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Casual gamer gets serious prize

\$1 million prize awarded to "World's Best Casual Gamer" at inaugural WorldWide Web Games.

All the talk about professional gaming has focused largely on who can race the fastest, who can frag the most, and who can fight the best. That may all change now, as a prize of \$1 million was given to the gamer who could break the most jewels, play the most cards, and bust the most bubbles over the weekend.

Kavitha Yalavarthi of Odessa, Texas, was crowned World's Best Casual Gamer by Fun Technologies at the first-ever WorldWide Web Games, held in Hollywood, California. Three games--Bejeweled 2, Solitaire, and Zuma--were featured in the competition, which took place over 12 hours and featured 71 contestants.

Casual games, called so because of their appeal to the nongaming crowd, have garnered a lot of attention in recent years because of their revenue potential and low development costs. Many industry experts believe the sector is due for considerable growth domestically over the next five years, with some pegging it as a billion-dollar industry by 2011.

By Tim Surette -- *GameSpot*

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