

Got Dial Up? Forget Online Gaming

Computer games have come a long way since electronic checkers and the like. Today, we've got computer games that would put some 21st century movies to shame and interest in online gaming is catching on like some kind of crazy fever. Once dominated by males aged 25 and older, today's gaming generation includes mom, sis, aunt, even grandma and grandpa! If you think you've caught the online gaming bug, and you're thinking about becoming a participant, don't even think you can join in on this online fun using a dial up Internet connection!

Part of the fascination with online gaming lies in its speed. During play, online gaming becomes a virtual world and in order to project a sense of reality into the mix, its games are fast, its movements are smooth, and its sounds are as realistic as we hear them in the natural world. Sitting in front of an online game, and actively participating in one puts the player in another world - a world that's so different, so cool, and so real.

No, we're not talking about a super-fancy version of checkers or backgammon. We're not talking about a visually rich game of tic-tac-toe. We're talking about full-fledged networked or multiplayer gaming that allows anyone to entertain themselves and hoards of others across the world at the same time. Multiplayer games play over online but trust us when we say any old Internet connection won't do.

If you want to get in on this craze, you're going to have to ditch the old dial up connection that you might have and get into broad band. A broadband Internet connection will give you the ability to send and receive highly detailed and realistic imagery at an appropriate speed. It will give you the means to watch videos in real time, and it will allow you to experience speech as if each and every other player were speaking to you directly.

A dial up Internet connection just can't handle this kind of fun, but you can get a broad band connection just as easily. For the techies out there, broadband is a type of data transmission in which a single medium (wire) can carry several channels at once. 1 For the rest of us, broadband is an Internet connection that allows several people to send and receive data at the same time. A dial up connection doesn't do that. A dial up connection can either send or receive - but it certainly can't do both. Let's talk about Broadband ISDN for a minute.

ISDN stands for integrated services digital network and it can transmit transmitting voice, video and data over fiber optic telephone lines at about 64 Kbps (64,000 bits per second).

Most ISDN lines offered by telephone companies give you two lines at once, called B channels. You can use one line for voice and the other for data, or you can use both lines for data to give you data rates of 128 Kbps, three times the data rate provided by today's fastest modems.²

Broadband ISDN - a combination of regular broadband and ISDN can transmit voice, video and data over fiber optic telephone lines at about 1.5 million bits per second (bps). It's a much faster connection than either broadband or ISDN alone! If your ISP offers Broadband ISDN, ask for it - your online gaming adventure will be the better for it.

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1 Source: Mecklermedia Corp.

2 Source: Mecklermedia Corp.