

THE GEEK GAZETTE

Product Releases

2007

January

- D&D Icons Gargantuan Blue Dragon Miniature (WotC)

February

- Secrets of Sarlona–Eberron (WotC)
- Dungeonscape (WotC)
- The Rage: Player's Guide to the Forsaken (WW)
- World of Warcraft Monster Guide (WW)
- The World of Warcraft RPG –reprint (WW)

March

- D&D Miniatures Unhal- lowed Booster Pack
- Shadowdale: The Scouring of the Land (WotC)
- Magic Item Compendium (WotC)

Geeks of the world unite!... and bring some popcorn.

2007 seems like it is going to be a good year for pretty much all things geek. It is amazing how much geek culture is influencing mainstream pop culture. Sometimes I think the two are almost interchangeable. Movies, video games, television and music are all being touched by the magical hand of geekiness (in a completely non-verted way).

Though they may be straight to DVD, Marvel animated movies, such as the Ultimate Avengers, are not only fairly popular but they are pretty good. This year we will see the release of the animated Iron Man movie as well as an animated Doctor Strange feature. Then to keep fanboys and girls in a frenzy, we get a live action Ghost Rider movie, Spiderman 3, Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer, and

everyone is excited about the upcoming live action Iron Man flick. But Marvel characters aren't the only ones being converted to the silver screen. Over the next year or two fans are going to see a live action Transformers movie, a new Ninja Turtles movie, 30 days of nights, another Batman movie and an animated Dragonlance movie.

Geekcentric shows such as Battlestar Galactica, Heroes, Doctor Who, Smallville, and Lost are not only some of the best, but some of the most popular shows being broadcast right now, with more, like Star Wars, to come. Marvel Ultimate Alliance set a new benchmark for superhero video games, World of Warcraft has gotten huge and was even featured on Southpark, D&D went online, and the Final Fantasy series only continues to

grow in popularity.

Some of the hottest properties in the world right now are things that geeks have loved for years. People, especially the entertainment industry, are starting to see the true value and sometimes brilliance in comics, and games. It seems that liking geeky things is now pretty cool. It just took the rest of the world a little while to catch up with us.



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Pirates may be cool but Piracy is not.

Ever since man first started creating things other people have copied and distributed other's creations. So why has this become such a big deal over the past decade? Back before CD's, DVD's and the internet we use to copy cassette tapes and VHS movies for friends and family. No one thought much of it and it wasn't a big deal. People love to get things for free, and if it happens to be illegal, so what. It's a victimless crime that really doesn't hurt anyone, right? Well that's not the case anymore. Now it is not only a big deal, you could get in a lot of trouble.

I have always been kind of wishy washy when it comes to the topic of pirating material that has been copyrighted. On one hand I look at how many times I, and my friends, dubbed cassette tapes and gave them to each other. With the advent of the internet and MP3's this just got a lot easier. Now people all around the world could share their music and it seemed like a good idea. After all we had been doing it for years anyway, albeit in a smaller geographical region.

Then they started cracking down on people who illegally downloaded music and slapped them with some heavy fines, even jail time. All the while musicians and record label executives cried about how stealing music was driving prices up and hurting their industry. At the time most of us didn't care. The people doing all the whining were rich and let's be honest, downloading songs didn't really hurt them that much. People still bought CD's and they still made money. So what if they only made 37 million off their newest album instead of 40 million. So what if they would have to buy the cheaper champagne and caviar. Weird Al hit the nail on the head with his song Don't Download this Song, (you can download it free and legally off the internet) they are a bunch of rich whiners and I for one had no sympathy for them. Even multibillionaire Mr. Gates got in on the anti-copy movement, just try getting a copied version of Windows now. You still can but since most computers now use some type of high speed internet connection they are always on the net and windows update will be happy to

Continued page 10...

Outland Arts: Mutant Epoch RPG

Another very interesting game I found on the net is due out this summer from Outland Arts (www.outlandarts.com) known for their Fantasy Clip Inks series. The game is The Mutant Epoch and is billed as science fantasy game. There is information regarding the game available to review on the website and from the looks of things this could be a pretty fun game. I will be reading up on it and give you a little more info next issue.

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Do you have questions or comments you would like to share? Any stories or topics you would like to see covered or added to the Gazette? Want to contribute a story to the Gazette? Then feel free to let us know.

