

Playing Online Games Pro-Style

Even if you don't know what you're doing...

One of the most intimidating parts of getting started with online gaming is getting over the fear of screwing things up for other players. It's one thing to play a game and make mistakes at home, but it's an entirely different thing to play a game and make mistakes that can cause failure in the game plays of others. But there's no reason to let this fear stop you or another gaming newbie from having fun. This article will give you the in's and out's of online gaming so that you can start with the confidence you need to continue on.

The first step anyone new to online gaming should take is to first, learn how to play offline. You can read the game's manual and save yourself from seeing the infamous acronym, "RTFM" scroll across your screen. Know what that acronym stands for? It stands for "Read The Fu**ing Manual" and its spewed by serious gamers to vulnerable newbies who interrupt a game with questions like, "What is this place?" or "What am I supposed to do?"

You could search the web for game related discussion groups, FAQ's, and walkthroughs. And you could learn more from game specific Usenet newsgroups. In other words, you could do your "homework." Some of the kind of information you want to learn includes how to play, how to create characters, how to gather equipment, and how to implement some smart strategies. Trust us when we say your gaming comrades will appreciate it!

In addition to reading how to play an online game, you can familiarize yourself with the game's interface. Just as you searched the net for a game's textual instruction, you can additionally search the net for a game's screenshot (or series of screenshots). Having a graphical representation (.gif or .jpg image) of a game on your screen gives you a chance to memorize where all the game's controls are. Knowing where everything is on a game before you play will speed things up not only for yourself, but also for everyone else. No one wants to wait for you to search for an inventory panel or message screen in a game when the location of these items is obvious to everyone else.

Once you start with a game, don't let the pressure of staying in the game prevent you from doing the unthinkable: dying. A character dying in a game is inevitable at certain points, and unless you willingly let go of a lose-lose situation, you'll run the risk of holding the game up for everyone else. It's like a game of chess. If it's checkmate - it's checkmate. Call it a day and start anew. Whatever you do, don't hang around waiting for some magical fairy to come to your rescue. Please let your character die with dignity.

On the same token, you don't want to take dying personally. Remember that online

gaming is still just a game. A character that dies in a game is not representative of your character as a person. Turn a death into learning experience. At the very least, you'll learn your way around an online game by learning all the things that you aren't supposed to do!

Above all else, ensure that your computer has what it takes to maintain the current pace of an online game. Don't try to play an online game with a slow computer or slow Internet connection. In fact, if you're still using dial up, find another hobby. A slow processor and connection will ensure instant death because other players aren't going to politely wait for their own defeat. They're going to squash you like a bug.

Hunt around for a computer that was built for online gaming and get a DSL or ISDN Internet connection. You'll need a fast processor, a high quality graphics card, and a sound machine to match.

By following these simple suggestions, you will have passed the "newbie" test and earned respect as a serious gamer much more quickly than if you stumbled your way through what others pride as "the ultimate hobby."

PPPPP

Word count 690