

Gamers, don't miss these Killer Windows 11 Tools

While gamers will enjoy a better life in 2022 thanks to Apple macOS and Linux, Windows is still the best operating system for gaming. Microsoft is acutely aware of this fact, and as a result it has added a variety of gaming features into Windows in the past. As time passes, with Windows 10 and Windows 11, there are even more gaming-related features. Here are the Windows 11 features that will make your next game even better.

Game Bar

Windows 11 Game Bar.

Windows 11 comes preloaded with the Game Bar. This allows users to access useful tools with a single keystroke. The Game Bar can be opened at any time, even if you aren't playing any game. This can be done by pressing Win +G. If your Xbox controller is connected to your computer, tap the Xbox button.

The Game Bar is an overlay with widgets that allow you to capture video footage of your gaming, control audio output, monitor PC performance, and much more. You can sign in to your social media accounts via the settings and upload your videos and images instantly.

DirectStorage

Microsoft has developed a method for your hardware to communicate more effectively with each other, which will improve performance in games. DirectStorage is a program that doesn't require you to do anything other than turn it on. However, you do need to hit certain specifications for your hardware that may require an upgrade.

Windows 11 DirectStorage.

DirectStorage allows your computer to communicate directly with the GPU's storage. This removes the need for CPU decompression, which is a major performance bottleneck. DirectX 12 games can take advantage DirectStorage as long as your computer has an NVMe SD and a compatible GPU. Any AMD RDNA2 card or Nvidia RTX2000-series or older will work.

If you're not sure if your system is able to handle DirectStorage You can check it out using the previously mentioned Game Bar. Click on the settings menu and then select Gaming Features. This page will tell whether your gaming software, GPU and SSD are compatible.

Auto HDR

Windows 11 Auto HDR.

Games that include HDR (high-dynamic range) can produce vivid real-looking colors. It's been relatively rare for developers to include HDR support in the past few years. If you're playing a video game that does not support HDR, Windows 11 can still pump up the colors with a feature called Auto HDR.

The problem is that you'll need a monitor that supports HDR as well, and these tend to be more expensive than conventional panels. If you have a compatible monitor, Windows can automatically enhance games that don't have HDR on the fly. This happens at the OS level, meaning that developers don't need to do anything. To enable Auto HDR, go to Settings > System > Display > HDR. Auto HDR will be enabled in the event that your monitor supports it. This will include an HDR intensity slider in the Game Bar.

Game Mode

There's nothing more frustrating than seeing your game suddenly drop frames due to a background task. [Minecraft-server-list.Xyz](#) If your PC is struggling to maintain frame rates, it could render a game unplayable. Game Mode is a feature of Windows 11 that can stop this.

Windows 11 Game Mode.

You'll find this feature under Settings > Gaming > Game Mode. It's just a single toggle and there aren't any specific hardware requirements. Switch it on and Windows will not attempt to install or download updates in the background, and apps that utilize the Windows notification system won't interrupt your game. When Windows detects that you are playing a game Game Mode will kick in automatically.

Game widget store

Windows 11 Game Widget Store

While the Game Bar is very functional when it first launches but it's far more customizable than you think. There's an inventory of widgets in the menus. This allows you to purchase more overlay items. It's found in the widget list, which is located on the far left button in the main bar. Near the bottom, you'll see the widget store.

The majority of the content in the store is free, however there are a few paid widgets, as well as overlays that can be connected to paid desktop apps. The store offers widgets that allow you to add floating YouTube videos, add an ethically questionable crosshair onto your screen to prevent sniping, and much more. There are also widgets that can be used to control hardware, such as Corsair coolers and EVGA video cards.

Xbox app

Windows 11 Xbox app.

Ryan Whitwam

Microsoft's Xbox app is available with Windows 11. It's worth exploring even if you don't have an Xbox. It allows you to buy PC games like Cuphead, Destiny 2, and Minecraft, but it's more than a Steam replacement with a poorer catalog. It also functions as the hub for Microsoft Game Pass on the PC.

Game Pass is an online subscription service that offers a wide selection of games available at no extra charge. You can download and play them as long as they are available on Game Pass. Microsoft has also purchased publishers such as Activision-Blizzard and Bethesda to ensure that there are plenty of games to select from. Even even if you don't have an impressive GPU or a gaming console, the Xbox application can help get your game on. Game Pass Ultimate (the \$15-per-month tier) includes Cloud Gaming, which renders Xbox games on a server and streams them to your PC. The choices here aren't very large, but you can get Halo Infinite, Forza Horizon 5, Doom Eternal, and more console games. Windows 11 should offer something for everyone, no matter the method they choose to get their gaming fix.