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Microsoft details changes

Just after E3 wrapped up, Microsoft decided to hold its own gaming-oriented conference, dubbed Gamefest 2008, and some of the announcements coming out of the event were actually more interesting than what the stuff featured at E3 showcased. Sure, it's unlikely we'll see the next Bungie project unveiled at Gamefes 2008, but at least Microsoft has given PC gamers some good news by detailing the changes it plans to make on the Games for Windows front. First of all, [Microsoft](#) has said that all fees that are currently associated with Games for Windows Live are to be removed, apparently effective immediately. GfW Live was supposed to be the PC counterpart of Xbox Live, allowing gamers to connect with one another, maintain friends lists, set up matches based on their level, and showcase the achievements they got by playing Games for Windows-branded games. The problem was that you had to pay to get all that the service had to offer and, therefore, the popularity of the Microsoft initiative remained low amongst PC gamers. The graphical interface of the service is also getting an upgrade "that's consistent with the way Windows gamers want to interact," as Microsoft representatives put it. Chriss Satchell, who is the guy in charge of [Games for Windows](#), says "I believe, from hereon, Games for Windows Live is going to take off," offering the upcoming Warhammer 40,000: Dawn of War II as an example of a game that can clearly benefit from the user-oriented services that Microsoft is offering. Alongside Relic's game, Battlestations: Pacific was revealed as bearing the Games for Windows seal of approval. It's nice that Microsoft has thought about dropping the fees associated with Gold membership but, what with the general disinterest in Games for Windows, it just might be that this comes as too little too late for PC gamers. We'll have to see how the service shapes up when a few high profile games are launched that take full advantage of its communications and match-making elements. Microsoft also plans to launch a PC replica of the [Xbox Live Marketplace](#), where developers and publishers will be free to offer content related to their games.