

# Life is, indeed, strange.

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Platform: PC

Revolving around the life of troubled teen Max, Square Enix's *Life is Strange* is a five-episode decision-based game, offering stunning story-telling elements, detail oriented visuals, and an eclectic soundtrack that tie the game together brilliantly. Episodic games fly under the radar of most gamers; however, the success of the *Walking Dead* series points towards a rising popularity of the genre.

Why were episodic games unpopular? The gameplay is restrictive and the games themselves offer very little in terms of satisfaction. *Life is Strange* solves this problem with the oldest play in the book: it hooks users with the story, and even though the restrictions are well evidenced, you'll still stick with the game just to find out what happens in the end.

Max is a scholarship student at the famed Blackwell Academy in Arcadia Bay, excited at the prospect of being a photography major. Despite the bullying and social castigation that comes along with being a scholarship student at an academy populated by the children of the rich and famous, Max takes the challenge head on, balancing it with her guilt at abandoning her best-friend Chloe some years before when she and her family moved to Seattle from Arcadia Bay. At the beginning of the game, Max worries that her chances of reconnecting with Chloe are slipping with each day she doesn't call her, but eventually, she's brought face to face with Chloe by random chance. While stumbling upon a confrontation between Chloe and a gun-



toting fellow student of Max's, where Chloe eventually gets shot, Max discovers the power to turn back time. The rest of the game deals with Max's decisions at each point, and each decision has its own set of probable consequences, while the effects of messing with the past and the present makes everything go south pretty quickly.

The side-effects of time-turning was extensively explored in the movie *The Butterfly Effect*, and the game carries a similar theme. The decisions that you make in the game are neither bad nor good, but they are polarising in the ripple they create over the rest of the story. How your decisions affect the rest of the story over the remaining four episodes is going to be very interesting.

The graphics are impressive, landing the game squarely in the final cycle of last-gen shaders and rendering. It'll run on most mid-range graphics cards with medium settings. The use of bloom is

excessive, so you get a warm, pleasant atmosphere that goes perfectly with the indie soundtracks. When the story kicks it up a gear, things become progressively gloomier. The contrasts are noticeably beautiful.

Feminist movements worldwide have been crying out for a while, demanding a strong female lead in a game to counter the hyper-sexualised brain dead hack-slashers of the past two decades. Max is their unlikely hipster hero, partnered with the idealistic, tattoo covered and hair dyed Chloe. Theirs is a story that catapults them into the future of gaming: plot and character driven gameplay, beautiful settings, and unpredictable endings. This game will go a long way, and fans are touting it to be a contender for Game of the Year already, based on a single play-through of a single episode. Even if you aren't a fan of teen-angst stories or episodic games, give this one a try, it'll definitely surprise you with its depth.

DR. GEEK  
SAYS

## Virus-free after reinstalling Windows

Right after you reinstall Windows, open Internet Explorer and download Chrome or Firefox. Install Adblock Plus for your browser. Then download a free anti-virus like Avast or Microsoft Security Essentials. Install the antivirus. Now, always remember to not go to sites that promise free things. Do a quick Google search if you absolutely HAVE to. Don't click on ads.

# Benefits of Having a Home Network

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More often than not, we mistake our Wi-Fi connection for the internet. We're going to tell you that it is actually so much more than that. Your shiny new router is a middle-man, a bridge between your devices. By creating a wireless local area network or WLAN, it acts a central hub for all your Wi-Fi capable devices. And that, in very layman terms, is a home network. So what are the benefits of having one in your humble abode? What miracles can you achieve with this?

### Home Server:

I don't know about you but my file management system is pretty messy (non-existent even). Spread across different devices and drives, many are the exhausting days when I find myself frantically searching for an important file. If

you're like me and even if you're not, having a home server will ease things up for you immensely. You can connect an external hard drive directly to your router and access the contents from any device connected to your network. Not only does this free space on your computer, it makes switching between gadgets, seamless. Gone are the days when you had to copy stuff.

### Media Streaming:

This one actually falls in the previous category but if you're more of a movie and TV Show fanatic like me, media streaming is a tempting reason for building a home network. I personally find it irritating when I just downloaded something and want to lie back and get right into the episode but instead I have to spend two very excruciating minutes waiting for it to be transferred to my tablet. Why go through the hassle when you can stream media without any

sort of delay from the central storage?

### Peripheral Sharing:

I still remember those days when I was given the task of moving my printer from room to room every time someone needed to use it. I had to set it up and deal with all the issues that might arise. Call it strategic thinking but a router would have solved all my problems.

### Multiplayer Gaming:

From *Age of Empires* to *Counter Strike* to *Microsoft Paint*, playing with your friends when they come over, is rather fun. No lags, no latency, all you need to do is delve in. By the way, there are loads of multiplayer games for mobile platforms that you could try too. *Air Wings* is a fascinating one. Not always do you need a pricey PC or a console to enjoy gaming.

### Screen Mirroring and Remote Access:

Nifty little features that often come in handy. Just remembered that you want to start a download on your PC? Want to run an application from there? Who says you have to leave your comfort zone for that? Want to use your computer from someplace else? Your router is at your command.

We hope this intrigues you enough to build your home network. Because if it does- fear not, we'll bring you the basics and walk-throughs of setting it all up, in our next article.

