

By [Amy L. Dickson](#)

It's nearly Labor Day, a long weekend that, along with Memorial Day, bookends the summer months here in the Pacific Northwest. And while some of you readers will head out to the mountains for a last minute camping trip, or over to Seattle Center to catch some live music and comedy at Bumbershoot, we are gearing up for the gaming user experience event of the year: [The Penny Arcade Expo](#).

Started in 2004 here in Seattle, PAX is a conference all about gaming. With more events added each year, PAX provides the largest dedicated gaming expos, catering to tens of thousands of game fans every year. PAX Prime will showcase new tech, live gaming, a handheld lounge, tabletop games, PC gaming, panels, concerts, and parties. And Blink will be there.

## Large crowds and awesome props at a recent PAX event

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Blinkers Jessica and Brian are both hitting the show over the weekend. Here's what they are most excited to learn, see, and try:

*"I'm super excited about attending PAX Prime in Seattle this weekend. It's my first time going and I can't wait to see all the upcoming games in the game booths. The thing I am most excited about is getting to try out the Oculus Rift. The last time I tried virtual reality was at Disney Quest*

*in Chicago over a decade ago, and I'm really interested in seeing how far the virtual reality experience has come since then. I'm also excited to find out more about the new Magic card set coming out this year, Khans of Tarkir. It looks like it's going to be a great set with a focus on three-color decks. Other things at the top of my list to do are try out the new edition of Dungeons & Dragons and play some four-player games of Spaceteam on my iPhone. I'll be there from Saturday to Monday, gaming away."*—**Brian Essex, Ph.D., User Research**

Jessica at PAX 2012 with The Creeper & in 2013 in costume

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*"PAX is one of my favorite things. It is a crazy weekend of gaming, pin-trading, cosplaying fun, and my friends and I have made it an annual tradition for the past few years. I always look forward to trying out new games by indie developers, playing new board games in the tabletop room, learning about gamers and game culture in the panels, drooling over nerd merch in the exhibit hall, cheering for tournament players, borrowing a console and a game I've never played before in the Console Freeplay area, and of course collecting a bunch of swag. And I will be doing all of those things again this year.*

*However, I am also trying something new. I have never brought a handheld system with me to PAX, but this year I'll bring my Nintendo 3DS XL. My plan is to make a visit to the handheld lounge, as well as wander around, and see how much StreetPassing action I can cram in to my day at PAX.*

*I look forward to playing D&D every year. Wizards of the Coast always has a fun mini-campaign planned and, despite the morphing editions, we have never been disappointed in the experience. This year, Wizards of the Coast has released a radical new edition of Dungeons & Dragons and it has received a lot of attention online. I can't wait to try out the new edition for myself!"* —**Jessica Munsey, Project Management**

So take out your Mass Effect Asari costume, grab your favorite Magic: The Gathering decks, and charge up your Nintendo 3DS – it's going to be a long, glorious, and FUN weekend of games.

*Come back next week when Brian and Jessica will report back with their findings, photos, and stories about PAX Prime 2014.*