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ALBION ONLINE Albion Online is an MMO without the constraints of character classes. Free games are no longer just the domain of MOBAs and Runescape; there are shooters to rival the likes of Overwatch, space games as shiny as Elite, and Warcraft-grade MMOs that don't demand a subscription. Questing and progressing in Star Trek Online plays out like episodes from the TV series: one moment you are wandering through space, the next you are having to do deals with, or shoot lasers at, one of the many franchise belligerents. You can team up with other player's AI-controlled squad. Instead, ArcheAge's world is full of rumdrinking, Kraken-fearing pirates who traverse the enormous oceanic map completing sidequests and hoarding loot. If Middle-earth: Shadow of War didn't scratch that Tolkien itch then perhaps this free MMO will. There's cross-play, too, so it doesn't matter if your friends aren't playing on PC. Not that you will have to reach for those if you do not want to - expansions have taken Neverwinter players to some of the most beloved corners of the Forgotten Realms, including the Underdark and Icewind Dale. Read more: Here are the best RPG games World of Warcraft earned the record for having the most concurrent subscriptions (12 million) for a reason. These titular portals open up unpredictably across the world, spawning in hordes of enemies or gigantic bosses and forcing every player in the area to band together in order to repel the demonic attacks. Plus, there's also Baldur's Gate 3 if you're looking to explore more of this glorious world. Chances are you will already know the basics of Tolkien's Middle-earth before heading into Lord of the Rings Online - so that is half the battle. While it began life as a subscription-based MMO, SWTOR is now also completely playable for free, although you should expect levelling up to take a little bit longer. Free-to-play games are increasingly common, meaning the F2P MMO crowd now have a lot more options than they used to. That is the ultimate goal of War Thunder. War Thunder's frankly ridiculous number of vehicles all manage to stay unique thanks to the game's realistic damage model, which simulates almost every single aspect of ballistics, from shell type and speed to the thickness and angle of the armour it is hitting. After you've chomped through the main story, you're ready to get into the real game, which is exploring the vast, pristine world of Teyvat. It is a F2P title that specialises in vehicular warfare, with three similar but largely separate games under its title: Ground Forces, Aviation, and Naval Battles. Even after some graphical upgrades, it's not the easiest MMO on the eyes, but that does at least mean you can run it on a potato. It is also one of very few cross-play MMOs, which means you can inhabit the same world as PlayStation users. STAR WARS: THE OLD REPUBLIC When you are starting out Star Wars: The Old Republic it will not strike you as a unique MMO. Surprisingly though, that story soon gets better - a lot better - and you quickly find yourself pouring hours into the game just to get to the next cutscene. The game has several tactical team-based modes to explore as you look to expand your fleet. Instead you just need to make it to level ten and the ability to switch between the game's eight combat classes is magically unlocked. FINAL FANTASY XIV Making an MMO out of the beloved Final Fantasy series was never going to be easy. Part of that meta is the roster of 137 LoL champions, who get buffed and nerfed on a regular basis, you can check out our LoL tier list for regular updates. What is the best free MMO? So what are you waiting for? WORLD OF WARPLANES With over four thousand customisation options across five different airborne vessels, World of Warplanes is a free MMO that will keep you at the centre of its eternal conflict set during the Golden Age of military aviation for a good long time. It's time to dive into a new world (or two). Like Call of Duty, World of Tanks is easy to learn, but impossible to master. The rather more modern Neverwinter pulls from both - setting groups of D&D characters loose in the famous city, while allowing players to write their own stories, with additions like Ravenloft characters being added to the game. Everything you would expect from a massive MMO is right here, from expansive open worlds to intricate skill trees. Instead of traditional quests, players encounter dynamic events that pop up around the game world. Play Neverwinter for free GUILD WARS 2 With a storyline that reacts to the player's actions, Guild Wars 2's narrative is unique by MMORPG standards. Every single shot is calculated, meaning that reacts to the player's actions, Guild Wars 2's narrative is unique by MMORPG standards. in War Thunder. Related: Take the crown with the best battle royale games on PC Combine these core elements with constant updates that