

# Philips 'Entertaible' combines the excitement of electronic gaming with the fun of traditional board games



Entertaible in action. Photo: Philips

**Philips announced today that it will unveil its prototype of 'Entertaible' – a tabletop gaming platform that marries traditional multi-player board and computer games in a uniquely simple and intuitive way, at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) on January 5th, 2006. Currently a working concept, Entertaible comprises a 30-inch horizontal LCD, sophisticated touch screen-based multi-object position detection, and all supporting control electronics.**



Example of an Entertaible pawn. Photo: Philips

Entertaible allows the players to engage in a new class of electronic games which combines the features of computer gaming, such as dynamic playing fields and gaming levels, with the social interaction and tangible playing pieces, such as pawns and dies, of traditional board games.

Initially aimed at the out-of-home game market such as restaurants, bars, and casinos, Entertaible has the potential to evolve into a gaming platform for the consumer market.

Entertaible owes its name to the social entertainment experience it encourages and the tabletop form factor it is built on. Its capabilities could breathe new interactive life into conventional multi-player board and electronic games. This may include, for example, using a portion of the touch screen to allow private tactical information to be shown to specific players only. Other enhancements to the gaming experience could include 'play-based' rule explanation and feedback tips; the ability to electronically store large numbers of games, which could include rekindling those of the past without requiring large amounts of

physical storage space for conventional boxes; instant retrieval of part-played games; on-line access to new or trial games; and a fast, simple set-up.

To demonstrate Entertaible's potential, Philips will bring a fully functioning sample to CES (booth # 9024) ready for visitors to play. Philips aims to encourage partnerships and collaboration with games vendors that plan to add new capabilities to their games. Entertaible provides the ideal electronic platform for these companies.

While the concept of a multi-user digital table is not new, previous solutions have utilized complex arrangements of overhead cameras and dimmed lighting that detract from the user experience. The Philips Entertaible, however, is based on a series of infrared LEDs and photodiodes discretely mounted around the perimeter of an LCD screen. It requires no special lighting conditions or other equipment and is entirely 'hand' operated by touch alone. Entertaible can simultaneously detect dozens of objects, including fingers.

"Entertaible offers the means to reinvigorate established board game classics," comments Gerard Hollemans of Philips Research in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, who leads the research team that developed Entertaible. "However, in the longer term, Entertaible could be used to invent brand new games offering unprecedented levels of user interaction – games that would never become predictable or ever quite 'feel' the same twice, however often you played them."

After CES, Entertaible will be subjected to additional field tests at the Philips HomeLab research center in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Here, volunteers are encouraged to play and live with new technology so researchers can gain greater insights into the viability of a new technology before it is launched into the market.

The Entertaible concept could also be extended into other domains. For business or educational users, this might take the form of an interactive desk where several colleagues or students gather round a single workstation to work on a project or cooperatively create new ideas and learn together.

"Perhaps most important of all, Entertaible will host electronics games that promote invaluable social interaction within groups and families," expresses Hollemans. "This contrasts completely to the solitary, isolated environment encouraged by some contemporary console-based electronic games."

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