

## TECHNOLOGY COMMENT

# BLAST AWAY THOSE DARK CLOUDS

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THERE is just too much bad news these days: The credit crisis, imminent recession, salary cuts, impending retrenchment. The list goes on.

As everyone begins to reduce expenditure to tide over the tough economic situation ahead, I can't help but wonder if the electronic gaming industry will become victims of the financial tsunami, too.

I don't have any statistics offhand, but as far as I can remember, since I began playing computer games seriously as a teenager, computer and console games sales have never been greatly affected by dire economic

situation. In fact, there is anecdotal evidence that games sales go up during times of hardship!

I wouldn't be surprised if this is true. Or rather, I want to believe it is true.

With more companies implementing four-day work weeks or enforcing leave to save operational costs, consumers are going to find themselves with more and more free time. With more time to kill but less money to spend, I say — at the expense of looking like a total nerd — that the best way to beat the recession blues is to game!

If you go out shopping on your days off, window shopping might ultimately translate into

credit card sliding operations. Even if you go out for just a movie, it will cost at least \$15 (throw in the popcorn and drinks) for just two hours of your time — and you might walk out disappointed. Let's not even talk about clubbing, which will make you spend way more than you should.

If you buy a game, say, *Fallout 3* (my favourite), this \$70 game will give you at least 60 hours of gripping entertainment! Now, that's value for money, isn't it?

Of course, I'm not recommending anyone to cut off contact with the outside world and sit in front of the monitor to play for 60 hours straight. And I'm not saying you shouldn't

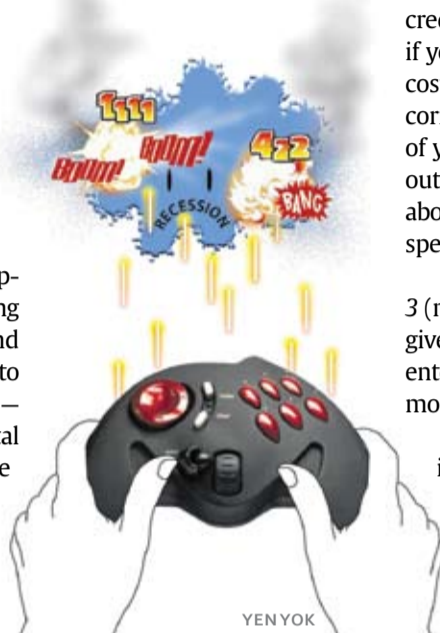
take a stroll in the park, or work out (actually, there's the Wii for that), or upgrade your skills.

I'm simply recommending a nice and cheap alternative: Spend your free time at home while stimulating the economy with a little purchase. Or, there are totally free MMO (massive multiplayer online) games, iPhone games and Facebook games.

The ultimate aim, I hope, is to shelve your worries aside for that period of time when you are immersed in your game, while maintaining your mental and financial health.

So ... want to play a game?

This first appeared on TODAY Blogs, at [blogs.todayonline.com/techtalk](http://blogs.todayonline.com/techtalk).



## COPING WITH THE DOWNTURN

# Sharpening your job hunt online

**If I work in HR in a bank, an easy way to differentiate the multitude of applicants ... is to see how someone is blogging on the current financial situation.**

Blogger Daryl Tay on how to get noticed



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WITH our personal and professional lives tightly intertwined with the Web, the online job hunt has become more complex. It's no longer just about surfing corporate websites and job portals like *JobsDB.com* and emailing resumes. We show you how you can use online tools to get your dream job.

### JAZZ UP YOUR RESUME

If the usual curriculum vitae in a Word or PDF document is cramping your style, jazz it up with *VisualCV.com*. The site replaces the traditional resume with an Internet-based professional profile where you can host and manage your portfolio and securely share information with prospective employers.

The service is free for individuals. Apart from text documents, slides and spreadsheets, you can include images, videos and audio clips to build a multimedia resume. We like that you can embed videos to demonstrate presentation or oratorical skills. If you're worried about identity theft, security settings in *VisualCV.com* allow one-to-one private sharing.

### LEVERAGE YOUR NETWORKS

The widest, most immediate pool of people you can get in touch with are your social networking contacts. Even tech giant Microsoft uses platforms like Facebook and Twitter to source for interns and vendors.

"I got hired when a former client dropped a note as a personal recommendation to a

mutual friend on Facebook who had an opening," said Ms Patricia Law, an account manager from public relations firm Ogilvy 360° Digital Influence. "Think of your contact list as an informal reference list. It can work for or against you, depending on your reputation."

There are also social networks for professionals, such as LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)). It is the most popular social networking site for professionals in Singapore, with over 94,000 members from the country. It's an international site, too, so you can hook up with contacts beyond your shores. LinkedIn can be used to find jobs and business opportunities. Employers also list jobs and search for potential candidates on the network.

To get the most out of LinkedIn:

1. Complete your profile page with relevant employment details and history. It acts as your CV on LinkedIn.
2. Once you've entered your employment history, LinkedIn can find your former colleagues. Add former bosses, colleagues and clients who are familiar with your work.
3. Write a recommendation for former bosses and colleagues and ask (politely) if they will write one on your profile in return.
4. Make it easy to be contacted. Leave an email address that's regularly checked.

### GET NOTICED

Getting noticed might be harder in a recession, where job seekers are aplenty and firms scrutinise candidates more closely.

Social media blogger Daryl Tay ([www.uniquefrequency.com](http://www.uniquefrequency.com)), whose blog is part of the Brazen Careerist network of career-related blogs, believes that having a blog can help professionals get noticed and enhance their reputation online. Bloggers can build up their credibility and position themselves

as thought leaders, or at least, be seen as an engaged professional in a relevant niche.

"If I work in HR in a bank, an easy way to differentiate the multitude of applicants ... is to see how someone is blogging on the current financial situation and how it applies to investor relations or risk management," said Mr Tay.

### GET A (VIRTUAL) MENTOR

Career blogs push the envelope on job advice and give up-to-date information on resources. They dispense new-age career advice for the Internet generation of so-called "millennials", helping you think out of the box. Here are three of our top picks:

» [www.careerealm.com](http://www.careerealm.com) If you're sick of the old tips on getting a job, head to *Careerealm*, a blog that dishes out unique and refreshing advice. Recent posts include tips on how to avoid sweating (literally) at interviews and help on giving interesting presentations. Apart from blog posts, the site provides entertaining and educational video posts of career advice.

» [blog.penelopetrunk.com](http://blog.penelopetrunk.com) Penelope Trunk doesn't mince words. She lays out practical advice that's honest and sometimes hard to swallow. She tells you to stop whining about your job, how to tame materialism and workaholic tendencies and how living up to your potential is a load of bull. It's no wonder her advice appears in over 200 newspapers and even *Time* magazine. We're fans.

» [personalbrandingblog.com](http://personalbrandingblog.com) It isn't enough to have great qualifications and a CV — job seekers must know how to present themselves and manage their skills to market themselves. This blog teaches you how to define, position and develop your personal brand to distinguish yourself.