

E-Gaming – Opening up the World of Gaming

From the hobby's earliest days people have been playing remotely as a means of widening the choice of opponents to increase their chances to play and/or to avoid having to rely as heavily on solitaire play. Before the Internet age people used [Play-by-mail](#) (PBM). This necessitated both players having somewhere to leave the game setup (often for months on end) and playing at an excruciatingly slow (or, perhaps, deliciously slow) pace, as moves were exchanged by 'snail-mail' and then replayed on the recipient's copy of the game. [Play-by-email](#) (PBeM) speeded things, and made international opponents as accessible as more local ones, but still required physical copies of the games to be setup.

Then e-gaming play-aids arrived in the form of the likes of [Aide de Camp](#) (ADC) and [Cyberboard](#) (CB).

Now people could play the games they knew and loved quickly, using email, but without having to leave the physical game out. Instead the board, counters and most play-aids needed were there on the computer. They could not only leave the game setup without gathering dust, being disturbed by the cat and/or invoking the wrath of the wife, they could have numerous games setup at the same time.

With these tools, as you move your counters on the computer screen, roll virtual dice and type in comments for your opponent, the computer logs your every action. The log file then gets emailed to, and is played back by, the other player.

The next evolution was live-play over the Internet. [Vassal](#) and, more recently [ZunTzu](#) (ZT), are currently the principle tools in this domain ([Vassal](#) supports [PBeM](#) too). With these tools and the likes of [Skype](#) and [Ventrilo](#), it is possible to sit at your computer and play an opponent in real time.

The most recent evolution is cultural rather than technological. In the early days the legitimacy of these tools was hotly debated. Did they breach copyright? Did they cost sales as a result of piracy, or help sales by enabling people to find opponents and play the games. Though the debate continues, the tide is turning in the play-aids' favour. It is now very rare for a publisher to object to such a tool being created for their games (though there are still a few exceptions) and it is now far more common to see them actively supporting production. This acceptance by the hobby has allowed download sites such as [Limey Yank Games](#) (LYG) to not only exist but to flourish. [Against the Odds](#) is a good example of this. They have allowed [LYG](#) to host-play aids for their games for many years and are a major sponsor of the site.

What happens next? Well one aspect of the next phase has started already. Publishers are now not only supporting the production of play-aids, they are encouraging it and are even using the tools themselves. You will often see a publisher on [Consimworld](#) (CSW) seeking volunteers to produce the tools and [LYG](#) has just added a forum thread for them to use for this very purpose. They often use them during play testing as they are not only more versatile to use, they are also cheaper to produce/distribute and easier to maintain than traditional playtest kits.

E-gaming may be a niche within a niche hobby, but it is an important one. By broadening the access to the wargaming community, and allowing people to actually play these games they invest so much money in, they help the hobby to grow and prosper.

If you've not tried e-gaming yet and would like to give it a go, the best way to start is to find an opponent that is willing to show you the ropes. Sites like [CSW](#) and [LYG](#) may help you find potential opponents. If you want to try [PBeM](#) then [Cyberboard](#) or Vassal are my recommendations. If you want live play, then go for [Vassal](#) or [ZunTzu](#). The choice of platform is normally one of personal preference (and support for the game(s) you're interested in) and you'll probably become an adherent of whichever one you get used to first.

There are a mass of games supported ([LYG](#) alone has over 1100 files you can download) so ***what are you waiting for? Jump in!*** The sites below are examples of what is on the web to help you get started:

Play Aids

- [Aide de Camp II](#)
- [Battlegrounds](#)
- [Cyberboard](#)
- [ZunTzu](#)
- [Vassal](#)

Publisher's Actively Supporting E-Gaming

- [Against the Odds](#)
- [Australian Design Group](#)
- [Battles](#)
- [Clash of Arms](#)
- [Columbia Games](#)
- [GMT Games](#)
- [Jeux Grenier Games](#)
- [Legion Wargames](#)
- [LPD Games](#)
- [Operational Studies Group](#)
- [Red Sash Games](#)
- [Victory Point Games](#)

Download Sites

- [Cyber Gamers](#)
- [GTL Editor](#)

- [Limey Yank Games](#)
- [Pierre Bulle's Gameboxes](#)
- [Play by Email Emporium, The](#)
- [Private Wars](#)
- [Warzone C](#)
- [Web-Grognards](#)
- [Yankie Air Pirates](#)

Forums/Bulletin Boards

- [Consimword](#)
- [Limey Yank Games](#)

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