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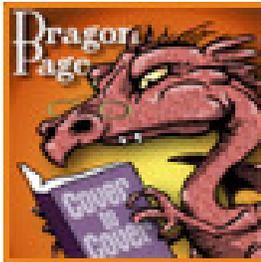
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Video Game Review

As a general rule video games based on comic books suck, but it seems there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I recently played Marvel Ultimate Alliance and Justice League Heroes and while they were not perfect, they were much better than I thought they would be.

Marvel Ultimate Alliance (PS2)

MUA is like playing an RPG and reading a mega comic book event all rolled into one. There were quite a few Marvel characters to choose from, with even more unlockable characters and costumes as the game progresses; most characters have three to four costumes to choose from each with different abilities. Part of the fun in the game is the number of optional missions you can do that will unlock different costumes and characters. You also have the option of customizing your character of choice as the game progresses. For example if you like Ms. Marvel's Nega Blast you can max it out and ignore her other abilities or distribute the bonuses evenly to all her powers, it's up to you. Another feature I really like is the fact you are not stuck with the same character throughout the game. You can switch characters as much as you like, although later in the game you can be penalized for switching. Once you get a little ways into the game you have the option to form a team, gain reputation points and bonuses that give boost to the entire team or allows you to unlock the ability to add team members. This is where the character switching penalty comes in. Once you have named your team, picked a team symbol and assigned which characters you want on your team you can no longer freely switch those characters out for non-team members. If you do so you lose 50 reputation points, however once you get bonus points you can spend them to add team members which will expand the number of available characters you can switch without penalty; forming a team is optional.

The games story bounces you all around the Marvel Universe from Stark Tower to Atlantis and to the Skrull home world and feels fairly epic. One of my favorite sections was Murderworld, which was one of the oddest and most fun sections of the game. MUA is one of the few games that my fiancé and I both enjoyed and spent an entire weekend playing in co-op mode. We liked it so much that we bought it and are now playing it again with different characters, which is rare for us to like a game that much.

While Doctor Doom may be the villainous mastermind there are plenty of baddies you will recognize in this game, including a few I didn't expect. The funny thing is that the villains I was sure would be in the game, such as Venom, never made an appearance, yet villains like the Wrecking Crew, that are less well known by the general public, were in the game.

While the game play and story would easily appeal to non comic fans, such as my fiancé, there are also enough references that only a fan would understand to make the biggest comic geek smile. My fiancé loves games where you can interact with (i.e. destroy) the objects around you and MUA had plenty for her to tear up. We both liked the fact that things you do in the game have ramifications when the game ends. If you decide not to complete an optional mission or miss an item that may have had some importance it tells you what happens because of this. All of this only adds to the feeling that you are part of the story, which I like.

The camera angles do get a little buggy, but the graphics, especially in the cut scene movies, were almost life like. I am not a fan of online gaming but MUA does have that option and what I have read about it seems really interesting. Overall the Marvel Ultimate Alliance is not perfect, but it is a lot of fun and a game any Marvel fan would love.

Justice League Heroes (PS2)

As an avid DC fan this is the game I was looking forward to the most and the one I was most disappointed with. The story is pretty good, the game play graphics are fine, but during cut scenes the characters just



Video Games continued

didn't look right. Wonder Woman looked fairly butch and the rest of the characters looked cheesy. Although game play is a much bigger issue for me than graphics, I did set the bar a little higher after playing MUA. I figured DC would make sure their characters got just as good, if not better treatment, but that is not the case.

There are several characters to choose from, but not as many as MUA. One of the things I did not appreciate was the fact you were forced to use certain characters on some boards whether you liked it or not. This seemed to serve the purpose of furthering the story, but that lack of freedom only made me want to hurry through the scene so I could get to another section and use the character I wanted. There are only a handful of unlockable characters and costumes that you have to buy with shields picked up through out the game. The game primarily centers on the Justice League from the animated series with Zantana replacing Hawkgirl (Hawkgirl is one of the characters you can buy) as a starting character. There was no Booster Gold, Captain Marvel, Blue Beetle, Firestorm, Captain Atom, Red Tornado, Atom or any of the hundreds of other Leaguers I wanted to see available to use. The alternate costumes for the characters were a bit of a disappointment as well. Seeing a butch Wonder Woman in a toga was definitely not the highlight of the game. All the Green Lanterns (you start with John and can unlock Kyle and Hal) have the same power moves and don't really effect the game because you will likely only get to use them for one scenario before you are forced to use one of the starting characters.