bring additions such as the Paladins battle royale mode, and you have a shooter that will keep you entertained for years. Even if your wallet is gathering cobwebs and your bank account is best friends with the number zero, there is a quality game on the PC to enjoy. TERA If you have played a whole bunch of MMOs you may be tired of the traditional combat systems that so many of them use. You can customise every last element of your ship so your airborne enemies can gawp at how 'fly' you're looking before they get blown to smithereens. Path of Exile also manages to shed some positive light on that most loathed of all monetisation strategies: microtransactions. It's unusual, but welcome to not get bogged down in creating a class and feeling obligated to stick to it, especially after sinking hours into your build, which in Albion Online, is very easy to do. If you fancy playing as a slave-turned Sith or an Imperial Agent, though, it is a worthwhile grind. So while PC gaming may have a reputation for being rather expensive, our list proves otherwise: you can have a fantastic time without needing to buy a single game. What more could you possibly want from your online multiplayer games? RUNESCAPE At over 20 years of age, Runescape isn't far off being able to buy itself a drink at the bar - you don't get to that age in that industry without being one of the best PC games. And in the air, too - if you're feeling a little tricky at first, so make sure you read our Crossout beginner's guide. Be it in spaceship battles or on the ground where gameplay takes the form of a third-person shooter, Star Trek Online does a brilliant job of bringing the storylines and tone of the TV shows into an F2P MMO. It can take a long time for shots to meet their targets, which means that every moment is spent trying to avoid incoming fire or anticipating where your foe will have moved to. For example, defending a town from a group of rampaging ogres might cause them to return with deadlier weapons or seek out refuge in a nearby cave - you will have to deal with the fallout of these events, whether that means repelling a stronger attack or hunting down and killing the remaining ogres. That realism means it can be a little tricky to get started, so be sure to read our pilot's manual, AKA the War Thunder beginner's guide. It boasts one of the most flexible class systems in the genre, allowing players to create a variety of builds. In what is essentially a free-to-play Mad Max: The Game, you customise a unique and wide range of vehicles with dozens of bespoke parts and use them to destroy your enemies in high-octane, action-packed skirmishes. The change of pace makes for action that is more calculated and nerve-wracking. Wander through the sci fi fantasy-themed planet of Aelion - admiring the beams of sunlight that poke through the foliage or the crisp fidelity of the lightning that is shooting from your character's hands - and it is easy to forget you are playing a game that cost you exactly nothing. You may even get to see some of the best World of Warcraft moments before your time runs out. Warships are leviathans: they crawl and creep across the map, and each one possesses enough power in a single barrage to wipe out anything else. There's a central hub, known as the 'Junction', where players can go on quests and unlock items for their Blankos - or you can venture into a user-generated party game with your pals. The best free MMOs are: Play for free WAR THUNDER Planes, tanks, and ships battling it out for ever and ev more cinematic than its on-tracks sibling thanks to the sheer scale its warfare is conducted on. There are some inventive community adventures on offer if you're willing to dig. Play Guild Wars 2 for free BLANKOS Blankos Block Party is essentially a giant party thrown by a colourful cast of collectible vinyl figurines. You get some story, pick a faction and a class, and do some typically grindy missions for a while. Play World of Warships for free Play for free Pla first time around and had to take another swing at it, eventually turning one of the best MMOs on PC. Damage, Support, Flank and Front Line are the champion types players can choose from, which makes deciphering their strengths and weaknesses dead easy. WORLD OF WARCRAFT One of the most famous and adored MMOs around, and one that most associate with a hefty subscription fee, World of Warcraft actually has a free-to-play trial now, although you won't be able to take your character above level 20. Dreadnought, a 5v5 space combat sim from Yager Development, kindly lets you do this - without hours upon hours of training. With regular updates adding everything from Halloween cosmetics to Pan-Asian Destroyers to World of Warships, it's not an MMO that will get stale any time soon. The Korean heritage shines, too, with detailed character designs and all sorts of monster varieties to get your blades stuck into. That is not to say there is