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## Halo 3 still the best shooter on any console

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In today's "Next Gen" world of video games, keeping up with the Jones', as in much of contemporary popular culture, is an inescapable fact of life. Just the act of lining up on the other side of midnight on release dates of new game titles is a rite of passage that proves your mettle giving you instant street cred separating the men from the boys and/or the serious gamers from mere posers.



This is true whether you're a stud with a ranking that would make a Frag Doll blush or if you just so happen to be a "noob" any 11-year-old with opposable thumbs could beat down with his eyes closed just for kicks. Never mind the questions waiting out in the cold and rain might raise from anyone and everyone you know regarding your sanity buying a game you know full well you probably won't play until The Sandman has had his way with you.

The truth of the matter is, if you're into shooters (and really, who isn't?) you probably already own the best multiplayer video game ever released in the history of mankind. That game? Halo 3. That's right, all you haters out there who are only lying to yourselves when you say otherwise--I said it. Halo 3.

So, why despite all the nabobs of negativism out there, do I love the Halo franchise and why should you if you don't already? Let me count the ways. For starters, Halo 3 is just as fun and addictive now as it was that cold September 25th back in 2007 when I lined up with all the other fools who couldn't wait for common sense and daylight to kick in to get their hands on a copy of this revolutionary game. And when I say revolutionary I mean it in every sense of the word. Halo 3, is still to this day, the only game like it available on any console, bar none.

If you don't believe me, if you own a copy, pop it into your 360 right now. You can skip the campaign because, well, who buys a first person shooter for the campaign mode? Shooters and just about every other genre these days are all about the multiplayer experience and on that playing field Halo 3 still dominates like no other.

Matchmaking is silky smooth with so many variants and game types to choose from there truly is something for everyone. And no matter what time of day you hop on, there are literally thousands of Halo 3 players all over the world, much like me who still just can't get enough. I've played with players from Germany, New Zealand, Korea, Mexico, Australia, Sweden and more than likely a bunch of others I don't even know about.

My favorite is Slayer, because, well, you get to commit pixelated homicide to your heart's content, with kills of 25 for single player matches on up to 50 kills for team matches where teams can range anywhere from 2-8 players. There are other games available like Odd Ball and VIP which are okay if you like that sort of thing, which I don't. Enough said.

Admittedly the maps aren't as fun as those on Halo 2, but that leads me to yet another reason Halo 3 reigns supreme. Bungie, the company behind Halo in all its glorious iterations, is not one to rest on its laurels. They know the secret to keeping its franchise fresh is to keep offering up fresh content for its devoted fans. So, just when the current list of maps start to feel stale and played out, rumors start flying and you hear it through the grapevine that new maps are on the way. And sure enough, new maps (or sometimes updated reinterpreted versions of classic maps) pop up for a nominal fee for your downloading pleasure.

Then of course there's Forge which allows gamers with a serious case of God Complex the power to create their own maps—complete with the ability to add all kinds of goodies like vehicles and weapons wherever you like for you and all your buddies to love--or hate--together. (Fan sites like forgehub.com have even sprung up to help adventurous gamers learn the ropes.) If that weren't enough, you can create custom games, which you can open to the public or hog all to yourself, save films and clips of your favorite matches—even take snap shots of all the people you've humiliated and share them with the world. (You can even download high res images of said pictures and save them to your 360 or PC hard drive—something I've done and shared with my friends on Facebook and via Email.) But wait—there's more. Every weekend without fail, Bungie offers its loyal fanboys and girls even more reasons to remain ever steadfast and loyal to the fold, serving up irresistible variants for its “DOUBLEXPWEEKEND” which lasts from Thursday to Sunday, and features game variants like Team Flag, Team SWAT, Team Snipers, Griffball, and my personal favorite, Team Melee.

Long story short, nothing matches the pure adrenaline rush and entertainment value Halo 3 still delivers in spades even in 2009--nearly two years after its initial release. Does that mean there aren't other games out there with a lot to offer? Of course not. Is Gears Of War 2 awe inspiring? Yes. Is Call Of Duty 4 off the chain? You bet. Are games like Left 4 Dead, Fallout 3 and Little Big Planet ridiculously addictive astounding achievements in video game technology? Yes, yes, yes, yes—hells yes. But for my money (and for yours too if you're being completely honest with yourself) Halo 3 is still the best designed, most epifanglorious time to be had on a video game console in the multiplayer universe. The only thing Bungie is guilty of, if anything is spoiling Halo fans so much that they've taken everything the game has to offer for granted. Of course that's just my not-so-humble opinion. And until Halo 4 comes out (which Bungie denies will ever happen) I'm sticking

to it.

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