitious and powerful console that started slow. Since then, it's become stronger with more features and available games. It could become the most successful of the three consoles, with games like Final Fantasy XIII on the way.

Xbox 360

Created by: Microsoft
Prices: \$400, (250 GB Elite) \$300, (120 GB Elite) \$200 (Arcade)

Features: Has a very strong online component with downloadable content, a very large hard drive depending on the version, smooth dashboard and interface.

Notable games: Halo 3/ODST, The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion, Gears of War/2, Fable II.

Pros:

+Xbox Live is a great feature that allows for online play and includes downloadable content both for games and original Xbox Live Arcade titles.

+Backwards compatible with many Xbox games.

+Good library: contains titles for the hardcore such as Halo 3, and more family-oriented ones such as Viva Piñata.

Cons:

-Can become expensive, especially the more advanced versions and having to pay for Xbox Live.

-Very prone to crashes. Many Xbox 360's have "Red rings of death" that cause the console to no longer work correctly.

-Prone to other issues as well, such as frequent disc read errors



and

freezes.

The verdict: Being released earlier than the other two consoles, the Xbox 360 still stands strong, if you can handle the cost. The console and games can be expensive, and the hardware itself can be spotty, but it offers a great collection of titles to satisfy hardcore gamers and has a strong online component to boot.



Ani and Maggie

ROCKY RELATIONSHIPS

Dear Ani and Maggie,

I am in love with a cheerleader, but the source of my problem is she only likes football players. However, I do not play football due to religious reasons. I cannot decide whether to abandon my God in order to appease my heart, or to live every day knowing I could be with the girl of my dreams. What should I do?

A Confused Man

Dear Confused,

If she is so close-minded that she refuses to give anyone but football players a chance, then she's simply not worth your time or attention. Do your best to forget about her.

Ani and Maggie

Dear Ani and Maggie,

I have a friend who I've known for a year or so. He's everything I look for in a guy. I told him I loved him a few weeks ago, and he said he wanted to be just friends with me. I've

still liked him ever since; he's basically the only guy I want as a boyfriend. Should I keep my hopes up for a real relationship? Even though I know he was honest in telling me we're just friends, am I crazy to think he might come around?

Thank you,

Lovesick Blues

Dear Lovesick,

You're not crazy, but it probably won't happen. If he specifically told you that he only wants to be friends, then it's likely what he really means. Though it's not impossible that he would change his mind, you definitely shouldn't wait around for it to happen. Put forth an effort to talk to other guys, and see if there are some great people you didn't know about before. For now, just try to enjoy his friendship while making other friends as well.

Ani and Maggie

Dear Ani and Maggie,

I am having a hard time

deciding which sport to play. I would love to take part in the Equestrian Team, but I already ride my horse five times a week. I have been so excited about the Equestrian Team, but it's also really expensive. Then there is the school Ski Team! I love to ski, but it would be the second best sport next to riding horses. However, my family loves to ski and it would be cheaper. Help! I want to be involved, but I can only afford, time and moneywise, to do just one.

Sincerely,
Stressing Sports

Dear Stressing,

Assuming that your parents are paying for your sports fees, you should talk to them about what they'd be willing to pay for. If they're fine with covering either cost, think about what you'd be happiest doing. If you join Ski Team, you'd still be able to ride your horse for recreational purposes, but if you do Equestrian Team, you'd probably

still be able to ski with your family occasionally. Make the choice based on what you want to spend the most time doing because being part of a sports team is a big time commitment. Good luck!

Ani and Maggie

Dear Ani and Maggie,

My boyfriend broke up with me last Tuesday. I'm really sad and I can't get over him. Yesterday I saw him making out with my best friend. I can't tell you how mad I am; I want to scream. What do I do? I don't want to lose my best friend, but it was a JERK MOVE. Thanks so much for your time.

Jealous Jill Without Jack

Dear Jealous,

You're absolutely right — it was really mean of them. You say you don't want to lose your best friend, but how much of a best friend is she if she went behind your back and made out with the guy you still have feelings

for? Talk to her and try to figure out why she did what she did. If she seems sincerely sorry, there's room for forgiveness, and the relationship can be repaired. As far as the boy is concerned, forget about him. As hard as it may be to hear, he's over it if he has already moved on to other girls so quickly, and you'd be better off focusing your attention on someone who may be interested in you too.

Ani and Maggie

Dear Ani and Maggie,

My pet velociraptor ate my parents last night, and I don't feel guilty. Why?

Oswald Greenfield III

Dear Oswald,

Maybe you're still in shock. Give the tragedy time to sink in, then seek counseling to help you through this hard time. It might also be best to part ways with your pet, who seems to be a destructive force in your life.

Ani and Maggie