a lack of sophistication, but rather that the core of the game has always been its fast-paced, arcade action. Aside from completely free to play games, we have also included some MMOs with lengthy free trials - games where there is plenty to enjoy without spending a penny. And if you were into LoL back in the day and have been out of the game for a while, League of Legends' tournament mode is perfect to get you back onboard. Great, here you can be a Gorn, Rigellian, Romulan, Klingon, or any other of the 30 race variations available. Essentially, the game's progression is all about acquiring a bigger and bigger collection of ships, from agile fighters to floating behemoths, before finally handing you control of your own fleet. ArcheAge is free to play with an optional subscription, but there's also ArcheAge: Unchained, a separate but identical game that gives you access to all gated content for a one time fee. Whether you choose to play as the mighty Gon, the versatile Jin, master of the natural world, Yun, the mystical Lyn, or any of the many other roles, doing battle using the fast, high-octane combat system is always a joy. Raid also allows for online battles too. Both of which lead to high-quality rewards that can be used to further develop and improve your team. Better yet, we can look forward to the upcoming Path of Exile 2 release date, which began as an update but developed into a fully fledged sequel. Unlike War Thunder however, World of Tanks does not ask you to pour hours of research into learning the armour ratings and layout of every vehicle in the game; instead, World of Tanks takes a more arcade approach. PALADINS A first-person shooter game with cartoon visuals and champions: Paladins might have a lot in common with Blizzard's Overwatch, but it is worth seeking out for more than the fact that it is free. All your explosive efforts go toward your choice of five factions, too, earning you new blueprints, missions, parts and machine guns favour the most offensive and in-your-face players, whilst stealth generators and drones give you a greater choice in your approach. The games developers are so staunchly against pay-to-win business models that they've included only "ethical microtransactions" in their game, by which they mean they add no gameplay advantages to the customer whatsoever. In fact, pretty much every setting in the lore has made it into the game in some form. Instead you build a character from the ground up, and your role in combat can be changed to compliment your team and the situation at hand. Play Enlisted for free Play for free WORLD OF TANKS There are over 800 tanks in World of Tanks, and if you revisit this page in the next hour that number will likely have grown. Making such a decision is no mean feat. Enlisted offers players the chance to fight and strategise as they take on a number of key campaigns from the conflict, where each new location offers unique weapons, vehicles, and aircraft to aid you in your battle. You'll build and improve your AI squad to incorporate a variety of specialists, from flame troopers to tankers, and with the ability to switch between each soldier under your command, every avenue of combat from tank to aerial support is open to explore. DREADNOUGHT Anybody with taste will know that there is nothing better in life than piloting a massive spaceship. What's more, from online war zones to behemoth free MMORPGs, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Play World of Tanks for free Play for Free WORLD OF WARSHIPS World of Warships switches out the twitch shooter elements of World of Tanks for a slowed-down and much more tactical style of play. New content will arrive regularly with each new season, locking out older content - meaning all the Blankos and items you can get are essentially limited editions, and the player-owned economy will allow you to trade your valuable acquisitions. Azeroth is enormous and ever-growing thanks to new expansions like Shadowlands, and it will be years before you feel like you've seen everything that is hidden away in its various dungeons, cities and regions. An open-world RPG with some of the least intrusive free-to-play mechanics going. Bucking the trend is TERA, which trades in click-to-attack mechanics for fast and fluid third-person, over the shoulder view that brings players closer to the action. Smite What makes Smite different? This MMO is designed to please even the pickiest history buff with its impressive level of detail, particularly the fact that you're limited to the equipment that was historically available for each specific campaign in order to get the job done. LoL also boasts some of the biggest eSports prize pools out there, if you fancy yourself as a future pro. LEAGUE OF LEGENDS League of Legends' player count of almost 67 million means you'll never struggle to find a game in Riot's sensationally popular MOBA. Ultimate meters for each hero also mean that the