

# Halo heads back to original roots

by ZACH BAKER  
Staff Writer

Did you know that the immensely popular first-person shooter game Halo, was originally planned to be a real-time strategy game? When producers Bungie first came up with the idea of Halo, they planned the game to be a real time strategy game for the computer. The game, after running into some problems, eventually became the first-person shooter that everyone knows today. After all of Halo's success, Ensemble studios, developers of the Age of Empire RTS (real-time strategy) series, has taken Bungie's original idea into its own hands. Released on March, Halo Wars takes the Halo universe back in time 20 years before Halo 1, but this time as a strategy game, not a shooter.

Halo Wars is not just any strategy game; one of the few RTS games for a console, and one of the few that works well on the system. Many RTS games have tried their hand at console systems, but Halo Wars seems to be the first whose controls function smoothly with the console. Simple to learn controls and straightforward game-play make Halo Wars a must have addition to any Halo or RTS fan. Like most other RTS games, Halo Wars provides a

bird's-eye-view to a battlefield in which the player controls an army or civilization and must defeat the opponents. In the game's campaign, the player controls the UNSC (United Nations Space Command) and leads them to discover what is hidden on the planet Harvest. Gamers face the Covenant, the main enemy in the other Halo games, and the Flood, a parasitic alien race that turns its victims into zombie-type life forms. The game has many units, ranging from powerful vehicles, cheap, quick-building infantry units, and fast, resourceful aircraft. The campaign has four levels of difficulty: Easy, Normal, Heroic, and Legendary. Each of the 15 campaign levels offers hidden collectibles and unlockable game add-ons that can be activated in any mission.

The game also includes skirmish and online multiplayer modes. Both allow for two game types (standard and deathmatch), 14 different maps, and three types of player match settings (1v1, 2v2, and 3v3). There are also six different variations on the UNSC and Covenant races, three UNSC and three Covenant. Multiplayer is where the game really shines, allowing players to team up with up to two friends, and face-off online, implementing team strategies and

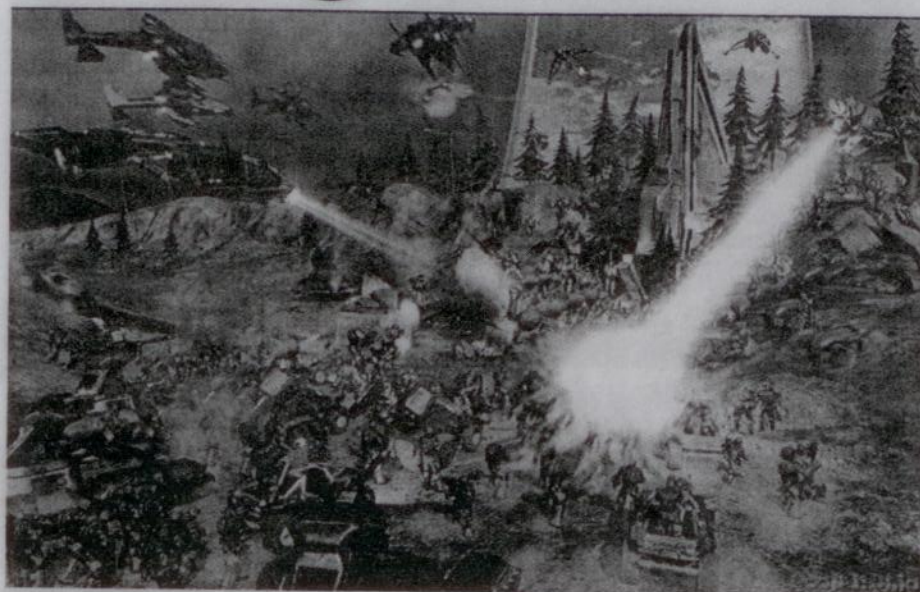


Photo courtesy of: [rtspcgames.com](http://rtspcgames.com)

*An addition to the Halo series, Halo Wars, makes it easy to play from a computer and has multiple additions and controls.*

tactics to outsmart their opponents.

Although some hardcore RTS fans may say that Halo Wars is not a true RTS game, it is simple to use; and innovative controls allow for players new to the genre to have a great time on their first try. Others may complain that the campaign can get repetitive from time to time, but the amount of add-ons and collectibles can help

make the experience different every time it is played. There have also been rumors that players will see DLC (downloadable content) for the game in the future, adding on to the already awesome online multiplayer mode. The game has been out since March 3, so Halo fanatics should check out your local videogame store to get this brand new addition to the Halo series.