Over all the game is very similar to MUA; the story is similar to a comic book event (though on a much smaller scale), you encounter a few DC villains, and you can customize the character's powers in a similar fashion. However, the limitations tend to make you feel like you are not actually playing, but being directed. This also makes the game feel small in comparison to MUA and more like a brawler than a superhero RPG. JLH is also fairly short and can be completed easily in 10-15 hours, less if you don't spend time searching out secret areas.

The game is also pretty buggy. I played two different copies and both had pretty much the same issues. Even though this may not be true for every one, these are the problems I encountered. The screens froze up for no apparent reason and required me to turn off the system and play from the last save point, but the biggest issue I came across was when saved games would occasionally be corrupted and lost. This happened no matter which memory card I used and generally followed a frozen screen.

Other than the things I have been complaining about, the game can be fun if you play in 2 player mode and the graphics may not be the best, but they aren't terrible either. If you plan on playing both JLH and MUA I would suggest playing JLH first so that you aren't terribly disappointed.

Final thoughts

If I had to choose which of these two games is the best, Marvel Ultimate Alliance wins hands down, which is something I never thought I would do, pick Marvel over DC. But you have to give credit where credit is due; MUA is a far superior game, and from the standpoint of a comic book fanboy it sets the bar high for future games. In the sequels I do think that they could put just a few more playable characters in the game, of course like most fans I would love to see every Marvel character available, but they give it a good try with all the unlockable costumes, playable characters and the numerous Marvel characters that you encounter during the game.

While we are on the topic of the sequels, I would love to see Marvel Ultimate Secret Wars, MU Civil War, and Marvel Ultimate Zombies, just to name a few. As for playable characters in future games I would like to see Wasp, Giant Man, Moon Knight (he is an available character on another system) Iron Man's Silver Centurion and Hulk Buster Armors, The Hulk, She-Hulk, any members of Alpha Flight, Beast, Hawkeye, Quicksilver, Scarlet Witch, Wonder Man, and some of the more obscure characters like the Great Lakes Avengers.

4e or not 4e....

Just about the time that D&D 3.5 was released rumors about a 4th edition started flying, causing quite a stir on many message boards across the net. But is Wizards of the Coast really gearing up for 4e or has watching the X-files caused us to read too much into everything? Are we, as gamers, so jaded and cynical that we have to complain and speculate about something long before it has been announced? While many on the boards claim to have reputable sources that confirm various bits of information concerning 4e. My own cynicism tends to make me wonder about the validity of these unidentified sources and to be very skeptical of all unconfirmed rumors on internet message boards.

For those of you who have more to do than waste time on internet message boards here are a list of the more common rumors I have come across.

- 4e will be announced at Gen Con Indy 2007 (they used to say 06 but that came and went with no announcement)
- 4e will do away with psionics
- 4e will be more miniature oriented
- 4e will be completely compatible with 3.5
- 4e will not be compatible with 3.5
- 4e will be nothing but optional rules for 3.5
- 4e will never happen
- 4e will is planned for 2011
- 4e & 3.5 will be two completely different systems both receiving full support.
- Hasbro is selling the D&D RPG division and focusing on video games & minis for the D&D brand.

While there may be some truth to one or all of these rumors, I still find it hard to believe that WotC would risk alienating long time players by releasing a new edition so quickly. But what about 3.5? Well technically 3.5 was a revision not a new edition and it was compatible with 3e with little to no tweaking. Plus WotC made the 3.5 changes available for free on line just for people who did not wish to buy the new books. I may have my issues with WotC but I have to say that they seem to genuinely try to produce quality products, make their customers happy and not totally rip them off.

While WotC and Hasbro are in the business to make money, I don't think they are willing to completely destroy a tried and true brand name by rushing a new edition. Unlike video games, mini games and CCG's, pen & paper role playing games are a very niche product that only appeals to a certain kind of gamer. Most casual gamers, many of whom gravitate toward computer/video games and CCG's are not willing to invest the time and money that most of us do for pen & paper games. It is much easier, and in most



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I am a fairly adamant believer in not stealing so I don't really condone the use of this site. However it is amazing that they have gotten away with making so many shows available for free. You can find Firefly, Southpark, & Doctor Who, just to name a few.

