

Windows XP: Games For Windows

Fact Sheet

Gamers invest a lot of time and energy into optimizing the performance of their gaming rigs. Developed with power users such as gamers in mind, the Microsoft® Windows® XP operating system delivers the exciting interactive experience gamers expect. Windows XP provides the high levels of performance, reliability and compatibility required to let gamers focus on enjoying their games, rather than on configuring their machine.

Get Started Right Away

Windows XP seamlessly and quickly delivers the experience gamers expect, so they're ready to play.

- **Fast system boot.** Windows XP is ready to go an average of 34 percent more quickly than Windows 2000 and 27 percent more quickly than Windows 98 SE. After users have opened a game a few times, Windows XP will arrange the required files on their hard drive to enable the game to load even more quickly.

Easy Networking, Fast Performance

Windows XP helps gamers quickly connect to other gamers everywhere — on the Internet or in another room.

- **Quick step-by-step setup.** With Windows XP, setting up an Internet and network connection is a breeze. Wizards guide users step by step, helping them quickly install new network hardware such as a wireless device, configure a home network, and connect to the Internet or their own living room.

A Reliable Platform for Gaming

Game software can require the most from system resources, and gamers push their PCs to the limit. Because gamers frequently hook up the latest devices — from 3-D graphics cards to displays and peripherals — they need a dependable system that can easily incorporate new hardware. Windows XP is the reliable platform that helps keep any PC — even custom-configured gaming machines — running at peak performance.

- **Stability**
 - **Avoid blue-screen crashes.** If software running on Windows XP crashes, the application may shut down, but the desktop will keep running, enabling gamers to get back in the game faster.
 - **Fewer support questions.** Internal Microsoft research shows that users playing newly released games on Windows XP-based computers are less likely than users of previous versions to contact product support with system questions.
 - **Easy driver installation.** Windows XP makes the installation of new device drivers a breeze thanks to Windows Hardware Quality Lab (WHQL) certification and the System Restore feature. If gamers load a new uncertified driver, Windows XP creates a restore point that allows them, with just a few clicks, to easily return their machine to a state in which it uses the previous drivers.
 - **Easy Windows Update.** Windows XP makes it simple for users to keep their computers up to date and running at peak performance. Windows Update provides users with easy access to the latest updates for the computer's operating system, software and hardware. Gamers even can enable Windows XP to automatically download new device drivers and critical software updates, as well as other enhancements when their computer is connected to the Internet.

- **Compatibility**
 - **More fun, less hassle.** Game creators develop on Windows XP, so it's now easier to track down bugs and performance problems during development than with previous versions of Windows. The end result is more fun while gaming.
 - **Easily attach a gaming peripheral.** When gamers attach a steering wheel or joystick, Windows XP installs the appropriate driver. Universal Serial Bus (USB) driver support enables lightning-fast installation.
- **Performance**
 - **DirectX® enables gaming at its best.** Windows XP includes DirectX technologies that leverage a gamer's hardware to bring astonishing game environments to life. DirectX is a group of Windows technologies that help make a personal computer an ideal platform for running and displaying applications rich in multimedia elements such as video, 3-D animation and interactive audio.
 - **Graphics.** The Direct3D® API enhances graphical performance with new vertex and pixel shaders. High-Level Shader Language (HLSL) allows developers to create technologically advanced game content, from lifelike animation to programming dramatic effects. The DirectShow® API supports advanced video playback for games that include full-motion video. HLSL is included in popular titles such as "Half-Life 2," "Halo" for Windows and "Star Wars Galaxies."
 - **Sound.** The DirectSound® API supports sound input and output, including DirectSound for advanced spatial effects such as 3-D sound placement and real-time echoes. The DirectMusic® API is a rich library of sound functions specifically for music, allowing games to create interactive symphonies and even mix multiple musical themes on the fly.
 - **Multiplayer support.** The DirectPlay® API provides essential multiplayer support for games on a local network and the Internet.
 - **Peripheral support.** The DirectInput® API offers more accurate response from game controllers, including traditional joysticks and the current crop of digital USB controllers.

About Games for Windows

Games for Windows are built to harness the powerful technology of Windows to provide gamers with the most innovative games possible. Games for Windows utilize the performance and stability of Windows to bring serious gaming to everyone. Reliability, compatibility and the freedom of customization empower gamers to create their own gaming destiny. More information can be found on the Games for Windows Web site at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/games/>.

#####

Microsoft, Windows, DirectX, Direct 3D, DirectShow, DirectSound, DirectMusic, DirectPlay and DirectInput are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corp. in the United States and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

For more information contact:

Brian Kemp, Edelman, (206) 223-1606, brian.kemp@edelman.com