

PSP, DS special in their own way

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Sony's Playstation Portable and Nintendo's promising Dual Screen are very different, but both devices serve the same purpose of delivering a good time whenever a gamer gets that too-familiar twitch. So, without further adieu, let the battle of the PSP and the DS begin.

Sony's PSP, visually, has got to be the coolest thing since the invention of the picture tube. Its "X-Brite" LCD screen keeps a perfect 16:9 ratio, giving it the feel of a High Definition screen in the palm of the hand. Then the power of the unit itself puts even Sony's own

Playstation 2 console to shame, with a beautiful graphics engine, wireless internet capabilities, support for .mp3 and .mp4 audio and video files (respectively), and a removable memory card, the PSP is possibly the most versatile entertainment device ever made.

Sony has also started releasing feature-length films on proprietary Universal Media Disc format currently only supported by the PSP. The full-length "Spider-Man 2" movie shipped on UMD with the first 1 million PSP units sold in the United States, and recently "Kill Bill: Vol. 1" hit store shelves. While they function similarly to DVDs, with selectable chapters, multi-layered audio and multi-language subtitle formats, they also represent the first of the PSP's two major flaws.

The first major flaw in the PSP is that it's a Sony. This means every piece of software, every accessory, even the unit itself is, on average, 35% more expensive than competitors. The PSP is powerful, but DVDs cost half as much as UMDs, and can be viewed on a full-size screen when someone has two hours to focus on a movie instead of the environment around them.

Secondly, one of the main purposes of a portable gaming device (or most portable electronic devices in general) is that they're primarily used

in "on-the-go" situations. Killing time sitting on a bus, for example, or waiting in line at the bank are where portable devices thrive, so when Sony starts pushing things like full-length films and games like "Metal Gear: Acid" that take hours and hours of concentration, it's apparent that Sony is still very new to the concept of "gaming on the go."

Nintendo, the reigning king of portable gaming, hasn't even blinked at the blinding success of the PSP, and they likely won't be anytime soon. With nearly 60 titles set for release between now and the end of the year, the DS won't be far behind in the race for software, which seems to be the major complaint for many DS owners.

The DS (a flip-open unit like the popular Game Boy Advance SP) has two 3:4 LCD screens. The bottom screen, doubling as a touch-screen, allows for a completely new analog human interface, one of the DS's most prominent features. Nintendo pioneered analog interfaces when they introduced a joystick on the N64 (before the Dual Shock for the original Playstation), and now they're using a touch-screen/stylus combo to create a completely new experience that has many developers itching with the excitement of the new possibilities.

The DS also brags several other innovative features, including voice recognition,

wireless chatting/gaming and backward compatibility with Game Boy Advance games (a first for Nintendo). What's important for people to note, however, is that the DS doesn't have a disc drive, so its battery tends to stay active four times longer than the PSP.

I love my PSP and my DS. The DS it sickens me to go down to Game Boy and see how many people have sold their DS for a PSP with no regard for the fact that they are not similar at all. Sony is a beautiful toy in the PSP, and for some who can afford its pricey software, it's incredibly fun and powerful little device. To anyone thinking of abandoning

DS, it's safe to say that it's just not worth it.



Photo illustrations by Jeff Sorensen Clackamas

Amityville haunts new generation

Jenna Johnk
The Clackamas Print

The American Dream. A new family, a new beginning, and a new house. One problem: the house was the scene of several grisly murders! But did that stop Mr. and Mrs. Lutz from buying it? No way! I have to admit I entered the movie theater with a bit of trepidation. The constant remakes, adaptations, sequels, prequels and crap-quals have worn me out. So imagine my surprise with the new Amityville Horror turned out to be ... good!

The original "Amityville Horror" starred James Brolin as George Lutz and Margot Kidder as Kathy Lutz, the newlyweds that purchased the accursed house. In the original, the story focused much more on the effect the house had on Mr. Lutz, with the scares being subtle and more psychological than visual. And it featured the physical and psychological torture of the family priest/friend, following in the footsteps of other horror classics of the time. Priests are definitely a must in any horror movie.

But one thing the new "Amityville" got absolutely right was bringing in the creepiest of all creepies—the freaky little kid. What is it about little kids that make you want to

scream? While the original had its psychological horror, the remake had the veiny, pale, gun-shot-through-the-head dead girl. What did the original have? A big pig with glowing eyes.

With that, the new "Amityville" focused on the family as a whole—especially Mr. Lutz (played in the remake by Ryan Reynolds) with his growing murderous rage towards the children. Too bad the priest in the new version only had a short part which—yes—involved flies. Makes you think twice about squishing flies. You never know which one may be a spawn of evil!

Both the original and the remake are really well done. A horror movie can go downhill one of two ways: cheesy as hell, or hack-and-slash. Both versions were written well, with a good story, and it helped that both versions had decent actors. Luckily, in this day of gore-over-plot horror movies that put the "horror" back in "horrible,"



Photo courtesy of MGM

Kathy Lutz (Melissa George) tells her worries to Father Callaway (Philip Baker Hall).

the new "Amityville" had little blood and guts in it. The only parts one saw with any gore were little flashes of scenes that threw Ryan Reynolds' character deeper and deeper into insanity—caused by voices in the basement, and the evil that had seeped into the very bowels of the house.

It's hard to say who did a better job of going mad, though, Brolin or Reynolds? Both did well in going slowly crazy, though with Brolin looking a little older and a little broader in the shoulders, he made a more menacing figure in the role of Mr. Lutz. But still, both played the tortured George Lutz realistically, making it seem like they really were crazy.

Remakes today rarely stay true to the original, but I must admit I was pleasantly surprised by the new "Amityville." And I learned from "The Amityville Horror" that if you start hearing voices, see blood seeping from the walls, a dead girl's ghost is hanging from your ceiling, and you find a hidden torture chamber in your basement, don't wait 28 days—"Get Out!"



Photo courtesy of MGM

George (Reynolds) and Kathy Lutz (George) have no idea the horrors they're in for when they move into their "dream home."

