

# Wii will, Wii will rock you!

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Welcome to part one of sifting through the next-gen console hype. I will begin with the least expensive home console, and conclude with the most expensive home console.

First up, the Wii: The Wii is \$250, and will launch on Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2 full days after Sony's uber-expensive PS3 launches. But what's included, I hear you say? The Wii will have the first real pack-in game at launch since the Super Nintendo, and Wii Sports, a collection of really cool sports games. All will use the Wii's unique controller. The games include baseball, tennis, boxing, golf, and bowling. Yes, bowling.

Now, some launch games! There are 25 in all, led by the newest Legend of Zelda game, Twilight Princess. Excite Truck's controls should be familiar to anyone who ever played Excitebike on the old NES. There's also Madden NFL 07, a sequel to the Nintendo DS game.

At launch, you'll be able to go onto what is known as the Wii Shop Channel and buy NES, Super NES, and N64 games, going for \$5, \$8, and \$10 a pop, respectively. But the sneaky folks at Nintendo are using Wii Points, so NES games are 500 points, SNES games are 800 points, and N64 games are 1,000 points. It's unclear which games will be left out, but right now, we do know that Super Mario World and Super Mario 64 will be available, and, most likely, Super Mario Brothers.

If you were planning on getting Twilight Princess for your Cube, don't. It's been delayed till Dec. However, the Wii will be backwards-compatible with the Gamecube. There is Nintendo DS connectivity, but we don't know what said connectivity will be just yet. We will know more when Pokemon Battle Revolution (temporary title) comes out, or when

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Wii release date: November 19, 2006

Pokemon Diamond and Pearl for DS comes out, whichever happens first. You may get DS Demos downloaded to your Wii, but don't count on playing DS games on the it.

Now that we've gone into severe detail on the software, let's talk hardware. IBM's "Broadway" CPU will power the Wii, while an ATI co-developed GPU will power the Wii's graphics, which will not be much better than the Cube's. Regardless, graphics

are superficial, as game play is king. An ATI-developed GPU means backwards compatibility with all Nintendo Gamecube titles. This is a step up from the XBOX 360. So, if you like Mario Kart Double Dash, you will like the Wii, as all the Gamecube games you know and love are backwards-compatible right out of the box. Also, there is no DVD playback, but you have a bajillion other DVD players as it is, right? No big loss there. And, a slot-loading CD drive

takes full-size discs as well as the smaller Cube discs.

The biggest feature, one that will have IT scrambling, is Wi-Fi online support. There will be no online games right at launch, but you can buy stuff off of the Wii Shop Channel. Wi-Fi is a touchy issue for the IT folks, but here's the fun part: WiiConnect24 is a service that gives you constant updates to your games! Also, this feature eliminates those nasty load times. Here's the cool part for everyone, including the environmental folks: when in "sleep mode," the Wii consumes the power of a single light bulb. Amazing! So, IT, get cracking on the best way to implement Wi-Fi on campus, especially in the dorms!

Now, where do I pre-order? Blockbuster in Brevard has a pre-order list, and there are only 3 people on the list so far. Yours truly is one of them. So why should you pre-order now? Because you can get up to \$100 or more off the price of the Wii! When you pre-order, the least you will pay at launch day is \$150. That, my friends, is cheap! ■



Legend of Zelda, Twilight Princess gameplay

Image courtesy of nintendo.com

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