

Computer Games Evolved

Remember your old Commodore Vic 20? You were free to spend a Saturday afternoon doing nothing but playing video games # as soon as you found the game cartridge and typed in that lengthy run code. But man, it was fun!

Computer game software has come a long way since those days in the 1980's. From ping-pong a white dot from paddle to paddle, to simple static non-scrolling games, to today's mind blowing sound and graphics, computer games have evolved into game categories that are played on super consoles.

Playing computer games is part of our everyday popular culture. The entertainment genre that was once reserved for idle teenagers has grown to be the favorite pastime of the average thirty year-old. The computer games marketed today are so varied in style; anyone choosing from a selection of computer game software can easily be overwhelmed by the available choices.

The latest development to boost computer game playing was the development of broadband. With this technology, two players can play games from different parts of the world. As long as the broadband connection is good, the game is played simultaneously in real time, with no lag. Because of the universal appeal, computer games have made it possible to interact with other players anywhere, despite the cultural, time or language barriers. Even toddlers can now enjoy software with games and software designed for their education and amusement.

Computer game playing has enjoyed such worldwide popularity with people of all ages, studies are now being conducted on the effects it has on players. The seemingly innocent invention has created so much attention that international assessments are underway to track the impact of these products on user's behavior and thinking. Initial studies hinted that computer game "bestsellers" tend to be violent or ugly game styles, but the results may be leaning to a more optimistic side.

Choosing which computer games to play is a personal choice affected by a number of factors. Taste and preference of the player are the biggest determining factors. When choosing a computer game, consider these factors to find the style that suits you:

- * Challenge: What are your strong points? Logic, speed, verbalizing or coordination? Find a game that challenges you and builds your skills.
- * Number of Players: Do you play well with others? Team play or opposition involves organization, multi-player strategies and building coalitions.
- * Luck: If you're just plain lucky, try cards or games of chance.
- * Strategies: Strategic games are great for your brain. Choose titles with deeply strategic game play.
- * Ease of use: Some games are so complicated they're just not fun to play. Kids, especially, should choose games appropriate to their age and skill.
- * Reality: Does the game attempt to simulate real life, or is it an abstract game designed purely for entertainment.
- * Objectives: What is the objective of the game? Do players get eliminated, or can everyone stay to the end?
- * Style: There is an incredible range of themes and styles of computer games, from comical to downright violent.

Depending on your interests, you can shoot, race, fight or role-play on your computer. There are real time games, and simulation games.

Computer games have come a long, long way since those early blips and bleeps of the 1980's. Our screens are now graced with full-colour 3D graphics (although many still prefer two-dimensional games). Anytime you're ready to take a break, you can just turn on your computer and instantly disappear with the computer game of your choice.