I don't know a lot about international copyright law, or copyright law in general, so I can't not say whether everything on this sight is illegal or not. So if you must check it out keep that in mind.

Continued top of page 7

4th edition continued...

cases cheaper for them to buy 10 packs of the hottest CCG than to buy one RPG book. Both Hasbro & WotC know that alienating the core of their fan base, a cynical group by nature, would likely knock D&D off the top of the heap and force gamers to move to another system, produced by another company. There are plenty of great systems out there that can easily and happily replace D&D. Pissing off your customers and sending them to the competition is not generally accepted as a good business tactic, so I doubt that is on their agenda.

Is 4e coming, probably; will it be soon, I seriously doubt it. The current version of Dungeons and Dragons continues to be king of the pen and paper RPG heap and is the game that all others strive to be. Besides there are still countless possible supplements still to come and WotC has barely scratched the surface of the Eberron campaign setting. Why would they bother coming out with a new edition when the current version is still so young? Before they seriously begin considering 4e I see them expanding support for their other campaign settings (Ravenloft, Dragonlance), coming out with all new settings or reviving popular 2e settings. On the other hand if they do decide it is time for 4e I think it will be more of a rules revision than an all new system.

While it is in the realm of possibility that Hasbro may end up selling the RPG rights to another company, since pen and paper games seem to be less of a money maker than other games, I doubt they will let go of such a recognizable brand name. Most gamers complained when both 3e & 3.5 came out but we still bought it and most of us still choose D&D as our game of preference. Will 4e drive us away? I doubt it. We will complain and some of us may stick to the current system, but for the most part if they make it we will buy it. Then we can start worrying and complaining about 5th edition.

Around the Net

As usual I am always on the lookout for new pen and paper game systems in my search of the ever elusive perfect game. This month I have a game that may not end my quest, but it sure does seem like fun.

Castles and Crusades by Troll Lord Games (www.trolllord.com) claims to be the synthesis of old school AD&D and 3.x D&D. According to the testimonials I have read you can easily convert AD&D material and 3.x D&D for use in C&C. A few of the reviews and comments even state that you can convert any material from any pen and paper game system for play in Castles and Crusades with little to no effort.

Supposedly C&C is a rules light, fast past, high adventure, easy to learn system that claims to have taken what everyone likes about all incarnations of Dungeons and Dragons and wraps it up into one system. Although the feats and skills are gone the system is so malleable that you can import one or both from 3.x and use them if you want (although if you are going to do that you might as well play D&D). Stat blocks for monsters, spells and the level progression for classes has more of a AD&D feel, while the combat is more 3.x. The core races that everyone has become accustomed to are present, there are 13 character classes, (Fighter, Ranger, Rouge, Cleric Barbarian, Bard, Assassin, Wizard, Monk, Illusionist, Druid, Knight, and Paladin) and overall the game seems to work like a very simplified Dungeons and Dragons.

The only really new thing I could find about C&C is something called the SIEGE system. I am not exactly sure how it works, as I don't have the books yet, but from what I could tell characters have Primary and Secondary attributes (Strength, Intelligence, etc..) in place of skills. If your PC's Primary attribute is Strength then you get a bonus to rolls that require strength. If I have read everything correctly it doesn't matter what class your PC is, you can assign the Primary to any attribute and thus have a very strong wizard or very smart half-orc barbarian. While it doesn't seem to unbalance the game, this method could be useful to players who like to do a lot of min-maxing, at least the way I understand it.

Troll Lord Games seems to have come very close to creating a fantasy roleplaying game that gives both old school gamers and newbies something to enjoy. There are only two core rulebooks, the Players Handbook and the Monsters and Treasure book and both are very affordable at around \$20 each. Add to this that Gary Gygax himself is doing a conversion of Castle Greyhawk called Castle Zagyg and I think Castles and Crusades could be the game that many disillusioned Dungeons and Dragons fans have been looking for.

Quick Reviews

Short review about what ever I feel like reviewing



Random Thoughts

- Why isn't there a simple kid friendly RPG put out to draw in younger players?
- Heroes is great but what are they going to do in Season 2? Saving the cheerleader and the world in season 1 will be a tough act to follow.
- When is the %@^# Battlestar Galactica RPG coming out? The quickstart rules were due out nearly 4 months ago and still nothing!

