

Texas Gamer with Victor Godinez

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Go, Joe!

The U.S. Army has launched the Real Heroes addition for its free *America's Army* computer game. The add-on lets you examine the exploits of real U.S. military heroes from the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition, gamers can play through the Special Forces: Overmatch expansion pack.

Casual millionaire

Odessa resident and UT Austin graduate Kavitha Yalavarthi took home the \$1 million grand prize last weekend from a casual games tournament in Hollywood. The World Wide Web games were sponsored by FUN Technologies and featured office-favorite titles *Bejeweled 2*, *Solitaire* and *Zuma*. Ms. Yalavarthi's final-round victory against Green Bay resident Amy Demerath will be broadcast Dec. 3 on the Game Show Network.

Xbox 360 laptop

Amateur modder (game-speak for modifier) extraordinaire Ben Heckendorn has crafted a product that even the designers at Microsoft must be jealous of: a laptop Xbox 360. Basically, a 360 was gutted, crammed into an aluminum case with a fold-down 17-inch HD screen, keyboard, Wi-Fi and all the other goodies found in a run-of-the-mill 360. Total cost of the materials (not including labor and design): \$1,200. The system was built on commission, so feel free to order one for yourself, but as Heckendorn says on his Web site (www.benheck.com), "Beware of sticker shock."

Portable PS2

It may not be an Xbox 360 laptop, but another amateur tinkerer has made something nearly as cool: a portable PlayStation 2. Brian Gardiner has fashioned a handheld system that plays standard PS2 disks, and the palmPS2 looks just as professional as Mr. Heckendorn's juggernaut. Mr. Gardiner is selling his creation for a mere \$850 at palmips2.com.

Apple game console?

Not yet, but news that iPod owners can download and play simple games such as *Pac-Man* is an interesting baby step for Apple. If Apple ever gets around to launching a proper widescreen iPod, it would be a great opportunity to create a real game library for iPodders, sort of a poor man's PSP. Fingers crossed.

Wii a bit too expensive

A lot will be written and said about Nintendo's \$250 price tag for the Wii before it hits shelves in November. Ultimately, I think the price is too high, and there are not enough accessories in the box.

Give gamers two Wii controllers, and 250 bucks is reasonable. But one controller, for a console that's supposedly going to make gaming a social phenomenon, is annoying, and the \$60 price tag for extra controllers is insulting.

Online at: http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/ent/videogames/stories/DN-OTTgamer_0916gl.ART0.State.Edition1.3ed4eea.html