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A guide to online gaming by Jesse Wallace

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The popularity of online gaming has exploded in the past decade, thanks to faster Internet speeds and technology innovations to keep up with it. For some itâ€™s a way to pass the time and for others itâ€™ a lifestyle, but there seems to be no slowing of the phenomenon of online gaming and massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs) in particular. Thanks in part to the spread of broadband Internet and advances in download speeds, the online gaming industry is worth over 15 billion US dollars.

To get involved and join the 60 million plus online gamers, competing against each other across all corners of the globe, you need a computer that is up to the task and fast Internet. Here is a guideline to the Internet speeds, connection types and system requirements you will need to seriously get involved in online gaming.

A fast machine is paramount to proper online gaming. There are many hardcore gamers, including MMORPG gamers, who build their own computer from scratch or spend excessive amounts on custom-made systems in order to get the best system possible to keep up with their gaming ambitions. While this isnâ€™t necessary to play online seriously, you do need a quick computer.

A PC is a gamers computer, many online games won't run on a Mac. A processor with at least 8000Mhz is recommended, and a dual processor PC is a good idea if you are planning to have other applications open at the same time. You are also going to need a hefty amount of space on your hard drive, plenty of RAM and good quality sound and graphics cards. Various games have different requirements, ranging from 256 MB of RAM to more than 512MB, and some games requiring as much as 6GB of hard drive space.

As well as a properly rigged system, a huge factor in the success of your online gaming pursuits is having the right Internet connection. There is nothing more frustrating for an online gamer than a slow Internet connection. With an inadequate connection, games take a long time to load, gameplay is slow and actions happen seconds after they should, which means you canâ€™t play competitively.

Online games require a large amount of data to be downloaded and uploaded, and because of this, you need a fast Internet connection. Whether you are playing intense games such as World of Warcraft, something more subdued such as Second Life or even arcade games, broadband Internet is the bare-minimum recommended. A minimum of 4mbps will get you by, as will ADSL, but hardcore gamers will want something more serious, and thatâ€™s where fiber optic superfast broadband is the way to go.

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