

Game Consoles

The best overall console remains the **Sony PlayStation 2**, thanks to its enormous selection of games in just about every genre imaginable. The PS2 has also built a sizeable lead in online gameplay over the last year; it doesn't hurt that Sony's Network Adaptor now ships in the box with the PS2.

Microsoft's **Xbox** takes second place. The selection of games isn't as complete and online gameplay requires a \$50/year subscription and suffers from the lack of support by Electronic Arts, the biggest developer of them all. However, the Xbox has some notable exclusives – for instance, the now-classic shoot-em-up Halo.

Nintendo's **GameCube** has settled into third, with no online gameplay to speak of and a selection with some notable weaknesses. But the GameCube remains the only place you'll find such long-running characters as Mario and Zelda.

And it's this last point that's probably going to make your decision for you: Ask your kid or yourself what games you want to play, then see what consoles they're available on.

TOP TIPS

- * Buy the system that plays the selection of games you want to play.
- * You can't go wrong with Sony PlayStation 2.
- * Of the major consoles, only Microsoft's Xbox and Sony's PlayStation 2 allow online play.