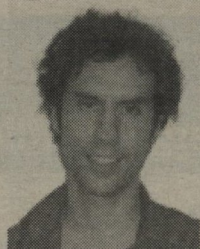


Right Here and Now

Rob Walker
Copy Editor



If you've been inside a Shoppers Drug Mart or mall store in the last few weeks, you'd know the Christmas season is almost upon us. That magical time of year when Jesus hooks a jetpack onto a reindeer and delivers coal to Haliburton CEO's.

And, like every Christmas since stores and companies realized people turn into glorified cash machines at this time of year, we have a product that everyone must have and yet no one does. When I was a kid, it was Power Rangers. Most recently it was Tickle Me Elmo.

This year, it's the X-box 360. According to retailers, including giants like Wal-Mart and Radioshack, these stores have only been receiving a quarter of their promised units. This means that even people who pre-ordered the system months ago still haven't received a unit.

This also means that Ebay is having an absolute field day. At last check before publication, X-box premium bundles (regularly \$499.00 Canadian) were going for \$XXXX and the hard drives, which go for \$149.00 can. Were selling for \$xxx US.

This is absolute insanity, and the system was just released on Nov. 22. With only one small shipment predicted from Microsoft before Christmas, retailers and parents alike are wringing their hands with worry. Microsoft, however, is loving it. And with 3 million units expected to sell before 2006, I can understand why.

The added press from a supposed 'shortage' is causing anyone

who was on the fence to immediately buy a system if they get the chance. This includes yours truly, because really, who needs to eat food during the winter months? A steady diet of Project Gotham Racing 3 and yarn is all I need to keep me going.

Besides, all those people that come over to play my system are always bringing food from Wendy's and Burger King, so I can always live off stolen fries.

And what about the X-box itself? It's fun. My TV is about 7 years old if it's a day, and so doesn't quite live up to the 'high definition' world that Microsoft is creating, but it beats the old system six ways from Sunday. The games are extremely easy to pick up (my French roommate and female friends are now beating my ass regularly in races and soccer games) and fun for groups of people to play, and the online stuff and software stuff is just incredible.

For example: I was annoyed at the music in FIFA 2006 (a soccer game) and wanted to listen to some of my own, so I plugged my ipod into the back of the machine. Sure enough, I was able to load up all my songs through the game and play them, all while pausing a match.

So, will I keep this cutting edge, state of the art, colossal waste of time and money, or make a giant profit when ebay collectively shits itself in mid December? Tune in next semester to find out. Same great time, same great paper.



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