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Developers, Help Me Consume Your Games

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This past holiday season I've been shocked at how some games and game peripherals have been sold. I'm looking straight at you Guitar Hero III, Time Crisis 4, and PlayStation 3.



The first culprit is Guitar Hero III. Guitars are not going to be sold separately for the PS3, Wii, or Xbox 360 until February. That makes it just that much harder to play this game multiplayer with your friend without having to buy another Guitar Hero Bundle, but then you have spent an extra thirty dollars for a game you already own. RedOctane, the game's publisher, should package

the controller individually for those wanting to play with their friends – not over Xbox LIVE or the PlayStation Network – without having to dish out the cash to buy the whole bundle twice. I know the controllers will be available eventually, but why make the consumers wait?

Time Crisis 4 follows in that same path, but worse. When I hear "Time Crisis," I immediately think back to playing the game in the arcade, trying to get as far as possible with a buddy and a pocketful of quarters. In Time Crisis 4 for the PS3, however, Bandai Namco have gotten rid of your buddy.

The Light Gun controller needed to play the game is not sold separately, so once again, you must buy two bundles and have an extra copy of the game that you don't need if you want to enjoy the game with a friend. Maybe you can coax your friend into buying a copy of the game for himself? Maybe that's what the publishers of Guitar Hero III and Time Crisis 4 want you to do to earn a little extra profit, by selling two bundles instead of just one bundle and a separate controller. This backfires, however, as I personally witnessed in a videogame retail store a few days before Christmas a man who turned down purchasing a copy of Time Crisis 4 for the sole reason he could not buy a second Light Gun for his son so they could play together.

The third quarrel I have is with Sony re-introducing the PlayStation 3 in two models: one a 40GB and one 80GB model. The 80GB obviously has more memory, two more USB ports, and has media card slots whereas the 40GB has no media card slots and only two

USB ports. But then, Sony cripples the 40GB model even more by removing its backwards compatibility. Now, to enjoy the limited backwards compatibility that the Xbox 360 and the Nintendo Wii have, you must spend the extra \$100 and receive memory you might not need, USB ports you may never fill, and media card slots that you just might not know what to do with.

The PlayStation 3 has already been criticized for its lack of good titles compared to the Xbox 360 and the Nintendo Wii, so a major plus to buying a PS3 was that it could still play a limited amount of PS2 and PSX games. Let's face it, PS2 games are not out of date yet, and new ones are still being released. However, by forcing the consumer to spend an extra \$100 on a system to enjoy the backwards compatibility is a poor move. The less tech-savvy folk who have no need for the media card slots and the extra memory should still be entitled to enjoy the old PlayStation classics.

At certain times like these, I hope to see the game industry try to cater more to its consumers rather than its own wallets, and though I fully realize that the number one priority in running a business is to make money, somewhere along the way you must retain a fan base. Making it difficult to game with your friends due to controllers not being released separately just yet, or making you spend more money for a simple feature than competing consoles have standard is just frustrating, and may make people look away from your product on the shelf in search of something more user-friendly.