



VIDEO GAME REVIEW



## Older Gamers Will Grow Weary Of ‘The Spiderwick Chronicles’

[By Jeb Haught]

**Game:** “The Spiderwick Chronicles”

**Publisher:** Sierra

**System:** Nintendo Wii (PS3, XBOX 360)

**Cost:** \$50

**ESRB rating:** E

**Review rating:** 2 1/2 stars

These days, finding a good movie-based video game is more difficult than locating a brand-new Wii for sale. One advantage of having low expectations for a game means the average person won't be very disappointed if it is subpar. I didn't expect much from “The Spiderwick Chronicles,” and that spared me a lot of frustration.

Players guide three youngsters who move into a new house and discover “Arthur Spiderwick’s Guide to the Fantastical World Around You.” This manual explains the supernatural possibilities that most people overlook, and empowers the youths with the knowledge needed to catch mysterious sprites and use their magic.

Players who undertake the perilous journey will find a large world filled with dozens of items and sprites to find as well as interesting areas to explore. I like the fact that there always seems to be something new to find around the next bend. Budding wizards defend themselves in battle by using basic weapons and magical abilities, such as super strength, which are gained by capturing certain magical sprites.



This title doesn't utilize the Wii controller's unique capabilities much beyond camera control (which is actually more frustrating than using an analog stick) and performing basic attacks (pressing “A” performs the same attack). As a result, the Wii version looks worse than its next-gen brethren, yet still doesn't make up for it.

In the end, “The Spiderwick Chronicles” will entertain younger audiences for hours on end, but older gamers will grow weary of the limited features.

**Game:** “Patapon”

**Publisher:** Sony

**System:** Sony PSP

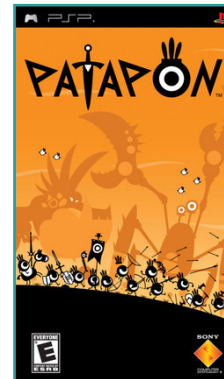
**Cost:** \$20

**ESRB rating:** E

**Review rating:** 3 1/2 stars

Since nearly every video game genre has

been combined over the last few years, it was only a matter of time before a company merged a rhythm game with an RTS (Real-Time Strategy). Yes, you read correctly. Sony's latest niche title, “Patapon,” lets participants control a small army using nothing more than rhythmic button-tapping.



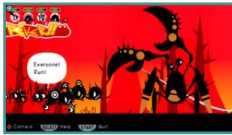
Players inflate their ego by becoming the exalted potentate of a mythical tribe of creatures called the Patapons. These one-eyed warriors may look adorable, but just like an army of ants, they can easily defeat enemies 10 times their size if they work together. Only skilled leadership, exploration, and advanced customization can help the pint-sized pugilists regain their former glory. Are you up to the challenge?

During game play, pressing on the PSP face buttons triggers a drumbeat, and the player



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must press a certain sequence in rhythm to advance their Patapon army. When enemies are encountered, different drumbeats incite the Patapons to attack, defend or retreat. It is even possible to use magic, but the Patapons must be in 'Fever' mode, which is initiated by beating out several commands in perfect rhythm.



Fever mode also makes the Patapons faster and stronger, so players should always strive for perfect rhythm in every skirmish. However, it does become tricky in later levels to keep a smooth beat during the heat of

battle, and therein lies the game's challenge.

In between sorties, players will want to explore Patapon village. This charming locale is where promising leaders find new items, resurrect fallen soldiers, create new types of Patapons and customize their squads.

While the combination of genres found in "Patapon" may be unusual, Sony has somehow managed to make it as fun as it is adorable.

**RATING KEY**

**4 stars** - Must have

**3 stars** - Pretty good

**2 stars** - So-so

**1 star** - Don't waste your time

**Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB)**

**E:** Everyone

**T:** Teen (13 and older)

**E10-plus:** (Everyone 10 and older)

**M:** Mature (17 and older)

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