action never results in a stalemate by ensuring every player has an ace up their sleeve that can potentially turn the tide of the match. And since it's free, you can get started right now with help from our Blade & Soul guide, no cash required. If you're looking for some of the best space games on PC and don't want to spend a penny then you can't go wrong with Dreadnought. Clashes are won by fine margins and lightning-quick reflexes, while a compelling XP system and tech tree keep players coming back for more. Unlike those MOBA behemoths, Smite boasts a glut of other game mode variants like Joust, which reduces the number of lanes to just one, and Assault, which randomly allocates a god to every player. Following a similar formula to that of the original Dota, League of Legends is significantly more accessible than its competition, and a constantly expanding and updating meta ensures that even the pros are still learning the game. The tools on offer allow you to create all manner of games, and because it's free-to-play, you can invite everyone you know to test out your ideas. While there's no multiplayer PvP in Genshin Impact, you can invite everyone you know to test out your ideas. to three friends in co-op, whether you just want to relax and unwind by a lake, or slay your way through a few dungeons. You can even waltz right through the gates of Mordor contrary to the classic meme, although in typical MMO fashion you will have to do a whole lot of farming in order to meet the level requirements of some areas. Play Crossout for free Play for free STAR TREK ONLINE Character creation tools in MMOs let you shape everything from your avatar's jawline and eyelash length to the exact density of their chest hair, but even they have got nothing on the options available in Star Trek Online. The result is a free MMO with the questing diversity of one of the best RPGs of all time: what's not to love? Play Star Conflict for free Play free Play for free Play f is enough gameplay variety to keep players coming back for more. Oh, and it has got some lovely sunsets too, if that is what you want from a free-to-play war game. While the Starter Edition of WoW limits a few features, there is enough to do before hitting the level cap to make this a worthwhile entry. Eve Online is a free MMO and galactic conquest simulator like nothing else in games, where corporations made up of thousands of players duke it out across an entire solar system. You can play in both PvE and PvP modes, even fighting against player-created bosses. Play Raid Shadow Legends for free Play for free Enlisted Storm the beaches of Normandy and battle across Europe in this free-to-play WWII shooter. EVE ONLINE Not many games boast battles so costly and sprawling that books have been written about them. Of course Rift is not just a multiplayer adaptation of whack-a-mole. It is a small tweak, but it is one that adds a lot to the flavour and pace. Of course this also makes Archeage one of the best pirate games on PC. Likewise, there are multiple paths to completion for each of these encounters, and intentional or not, your actions in Guild Wars 2 will have consequences. Essentially, if you are a fan of World of Tanks. Wargaming's sky-based battler is easy on the eye, too: each cloud-covered canvas is as full of beauty as it is death and destruction. It's also an MMO that receives a massive content update and competitive shake-up every three months, with its most recent expansion, Expedition, adding heaps of new items and challenges to the game. SKYFORGE Free MMOs are rarely as pretty on the eye as buy-to-play, triple-A titles. Skyforge is the exception. Wherever you go there's more to do, rewards to earn, and puzzles to solve. Unlike most MMOs, there's actually stuff to do at sea. Still confused? Play Star Trek Online for free Play for free NEVERWINTER The name and setting of Neverwinter has a long and storied history online, beginning in 1991 with the first graphical MMORPG, before revolutionising the realm of player-made modules under the stewardship of BioWare with Neverwinter Nights. ARCHEAGE Finally, an MMO for sailing aficionados! No, not the sweater-tied-around-neck, regatta and finger sandwich type of sailing. Playing as a Flank champion like Skye will mean you are best suited to attacking key objectives from behind enemy lines, whereas a Front Line champion excels at holding the line and stopping enemies from getting through. So without further ado, let's take a look at the best online games you can play without breaking the bank. Unlike other MMOs, Final Fantasy XIV doesn't force players down the route of having to grind endlessly with multiple characters in order to see which combat class they want to play as. You lucky thing. Many of the free games are even some of the best MMOs available today. Read more: Here's our list of the best action-adventure games on PC That rapid combat does not mean there is no RPG