

Gaming Glossary

Console – a box of electronic equipment that reads and plays game software. A console requires a controller and display to use.

Controller - a video game controller is the medium through which the player interacts with the game on a screen. A controller can be a keyboard, joystick, mouse, floor pad, steering wheel, wand, or even motion-sensitive camera that is activated by the player to control the game.

Easter Egg – a hidden object that is extraneous to game play intended to amuse the designers and reward the investigative and inventive player.

EyeToy – a PlayStation 2 compatible camera sensitive to light and motion, used as a video game controller as well as a digital camera for still and motion shots.

First Person Shooter (FPS) – the most controversial of all games, FPS give the player the perspective of action down the barrel of a gun or other weapon. They may be fiercely competitive, military themed, suspenseful, horrific, and sometimes historical in nature.

Forum – an online communication tool, usually in the format of bulletin boards with threaded topics, provided for game support, information from the publisher/designer, Q&A, posting fan fiction, cheat codes, game reviews, or other user created content related to the game.

Game - any activity pursued for play.

Game Engine - the core software that allows the game to run on a platform. Components include a graphic renderer, physics engine, scripting, animation, AI, and more.

Gaming – the act of playing (video) games.

Guild – a group of characters that join an affinity group to play together in a group. Sometimes called a “clan.”

Video Game - an electronic or digital game. Video games require a piece of software that holds the coding for the game, a unit to decipher the code and render it into multimedia text, audio and graphics, a screen for display, and some manner of controller to manipulate the characters and objects in the game. Video games may be played:

- On the Internet, via a website or digital download;
- On a CD-ROM played on a computer;
- On a CD-ROM played on a computer with an Internet connection required;
- On a CD or cartridge on a stand-alone console, requiring a television or other monitor;
- On a CD or cartridge on a stand-alone console, requiring a television or other monitor and a live Internet connection.

Handheld – a small electronic device such as a Palm Pilot, cell phone, or personal portable game system, such as the Sony PSP or the Nintendo Gameboy or DS.

Hardware – the physical equipment that runs the game software. Consoles, controllers, and hard drives are all examples of hardware.

LAN Party – event occurring when gamers bring their computers to a common location and set up temporary local area networks for competition and group play. Also known as a “frag fest.”

Machinima – filmmaking through recording video game play, editing clips together to create a story, and inserting an audio soundtrack. Machinima may be short films, music videos, commercials, or even periodic episodes.

Manual - instruction book that accompanies the game. Contents often include the premise for the action and a plot outline, a diagram to show what the controller buttons and knobs do, and definition of the basic game play and rules.

Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOG) – games that require players to log on to a server via the Internet to interact with other real players in real time. They are massive because players number in the hundreds of thousands at a time. Characters and other game elements are stored on the server, not on your personal console or computer.

Mobile Gaming – games played on portable electronic devices connected to the Internet, such as cell phones or handheld game consoles.

Modifications – Changing a game's code to customize character, setting, objects, etc.

Next Gen – the evolution of video game consoles. “Next Gen” is short for “Next Generation” – the upcoming replacements for current models.

Non-player Character (NPC) - a computer-generated character, also referred to as “AI.”

Party – a smaller group of characters with unique skills that make up a team and play together for a specific goal or mission.

PC Bang - a Japanese LAN party. Largely responsible for growth of online communities.

Platform - the style of device game is played on. The big three are Microsoft's Xbox, Nintendo's Game Cube, and the Sony Playstation.

Possibility Space – a game environment that allows the player to make choices with a variety of outcomes.

Puzzle – a game situation to solve that may involve linking objects or information, deciphering a code, or analyzing a sequence.

Quest – an assignment, mission, or activity that must be completed to advance in a role-playing or action game.

Rating – designed to provide accurate and objective information about the content in computer and video games, so you can make an informed purchase decision. Ratings by the ESRB assess content appropriateness by age and are based on some 40 elements.

Real Time – in the game space, continuous, simultaneous actions occur, regardless of whether player is logged into the game or not.

Role-Playing Game (RPG) – a game that requires you to define a set of characteristics for an avatar and choose your actions, attitude, and speech based on the persona you've created. This is a popular style of play for games in the fantasy and SF genres.

Simulation – an electronic modeling of system (such as social, historical, business, biological, etc.) with experimental manipulation of variables for different outcomes.

Software – the computer coding that renders the graphics, text, sound, and action of the gameplay experience. The software may come packaged on a CD, CD-Rom, cartridge, diskette, or in digital file format.

Soundtrack – the audio that accompanies a video game. It may be composed of dialogue, music, and sound effects. Songs are often packaged separately in CD format.

Sports Games – gameplay is based on any one of a number of physical sports, such as autoracing, baseball, football, golf, wrestling, etc.

Strategy Game – gameplay requires methodical testing of hypothesis and critical thinking skills, such as chess and military titles.

Strategy guide – sometimes called a “cheat book,” guides are to assist struggling players. The guide might include cheat codes, a walkthrough, and Easter eggs.

Turn-based – a game in which the player makes a decision or executes an action, and then there is a period for assessment or reaction from the AI.

Walkthrough – a step-by-step guide to a game, provided as a resource to help a player improve. May be online or in print format, with or without photos.