



Pittsburgh LAN Coalition, Inc.

Informational supplement

What is the Pittsburgh LAN Coalition, Inc.?

Pittsburgh LAN Coalition, Inc. (“Pittco”) is a consortium of LAN party organizers from around the greater Pittsburgh area. Our membership covers most of western Pennsylvania—from Erie to Greene County, from the Ohio border over to Johnstown. However, we've had attendees from as far away as North Carolina, Colorado, and even Toronto, Ontario in Canada.

The smaller member LAN parties came together in 2003 to create a larger LAN party, uniting all of each LAN parties' members for a 100+ person event.

Pittco hopes to be an extensive community involving participants, corporate sponsors, and seasoned staff members in a professional, safe, and fun environment. Through thorough planning, effective communication, and careful organization, Pittco has become one of the east coast's premiere LAN parties.

What is a LAN party?

A LAN party is a computer gaming event in which gamers congregate in one central, physical location to compete in various tournaments, socialize with other gamers, and enjoy the high-tech atmosphere. A LAN is a local area network, a small group of computers connected through a series of networking hardware so that they may communicate with other computers at the party.

The advantage of playing games at a LAN party is that games are more exciting when gamers are playing against other gamers in the same room and the game play is much faster because it doesn't need to compete with the traffic of the greater Internet.

Although a LAN party may have an Internet connection, the connection generally exists to allow gamers to play games which require Internet-based authentication and to check their email. The focus, then, is competing against gamers not more than a stone's throw away.

Worldwide examples of very large LAN parties are Dreamhack (Sweden, more than 7,500 attendees, www.dreamhack.se), The Gathering (Norway, more than 5,000 attendees, www.gathering.org), QuakeCon (Dallas, Tx, more than 6,000 attendees, www.quakecon.org), and MillionManLAN (Louisville, Ky, more than 1,500 attendees, www.millionmanlan.com).

Who sponsors Pittco events?

Numerous companies provide financial support and prizes for our events. These companies change from event to event. Some of our past sponsors are ATI, nVidia, Alienware, Corsair, AeroCool, Geeks.com, OCZ, PowerColor, Red Bull, Sansun, Tisonic, UMPH, Vizo, WiseTech, XGBOX, ThinkComputers, PittDesign, and Steelpad.

If you are interested in donating money or prizes to Pittco, please contact our sponsor coordinator, Greg Baden (gbaden@pittco.org). We are not a non-profit organization, but all profits from our events are reinvested in the organization.

What should I bring to a Pittco event?

Unless otherwise posted in our forums, **each attendee is expected to bring his or her own working computer or gaming console** (*staff members will not fix attendees' computer*). This includes a desktop computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse, joystick, 25' Ethernet network cable, and headphones. You may instead bring a laptop. Do not bring speakers—your sounds may interfere with others' and detract from their experience. Also, do not bring an uninterruptible power supply—they consume far too much power and may cause blackouts at events. Spectators may not bring a computer.

Gaming consoles are a fairly new addition to the LAN party environment. Attendees who wish to bring a console should bring a television or have the facility to connect to their computer monitor. Additionally, console-using attendees are expected to use headphones for sound and may need to bring extra headsets and/or a splitter in order for other players to hear the game's audio.

It is wise to bring a small amount of cash. Pizza is often sold at the event, and attendees often coordinate trips to local restaurants during downtime.

Each venue has its own rules regarding food and beverages. Please peruse the forums or contact a staff member or the venue itself to find out these rules.

Smoking and consuming alcoholic beverages are prohibited within the venue. Each venue has its own rules regarding these activities outside of the building. If you are visibly intoxicated, you will be removed from the event. If needed, we will contact the local police.

What do I need to have to get into the event?

You *must* have a signed waiver of responsibility (available on www.pittco.org). If you are 18 or older, you *must* have a valid photographic identification card (driver's license, college ID, military ID), the registration number contained in your confirmation email, or the confirmation email itself. If you are under 18, a parent or guardian must sign your waiver. The parent or guardian need not be present at registration.

Please print your name as clearly as possible on the waiver of responsibility so that our check-in staff can process your waiver as swiftly as possible. Pittco staff will not allow attendees to pass the check-in table having turned in a signed waiver. **There are no exceptions to this rule.** Pittco staff will not accept a vocal or digital acceptance of the waiver.

Will my computer be safe?

There has never been a major theft at any of our events. Sometimes smaller accessories get misplaced, but they are generally returned quickly by those who find them. Also, no machine has ever been physically damaged, unintentionally or maliciously. Our rules prevent the horseplay that would lead to such damage.

It is important to make sure that you have an up-to-date anti virus program running throughout an event. No one is able to determine if an attendee will bring an infected computer, so the best bet is

to make sure that you are protected. A good, free anti-virus program is Avast! (www.avast.com).

If this is your first LAN party experience, you should back up the contents of your computer in case something does happen.

Pittco and its staff hold *absolutely no responsibility* for lost, stolen, damaged or otherwise maimed possessions. This includes, but it not limited to, computers, computer accessories and peripherals, monitors, personal audio devices, jewelry, mobile communication devices, and data.

Is there adult supervision at Pittco events?

