

THE GOOD ONLINE GAMING GUIDE

A GUIDE TO ONLINE GAMING FOR PARENTS



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



More than ever Games are heading online. Everything from Scrabble to World of Warcraft can be played online over the Internet and against other human opponents - playing against real people rather than computer-controlled opponents is invariably a lot more fun. Increasingly, of course, we will also be downloading games and additional game content direct from publishers online.

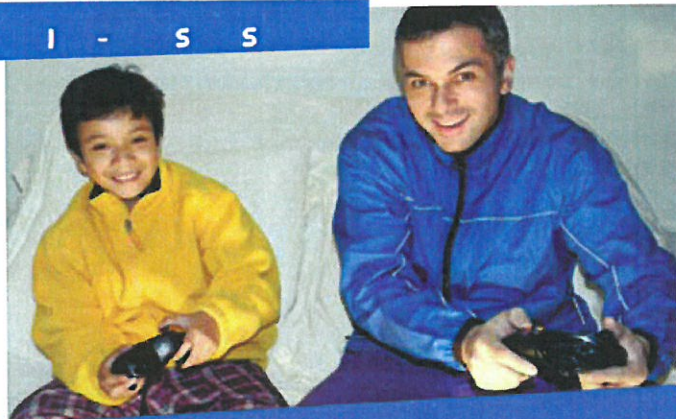
To play against other people online in multiplayer showdowns means more choices. Players can usually communicate with each other, perhaps using text messages that are typed during the gameplay. In fact, most online games now have chat facilities of some description so that the players can swap their thoughts freely whilst competing – and some games offer fully-fledged voice communication that seems as commonplace and relaxed as a 'phone conversation.

There is clearly a very real need for parents and guardians to fully understand the ever-evolving online world as it relates to video games. This leaflet is aimed both at adults and – on the flip side – children. You can freely download this leaflet, and find out more about sensible and safe gameplay, from www.askaboutgames.com.

I S S

Europe's games industry fully understands the need for games to be properly rated to ensure that only the right games get into the right young hands. So more than five years ago it set up the 'gold standard' PEGI, which stands for the Pan-European Game Information rating system. You can find out more about the PEGI system in our sister leaflet, The Good Gaming Guide, at www.askaboutgames.com.

I - S S



GOOD GAMING IS SAFE GAMING!

• Online Dos and Don'ts • Blocking Chat • Reporting Cyber Bullies

S I I I S S

Do explain to your children how the online environment differs from home or the school playground. Online your children will meet total strangers – some who may not be who they say they are. Often the chat will be uncensored, so they should be cautious about what they say and be careful not to give out private details such as their name, address, email address, passwords, telephone numbers or the name of their school.

Do know what games your children are playing online. There are several different game genres today – including sports games, strategy games, role-playing games and first-person shooters.

Do get involved with what your children are playing online. Ask them to show you any new games they want to play and, better still, join in yourself.

Do take advantage of any available Parental Control settings available. These are wide-ranging controls on consoles and PCs that can allow you to limit gameplay options. You can decide which games are played by age rating and PEGI descriptors or whether online interaction is permitted at all. For more details, please see our accompanying free-to-download .pdf, The Good Gaming Guide, at www.askaboutgames.com.

Do be aware of your children's online contacts. Make a point of asking who they are chatting to online, how they know them and so on.

Do ensure that you know how to report inappropriate behaviour or content to moderators or customer support teams on the game websites that your children use.

DON'T

Don't take your children's safety for granted when they are playing online. Apply the same precautions that you would if they were playing outside the home and interacting with others.

Don't allow your children to meet up with 'friends' they have met while playing online – remember not everyone is who they say they are online.

Don't downplay the seriousness of Cyber Bullying. If your children are being harassed by a classmate or any other player online, follow a game's grief-reporting procedures and log a complaint as well as turning on appropriate user-blocking controls.

Don't be 'blinded by science'. If you don't understand how online gameplay works or what it involves, ask your children to show you.

Don't assume that all online games are suitable for children. Some are suitable only for adult players – and may contain adult themes, imagery and language – so check the age rating of what they want to play. Only games rated PEGI 3 are suitable for players of any age.

Don't let your children download anything without your express permission. Sometimes cheat programmes are offered that claim to help players get more from a game – but these could be malicious and carry Trojans and viruses or damage your computer some other way.

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