◆ Final Fantasy III- Nintendo DS:

As an FF fan I have to say I was looking forward to this game and I was not disappointed. It's a little more simplistic than many other FF titles but it's still a lot of fun. I was amazed at the graphics, I honestly didn't know that my DS could do that! While you can only do a regular save on the world map they do allow a quick save for those times when you are in the middle of a dungeon and just need to turn off the game. Top notch graphics, fun gameplay and a descent story makes this a definite buy for any Final Fantasy fan.

◆ Secrets of Xen'Drick:

My group generally games in Eberron so this was a no brainer for me. There is a fairly even amount of crunch and fluff and I didn't feel that I wasted my money at all. While you could use the material in any campaign setting, it definitely is very centered on play in Eberron. Very good book.

◆ Players Guide to Eberron:

This book seems to be a little more fluff than anything else, but good fluff. There is a lot of really useful information, especially for DMs. While players could get a lot out of the book I think a more accurate title would be The DM's Guide to Eberron. A pretty good book, but it wouldn't be at the top of my list.

◆ Dragonmarked:

I have heard nothing but praise for this book and I have to say it was well deserved. Just about everything you want to know concerning Dragonmarked houses and characters can be found in this book. Of course if you don't use Dragonmarked characters or houses in your game this isn't the best book for you to buy.

◆ Night at the Museum:

Ben Stiller is a loser who takes a night watchman job at a museum only to discover the exhibits come to life at night. With the help of Teddy Roosevelt, a tiny cowboy, and Sacajawea he manages to foil an attempt to steal a magical tablet.

I thought for sure this movie would suck, but I was wrong. While it is definitely geared toward children, it will easily be enjoyed by adults. It has been one of the top grossing movies since its release for a reason.



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Comic Vault

Comic Book News and Reviews

- ◆ Will there be new Question in the DC universe? 52 sure seems to indicate that it is going to happen. While the Question may not be the most popular DC character fans may not take lightly to a new female character.
- ◆ I haven't read issue 7 of Civil War yet, but if the end of issue 6 is any indication it will be a knock down drag out fight. "Close your eyes Gentlemen. This might hurt."
- ◆ After Civil War Marvel is releasing The Initiative. I don't know a whole lot but it seems that Iron Man's team comes out on top in Civil War. Stark's plan for organizing and controlling the superhero community must have panned out, to some degree. But for how long?
- ◆ While we are on the topic of Civil War, apparently there are some new comic titles spinning out of the series. From what I have heard, but not confirmed, there will be a new Champions & Defenders series. Counting Omega Flight and Mighty Avengers that would give us 4 new titles.
- ◆ Spider-girl is just one of those characters you can't keep down. After numerous times on the chopping block, fans support was the only things that saved the series, which finally got canceled with issue 100. But all was not lost as she recently reappeared with an all new series, The Amazing Spidergirl.
- ◆ Remember the New Universe? Unless you were a Marvel fan in the 80s I kind of doubt it. With the success of it's alternate timeline/universe Ultimate books they are making the New Universe new again. New Universal reboots the alternate "real world" universe and so far seems to be a pretty good series. It started a few months ago and I recommend you check it out.
- ◆ Speaking of reboots the Wildstorm universe is starting over with all new #1 issues, again. Apparently Captain Atom's recent trip there caused some kind of universal disturbance. If you are a fan Wildcats #1 should still be on store shelves.
- ◆ Like I said last issue Zombies are all the rage.
- 1. Marvel is releasing a Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness comic. The story starts in an issue of Army of Darkness and continues into the Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness mini series.
- 2. Heroclix Marvel Zombie teaser minis that are suppose to be in 1 out of every 100 packages of the Supernova expansion are going for \$100 + on the internet.
- ◆ Do you remember Captain Canuck? Well for those of you that have no clue what I'm talking about he is a Canadian Superhero (like Capt. America) put out by Comely Comics. New issues are available online, (www.captaincanuck.com) or ask your local shop if they can order it for you. I haven't checked out the new series yet but I like to support independents so I will be adding it to my reading list. I suggest you at least give it a try.



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News & Rumors

- As previously mentioned rumors abound on the net concerning D&D 4e, but still nothing from WotC.
- Apparently there is already talk about a Spiderman 4.
- NBC has apparently given the green light to re-do the Bionic Woman television series.
- Everyone likes free stuff and with the success of Free Comic Book Day, there is now a Free RPG Day. Set for June 23, 2007 it hopes to draw new players into game shops. So far only Trolllord Games and Goodman Games are on board but lets hope others follow.
(www.freerpgday.com)
- Christopher Eccleston (the 9th Doctor on Doctor Who) will have a recurring role in NBC's Heroes. Apparently he will be a mentor for Peter Petrelli and will show that people with powers have been around for a while.