Most of our attendees and staff members are between 16 and 30 years of age. Some attendees' parents are gamers, as well, so they often come to participate. Younger attendees generally come in groups or with older, responsible siblings. Some staff members are employees of Pittsburgh-area companies and institutions.

Minors are welcome at Pittco events, but Pittco cannot assume responsibility for their supervision. All attendees, regardless of age, are treated equally and thus must respect and follow Pittco rules.

Where are Pittco events held?

Pittco events are held in public places: hotels, schools, churches, fire halls, community centers, etc. They are most often held at fire halls.

Can my parents accompany me or check-in periodically?

Spectator passes are available at registration table for each event. These passes are good for a short amount of time so that parents can check-up on their children, bring food, spare parts, etc. If a parent wishes to stay for the entire event, he or she may be asked to purchase a seat. Contact the staff for more information.

How can I contact someone in attendance during an event?

If the person whom you would like to contact does not have a mobile phone or pager, and cannot be contacted via an instant messaging service, ask a Pittco staff member at the event for a contact number for the staff or the facility. Either will be able to notify the person of your call.

Can attendees leave if they want?

Yes. We allow our attendees to leave so that they may get food or even sleep at home.

Can anyone walk in and out without having paid?

No. Our registration table is watched closely throughout the event and staff are on the lookout for persons without wristbands signifying a paid registration.

Are food and drink available?

The availability of food and drink varies from event to event and venue to venue. The staff may provide snacks and soft drinks when possible, but there still would be only a limited supply

available—no guarantees of availability. Check the forums for announcements on the availability of consumables for the next event.

Is there somewhere to lay down or sleep during the event?

The availability of a sleeping area also varies from venue to venue. While some venues have a sitting area with couches and chairs, our most common type of venue—fire halls—often do not. Some attendees sleep in their vehicles or bring **small** inflatable mattresses and sleeping bags. You are welcome to sleep under your table if there is room, but do not block the aisle. Check the forums for announcements on the availability of a sleeping area for the next event.

What are some of the rules and regulations of events hosted by Pittco?

- All attendees are expected to conduct themselves in a respectable manner and treat others with respect.
- Each attendee is expected to display the highest quality of sportsmanship. Sore losers are not welcome at Pittco events.
- Do not touch another attendee's equipment without permission. Do not put yourself in a position to be even accused of theft. Our attendees have worked very hard to build their systems and a theft reflects poorly on everyone in attendance.
- Staff members will work to avoid and/or solve conflicts and disagreements between attendees. Negative physical contact is prohibited.
- Every attendee **must** have signed and turned in a waiver of responsibility. Attendees under 18 must have their parent or guardian sign the waiver.
- We use many tournament rules from larger events and regulation bodies such as the Cyberathlete Professional League.
- If you have donated or leased equipment to Pittco, please do not touch it without asking staff first. It may be a central part of the network and a change of configuration may affect the entire LAN.
- Smoking and the consumption of alcoholic beverages is prohibited within the venue. Each venue has its own rules regarding smoking and alcoholic beverages outside of the building, so please find out those rules before doing either of those things.
- Cheating, hacking, or exploiting bugs is absolutely prohibited. Those who test this rule will be removed from the event immediately.
- Do not touch any of Pittco's equipment, including networking equipment, servers, and/or public address system.
- Pittco and its staff hold absolutely no responsibility for lost, stolen, damaged or otherwise maimed possessions. This includes, but is not limited to, computers, computer accessories and peripherals, monitors, personal audio devices, jewelry, mobile communication devices, and data.
- While we encourage attendees to bring boy-/girlfriends, we do ask that they keep public displays of affection to a minimum. Steamy couples will be asked to cool it down or leave.
- Keep vulgar language to a minimum. We know it's difficult when you just got killed in a game, but others may not agree with your choice of words.

Pittco reserves the right to judge and interpret these rules and enforce punishments for infractions. Pittco reserves the right maintain a peaceful atmosphere, foster good sportsmanship, and ensure the safety of attendees. Pittco reserves the right to deny refunds on registration payments except under extenuating circumstances as determined by the Pittco board. However, a registration payment *can* be transferred to another individual. Pittco reserves the right to change these rules at any time before or during an event.

Pittco staff will post a link to the venue's web site, if available, in the forums.

I have special medical needs or concerns. Can I have someone remind me to take medicine or help with another medical need?

No. Pittco cannot assume responsibility for the non-emergency medical needs of its attendees. In the event of an emergency, the staff of the event will contact EMS personnel to resolve the situation.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Our bulletin board-style forums are best source of information and are used to make announcements both long term and even up to the night before an event. Visit the forums to see if your question has already been answered or to ask it if it hasn't.

Dan 'Danielson' Wright (danw@pittco.org) and Sean 'obsidian' Potter (obsidian@antilan.com) are probably the best people to contact for general questions regarding LAN parties or Pittco. Parents should contact them by email and ask for a phone number if they wish to speak with them.

If you have a question about a specific part of Pittco, such as the web site, public relations, or sponsorships, please visit www.pittco.org/staff for a complete staff list.

How do I access the forums?

You will find a hyperlink to the forums on the Pittco web site at <http://www.pittco.org>.

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Revision 24 2008-07-28 CAD