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A SONY PLAYSTATION...FREE? A SEGA SATURN...FOR THE PRICE?

Everybody knows how expensive the new game systems are. The sticker shock of \$399, \$349 or even \$299 certainly has the game players talking. "Are the new systems worth the money?" **IS 16-BIT REALLY DEAD?**

MK3 used to be the hot topic but now with the Sony PlayStation and the Sega Saturn in the stores, everybody is looking at the games, counting their money and wondering what to do. Many have taken the plunge and spent the \$300+ but many more are taking a wait-and-see attitude. Waiting for the price to drop, waiting for the Ultra 64, or waiting to see which system will start to pull ahead of the pack, at least to be the temporary leader, but **THEY ARE WAITING**, nevertheless.

No one knows it better than the hardware manufacturers as the price war has already started...sort of...as both companies are 'playing games' with what they call the basic system price. Sega had it easy for a few months being the only new system in the stores but now with Sony's PlayStation out there selling for what appears to be \$100 less (not including a game or memory card), Sega countered with a three free games offer which they say lowers the Saturn's system price to \$249. Still that's a lot of coin. Somebody has to do better, but the hardware giants have **HIT ROCK BOTTOM.**

Now it's the retail store's time to bring the player's money in. They can't trim the price of the hardware any more but the smart ones have sharpened their pencils, put on their thinking caps and come up with a **SOFTWARE DEAL** that goes Sega's free games idea even one better!

Enter the big chains—Software Etc., Babbages, Electronics Boutique and others. Seeing early on that these new 32-Bit game systems wouldn't fly off the shelves at the suggested list prices, they did a little creative dealing on their own. Thinking that players would virtually abandon their older 16-Bit game system (as they did when the NES was replaced with the Super NES) the chains have made it even easier for players to afford the new 32-Bitters by offering to take the old systems and games off the player's hands in exchange for a reduced price on the new systems. Kind of sounds like shopping for a new car.

Now, players are **SHOPPING AROUND** for the best deal. Do they trade their 16-Bitter plus three games on a PlayStation or 3D0 for \$199 (or a Saturn for \$299)? Or do they go to the mall and trade in 10 games for a \$199 PlayStation? Or do they approach a smaller independent and try to cut an even better deal?

Score one for the retailers! Does it work? You bet! Each day the guys in the office talk about the various deals they are considering. One of our staff even found a way to get a **PLAYSTATION FOR FREE** (system plus 30 games)!

Hmmm, now if systems are being priced like cars, I wonder where I can go to get a two-year lease on a PlayStation?



by
Ed Semrad
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