Piracy continued from page 2

tell you if you have illegal software.

But now I am a bit older and wiser and I see things a bit differently. I still like to get things for free and I have little to no sympathy for the, incredibly overpaid, rich fat cats that continue to whine about illegal downloading and copying. However, I have come to realize that there are others who are hurt by this.

If you look hard enough you can find pretty much anything you want for free on the internet. I did a little research for this article and found you could use bit torrents to download movies, TV shows, comic books, and even rpg books. I found complete runs of X-men, Sandman, Animal Man, Spiderman and numerous other comics that could be downloaded and were updated weekly as new comics are released. I also found several sites that had nearly every single 2e AD&D, 3e & 3.5 D&D book available for download. Oddly enough I found very few books from smaller publishers like Palladium, but I'm sure they are out there.

There again you may say so what, how is this hurting anyone? But it does. Comic book creators and the freelancers that work on gaming products aren't usually millionaires, they tend to need every penny that they can get. Granted the CEO of the companies that hire them may still get paid, but those freelancers, most of whom started out as



fans just like you and I, will lose money and jobs.

Think about it. If people download and share copyrighted material and the company that produces it does lose many, who do you think feels that loss first? Is it the CEO? Not a chance, it's the people who need their jobs. The janitors, freelancers and warehouse workers that lose jobs over falling profits, they are the ones that get hurt. It also hurts the retailers, such as your local comic and gaming stores, because is people aren't buying it, they can't sell it. Plus if companies begin to lose enough money they will simply quit making the products.

So maybe we need to consider whether getting stuff for free is really worth the long term cost.



www.pulpgamer.com



www.captaincanuck.com

Online vs. FLGS

One of my favorite memories as a youth was going to the local comic book/gaming shops and hanging out. For a kid it was similar to walking into Cheers, a place where everyone knew your name. Most of us didn't go to school together nor did we see each other outside of the shop, but that didn't change the fact we were all friends. Countless Saturdays were spent arguing over which comics were best, playing Dungeons and Dragons or just hanging out, this was before CCG's hit the scene. The shop owners(s) never thought about chasing us out and often, if a game got particularly intense, we would stay long after the shop closed. The people that owned the shops I frequented were just as much fan boys and geeks as those of us that hung out there. The owners treated us regulars a lot like extended family.

Now I'm all grown up, few of my friends play D&D anymore and I live in an area where there is no friendly local game shop. I buy most of my gaming material at the book store in the closest mall (if you consider 40 miles away close), which has a very limited selection, and the comic shop I frequent(45 miles away) doesn't carry any game material except minis and CCGs. I have on occasion found a few items on the internet and of course at conventions, but if I had my choice I would choose to shop at a FLGS over anything else.

Many gamers complain that the prices in local shops are too high compared to the deals they can find online and I have to concede this is sometimes true. Although if you figure in shipping and handling a lot of those cheaper items end up costing more than you would pay in a shop. While on one hand I appreciate the deals online stores offer it saddens me to hear that shops are closing all across the country on a daily basis. What upsets me even more are the gamers that pronounce they don't care, that saving a few bucks, and never having to leave your home is the better way. If this continues future generations of gamers will never know what it's like to hang out at their local shop. They will miss out on the friendship and social interaction with true peers that can be found at the shop on the corner.

The local game shop is more than just a store, it is a gaming institution. The stores are generally run by people who love the hobby as much as the rest of us, they have to because they sure don't get rich running a hobby shop, and more than a few gamers were introduced to gaming through these local shops. So why do we choose to eliminate something that is an integral part of a hobby we enjoy? I doubt it is completely intentional, and I know that things like the 90's comic boom and subsequent crash played a part in the demise of the local shops, but the opportunity to save a few dollars on the newest gaming supplement by shopping online seems to be the biggest culprit.

I live in a small town that stopped a Wal-mart from opening because of the effect it would have had on local merchants. The owners of these local shops are our neighbors and friends. Their kids are in the same classes as our kids, and when you walk in they not only know your name, they are genuinely happy to see you. Granted the prices may not be the cheapest, and you may not have the convenience of one stop shopping, but you get good service and a sincere smile, something that can't be replaced by cheaper toilet paper and dog food.

