

# THE VIDEO GAME PAGE

## 2008 HOLIDAY BUDGET

With the holiday-shopping season approaching, the Video Game Page will offer special video-game holiday and year-end themed pages for the next 10 weeks.

The gift-guide series' first five parts will focus on the three major game consoles, the Windows PC, and games/devices geared specifically toward children. Recommendations will be offered based on the "value proposition" of each system and will be considerate of today's economic climate. After that, the next five weeks will serve as both a holiday gift guide and/or a post-Christmas, year-end best-and-worst games roundup.

### BUDGET FOR THE COMING WEEKS:

#### **Nov. 10 (coming this week)**

##### **Gift Guide 08: Tyke Tech**

The under-10 crowd is underserved this time of year, or lumped in with the "family fun" demographic of holiday-season sales. Fact is, there are a great many "edutainment" games and devices designed specifically for kids.

- Didj -- LeapFrog's new, advance handheld system for older kids, looks more like a PlayStation Portable, but is still focused on educational gaming.
- Leapster2 -- LeapFrog's second-generation "edutainment" handheld system, now with online compatibility so you can track a child-learning curve and accomplishments, plus add new games and content, play online in a kid-safe community.
- BionicEye (also known as "EyeClops") -- Kid-friendly microscope that plugs into a TV set to project and enlarge images (bugs, hair, coins, etc) on screen. Great silly science fun but also educational.
- Quick mention of several "edutainment" titles available on consoles and PC.

#### **Nov. 17**

##### **Gift Guide 08: Nintendo Wii**

The Shania Twain of video-game consoles: light, lovable and lacking substance. Great family fun. Allows moms and dads to revisit the simpler days of video gaming and connect with their kids with mostly lighthearted fare.

- List of pros and cons, suggestion of the best recipients of this as a gift idea.
- Quick mention of Wii-remote charging cradle by Nyko (accessory).
- Short list of must-have titles.
- Shorter list of horrible titles that look only appealing on their covers.

#### **Nov. 24**

##### **Gift Guide 08: Xbox 360**

Pound for pound the best value on the market -- new pricing makes it cheaper than the Wii. Powerful, high-def, blockbuster gaming, lots of downloadable content for the serious gamer but also including light family fun games, online social interaction, Netflix movies (direct streaming of HD movie rentals). Now the lowest-priced system out there.

- List of pros and cons and suggest best recipient of this as a gift idea.
- Quick mention of Klipsch CS-700 200 -watt 2.1 sound system with upconvert DVD and wireless subwoofer. Sleek, stylish and sets up in seconds. High-end equipment to match high-end gaming.
- Short list of must-have titles.
- Short list of horrible titles that look only appealing on their covers.

#### **Dec. 1**

##### **Gift Guide 08: PlayStation 3**

Still the most expensive and least-accomplished console, PlayStation 3 made great strides in 2008, now a very worthy purchase consideration/investment. Terrific online components for social/casual/serious game communities, lots of virtual content available, Blu-ray movie playback. New "Little Big Planet" game finally realize PS3's full potential and boast trans-demographic appeal to boot.

- List of pros and cons and suggestion of best recipient of this as a gift idea.

- Quick mention of Peak guitar controller for PS3, full-sized, wood guitar for "Guitar Hero" titles. Puts cheap plastic-guitar controllers to shame.
- Short list of must-have titles.
- Shorter list of horrible titles that only look appealing on their covers.

## **Dec. 8**

### **Gift Guide 08: Windows PC**

Some of the best-looking, best-playing games are found on PC, sometimes exclusively ("Crysis") or also in console format where they don't look/play as well. Also a networking social/casual/game community hub long before the consoles got on board. Also, does your e-mail and Facebook, obviously. The economies of scale have made a Windows PC a totally viable purchase consideration; will plug into your HDTV just like a console.

- List of pros and cons and suggestion of best recipient of this as a gift idea.
- Quick mention of Steel Series Professional Game peripherals (high-end mouse, keyboard, headset)
- List of must-have titles.
- Shorter list of horrible titles that only look appealing on their covers.

## **Dec. 15**

### **The Frugal Gamer**

A roundup of the best "Value Priced" titles available on all current-generation game systems and PC. These "budget" games list from \$19.99 to \$29.99, and often match or better regular titles retailing at \$49.99 to \$59.99.

- The \$149 PlayStation 2 "LEGO Batman" bundle -- a last-gen system with new "family fun" Lego game. Also mentions "Buzz" trivia (with four custom buzz-button controllers), karaoke (with microphones) and about 2,000 other PS2 games available, most of which now cost just \$20 to \$40.

## **Dec. 22**

### **The Season of the Rental**

A roundup of good, but ultimately short-lived or under-developed games that do not warrant their \$50-\$60 price tag. Transitory fun as \$5-\$10 rentals; a good way to spend the Blockbuster gift card found in one's stocking.

- A list of cheap or free "casual" games and game portals including Web-based game sites and downloadable console-game content, all in the \$5-\$10 price range.

## **Dec. 29**

### **Best of 2008's hard-core games**

A roundup of the best "mature" or serious-gamer titles of 2008.

- Short list of the most anticipated hard-core games coming in 2009.

## **Jan. 5, 2009**

### **Best of 2008's "everyone" games**

A roundup of the best games designed for everyone, often less sophisticated than the "core gamer" games, but wonderful fun for all just the same.

- Short list of the most anticipated "everyone" games coming in 2009.

## **Jan. 12, 2009**

### **Worst games of 2008**

A roundup of the worst games of 2008, "hall of shame" style.

- "Dishonorable mention" list of games that were promised for 2008 but ended up delayed or canceled.