depth, though. Developed by Hi-Rez Studios, who made the massively popular MOBA Smite, Paladins is built upon a simple class system that categorises its champions by their main strategy on the battlefield. Thanks to Star Conflict Oculus Rift support, this is also one of the only free MMOs you can play in VR. Just check out our best Paladin's champions guide. The other half is avoiding all the quests, NPCs and PvP encounters so you can get on with what you're really there to do: explore all the most famous locations from the franchise - locations like Rohan, Moria, and the Shire. It is so action focused, in fact, that you can even use a controller. PATH OF EXILE An action-RPG cut from the same cloth as the Diablo games, Path of Exile combines grim fantasy, compelling combat, and an extensive selection of gear, abilities and upgrades to keep players grinding away for hours on end. BLADE & SOUL Blade & Soul is a Korean fantasy martial arts MMORPG. That said, this WW2 game is no grind: this action-heavy dogfighter excels when you find yourself amid its 12v12 scraps. The turn-based combat encourages clever and calculated play, which will test the skills of both newcomers and more experienced players. Perhaps it's not very realistic, but its speed and intensity make it one of the best tank games to play. Play Genshin Impact for free Play free Play for free Play free Play free Play for free Play for free Play for free Play free Play for free Play for free Play for free Play free Play free Play for free Play free Pla scattered throughout its expansive sandbox. Tired of playing as a human? You can start your own venture in this hostile galaxy, but the main draw is petitioning a corporation to hire you and throwing yourself into the life of a space every area is randomly generated across all servers - so the dungeon you and your friends are battling through will be different every time you tackle it. Few games do as much to actively encourage experimentation across different classes as Skyforge does, allowing the player to switch between classes in an instant, opening up all of the game's combat styles for experimentation and mastery. By gaming standards it should be abandoned and decrepit, but with a still thriving community, one of the best free-to-play models around and updates so regular it's nearly impossible to keep track of, Runescape still feels as young and fresh as it did in the early 2000s. The result is that Smite feels more like an action game, but all the MOBA fundamentals are in place; roles, creeps, towers, lanes, and - of course - the best Smite gods. RIFT Rifts, as you might expect, are what makes Rift one of the most lively and exciting free MMOs on PC. An impressive tech tree and catalogue of ships means there's always reason to keep playing, as you're never far off a new weapon type or ship module. Think Devil May Cry as an MMO and you are halfway there. Perhaps the game's intricately designed world - inspired by the visual style of artist Hyung Tae Kim - and four unique races and ten compelling classes will sway you. The player-driven economy and risky nature of losing all your loot in a poorly calculated move against your opponents or from an unprecedented enemy ambush is the main draw in Albion, a game that pushes tactics and decision making to the forefront of the genre. Play War Thunder for free Play free Play for free Play free Play for free revolves around collecting heroes and optimising your squad. From the very specific to the Jack-of-all-trades: every style of play is catered for. SWTOR isn't just an MMO with a Star Wars lick of paint, it's one of the best Star Wars games around. And, if that's not enough to pique your interest, frankly, we don't know what will. It even gets updated regularly like a TV show, with expansions like Victory is Life adding the crew from Deep Space Nine to the game. PvE quests and raids see you and your friends facing off against squadrons of aliens or space pirates, while PvP is a looming threat wherever you venture. Related: Check out these free Steam games But Skyforge is more than just a pretty face in an otherwise ungainly genre. Shooting and building things has never been so lucrative. Ouests, new characters, festive events and entirely new features have come and gone in their hundreds. LORD OF THE RINGS ONLINE Wouldn't it be nice to enter an MMO without having to plunge multiple hours wrapping your head around its lore? Like Dota 2 and League of Legends, Smite's main mode features two teams of five gods engaging in a gladiatorial-themed bout for dominance of the arena. Rapid counters and combo chains are essential, whether you team up with friends to tackle a wide range of dungeons or you want to do your virtual scrapping in PvP. Runescape is also one of the friendliest MMOs around, with a community of veterans who are always willing to lend a hand to a noob in need - alternatively, you can use our Runescape beginner's quide.