So is saving a few bucks really worth causing the demise of the brick and mortar shop? Can those deals really replace the satisfaction of walking into a shop where they know your name? Someplace where you are more than just a customer, you're a friend.

2007 Convention Calendar

February

- ◆ GenghisCon 2007
Feb 15-18
Denver CO
www.denvergamers.com/genghis/
- ◆ Templecon 2007
Feb 16-18 Providence RI
www.templecon.org/home.htm
[generalinfo.asp](http://www.templecon.org/generalinfo.asp)
- ◆ DunDraCon 2007
Feb 16-19 San Ramon , CA
www.dundracon.com/
- ◆ OrcCon 2007
Feb 16-19 Los Angeles
www.strategicon.net/
- ◆ Gamicon 2007
Feb 23-26 Iowa City Iowa
www.gamicon.org/
- ◆ Con of the North
Feb 16-18 2007 St. Paul, MN
www.conofthenorth.com/
- ◆ Mega Con 2007
Feb 16-18
www.megaconvention.com/
- ◆ PrezCon 2007
Feb 21-25 Charlottesville Virginia
www.prezcon.com/
- ◆ Total Confusion XXI
Feb 22-25 Mansfield, MA
www.totalcon.com

March

- ◆ Wizard World Los Angeles
March 16th - 18th 2007
www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/la.cfm
- ◆ Wonder Con 2007
March 2-4 San Francisco
www.comic-con.org/wc/
- ◆ Momocon 2007
March 17-18 2007 Atlanta GA
www.onegaistudios.com/momo/
- ◆ Marmalade Dog
March 16-18 2007 Kalamazoo MI
<http://www.marmaladedog.org/>

- ◆ PrinceCon 2007
Mar 16-18 Princeton University
<http://www.princecon.org/>
- ◆ MidSouthCon 2007
March 23-25 Memphis TN
www.midsouthcon.org/

- ◆ Gamestorm
March 30 - April 1 2007
<http://www.gamestorm.org/>
- ◆ Lorecon 2007
April 13-15 South Burlington VT
www.lorecon.com/

April

May

- ◆ KublaCon 2007
May 25-28 San Francisco
www.kublacon.com/
- ◆ Rising Phoenix Con 2007
May 05 - 06 Milwaukee WI
www.willworkfordice.com/
- ◆ 2007 Palladium Open House
May 4 - 6 Taylor, Michigan
www.palladiumbooks.com

June

- ◆ Wizard World Philadelphia
June 15th - 17th 2007
www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/philadelphia.cfm
- ◆ Star Wars Celebration 4
◆ May 25-28 2007 Los Angeles
www.gencon.com/2007/swciv/
- ◆ PolyCon XXV
San Luis Obispo, CA
June 29 - July 1 2007
www.polycon.org/pc25/
- ◆ Gamicon 2007
Feb 23-26 Iowa City Iowa
www.gamicon.org/

July

- ◆ Comic Con 2007
July 26 - 29 San Diego
www.comic-con.org/ci/

- ◆ Liberty Con 2007
July 27-19 East Ridge, TN
www.libertycon.org
- ◆ Origins 2007
July 5-8 Columbus Oh
www.originsgames.com/
- ◆ Phoenix Con Games
July 14-17 2007
www.conevents.com/page/phx/main.asp

August

- ◆ Archon
Aug 2-5 2007 Collinsville IL
www.archonstl.org/
- ◆ Wizard World Chicago
Aug 9th - 12th 2007
www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/chicago.cfm
- ◆ Gen Con Indy
Aug 16-19 2007
www.gencon.com/
- ◆ Conglomeration 2007
Aug 10-12 Louisville Ky
www.conglomeration.org/
- ◆ Dragon Con 2007
Aug 31-sept 3 Atlanta GA
www.dragoncon.org/
- ◆ Gateway 2007
August 31- Sep 3
www.strategicon.net/

September

October

November

- ◆ Wizard World Texas
Nov. 16th - 18th 2007
www.wizarduniverse.com/conventions/texas.cfm
- ◆ AmberCon 2007
Nov 1-4 Portland OR
www.amberconnw.org/

December

** If you know of a convention in your area please email me the web address and I will be happy to add it to the list **