

A&E Presents
For one night only!

Console vs. Computer

A fight to the death, death, death, death

LANs are LAME

All hail the PC

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There's always one at every LAN party. The guy who, for whatever reason, can't get Windows to post, and has to bum a pirated copy from somebody just so he can re-install his video drivers and hopefully get a game to run before the end of the weekend.

Sound familiar? This is what PC gaming really is: sweaty guys eating Cheetos™ and drinking Code Red™ until their bladders force them to push "pause." Then they proceed to huff around the room screaming obscenities because somebody killed them while they were in "the john." This is what the gaming community used to be, but the console gaming industry is setting out to change the way we think about gaming today.

Be it the Microsoft X-Box, the Sony Playstation 2, or the Game Cube from Nintendo, all a console needs to be functional is a television, something many families already own. Then, as if having a television handy wasn't convenient enough, most consoles end up in the family room or living room, so gamers can enjoy their

favorite pastime from the comfort of their own couch or favorite arm-chair. Unlike the PCs that drive players to ignore Mother Nature until it's almost too late, consoles are as convenient and comfortable as the homes they are sold into.

Console gaming systems also excel over those antiquated networks when it comes to multiplayer gaming. For the consoles, it's all about gamers enjoying the experience with their friends. Gamers don't have to worry about what the "other guy" has cooked up in his own personal hardware concoction because, save for their own individual controllers, they are all playing on the same system. Only when variables are removed is true skill allowed to shine through. Gamers can then applaud their friends' efforts, rather than curse them, bringing their own small community closer together.

Perhaps the largest advantage of all, however, is the technology that's been incorporated into not only the next generation of consoles (the X-Box 2 is due out this year, followed by Sony and Nintendo in 2006), but also the impressive new handhelds that are already gracing the store shelves. Features like the Sony PSP's 128-bit 3D image rendering and wireless multiplayer networks, in addition to the Nintendo DS' touch screen and "Download Play" capabilities have all been stuffed into a new crop of systems that fit into most people's back pocket. It's no wonder *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, *Game Informer Magazine*, *IGN.com* and *Iup.com* are all calling 2005 "The Year of the Handhelds/Portables."

Consoles are just simply more fun, and PC gamers sometimes forget that fun is what gaming was all about in the first place. I'm convinced that when PC guys see something in consoles they relate to, like the graphics on the X-Box 2 (which runs circles around my Dual-Athlon ... yeah, I said it), then the world will finally see that in the argument over PCs vs. Consoles, the geeks never had a chance.

PC games are better. It is as simple as that. Don't get me wrong, I like console games. I own a Playstation 2 and an X-Box as well as a PC, but console games just cannot compare to PC games.

There are a number of reasons that I like PC games better. You can get patches to fix bugs, you can get mods for them, built-in technology that supports online multiplayer, and technology changes so fast, the games you get are always using up-to-date technology instead of making games on a console system that will not change for at least three years or more.

There are downsides to PC games of course. It's hard to keep up with the game requirements sometimes and even though you can upgrade your computer, it costs money, so consoles have the advantage in that people don't have to invest as much money in initial costs and continuing upkeep to play both.

PC games excel because the built-in support for many things that console games lack, like online multiplayer. Yes, both current consoles have the ability to play online, but in order to get it you have to buy a separate attachment, whereas most computers have a connection already and almost all PC games nowadays have built-in multiplayer support instead of just a few games here and there.

Also, PC game mods are also very good part of PC gaming: new multiplayer maps, new weapons, new single-player missions and campaigns, heck even whole new eras of play. So if you buy a new game, beat the game in single-player mode, and you're tired of the same old multiplayer maps, no problem; just download new areas to play in. It is not too difficult to find them on the internet.

Another area is the program glitches or bugs that plague every game. You cannot fix these bugs on console games, but with

PC games all you have to do is go to the game's official website and download a patch. More often than not, the patch enhances game play and introduces things into the mix, which is more than enough to offset the minor annoyances of downloading and installing the patch.

Console games have their place, but games have many advantages that more than offset any extra stuff you have to do with because you are playing on a PC. PC gives any games played on it advantages. The downsides are then, of course, like the fast pace of technology coming out for the PC on an almost weekly basis, but because of all the extra features you can get with a PC, it is more than enough to offset any disadvantages you get by playing a PC game. Long Live the PC!



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Online fan fiction worth the search

Jeremy Freid
Über Nerd

Fan fiction used to be only written for oneself, but it has now leaped into the cyber age. Now readers can find many fan fiction stories written by the fans of different television shows, movies, and books. With all this fan fiction floating around, some may wonder where one can find it.

At www.rpgff.net, one can find a variety of fan fiction stories based on role-playing games, including "Final Fantasy," "Chrono Trigger," "Chrono Cross," and "Legend of Dragoon" and "Legend of Legaia." The stories are well-written, although some are taken from games with multiple endings and they sometimes leave out important details that would be necessary if one has not played the game(s) before.

The <http://fanfic.theforce.net> website is dedicated to "Star Wars" fan fiction, which is immensely popular on the internet. Many authors use the main characters from the theatrical films, but others use characters that were created by the authors them-

selves. The writing quality varies, but there are some remarkable story lines.

www.fictionalley.org is a quality fan fiction site that has nothing but Harry Potter stories. The fan fiction stories are organized into four categories: novel-length fiction, romance fiction, mystery and drama fiction and, of course, humorous fiction.

Last, but certainly not least, there is an amusing site devoted to "Xena: Warrior Princess" located at <http://www.xenafanfiction.com>. A well-organized site, each story is categorized by the first letter of the story. There are some interesting stories involving Xena on this site. There are so many stories on this site, one could easily get lost.

On a side note, be warned: there are stories out there with adult content in them.

These sites are just a few of the good ones out there, but be careful to avoid the bad ones out there if you are sensitive to certain subject matter. For every good fan fiction web site there are probably 10 bad ones. Unfortunately, there is no sure fire way to find good sites; one just has to go out there and find them.

What is fan fiction?
(for the laysurfer)

The world of fan fiction can be a confusing place if you've never visited it before. Here are a few terms that might be helpful in your searches.

Fan fiction: Stories that have been written within a fictional world already created by another writer, artist or creator of a television series, movie, video game or book. May include existing characters created within that world, or original characters that the "fic writer" creates on his/her own.

Slash: Fiction containing homosexual content or themes. Does not have to be adult content.

Alternate Universe: A storyline that diverts from that which the original creator has set out for a certain time period.

Canon: A storyline that keeps with the original creator's ideas within the timeline documented in the original series.