

Microsoft unveils motion control for Xbox 360

June 1 2009, By DERRIK J. LANG , AP Entertainment Writer



In this product image released by Microsoft, a Project Natal sensor for the XBOX 360 is shown. The sensor tracks a player's full body movement while responding to commands, directions and a shift of emotion in voice without the need for a controller. (AP Photo/Microsoft)

(AP) -- Gamers, get ready for your close-up.

Microsoft introduced a prototype camera Monday that can be used as a controller for the [Xbox 360](#). Codenamed "Project Natal," the camera eliminates the need for a handheld input device - instead, the gizmo can track a player's full body movement, recognize their face and voice, scan images of real items and respond to both physical and vocal commands.

Microsoft also debuted 10 exclusive new games and several additions to the Xbox Live online service at their flashy Electronic Entertainment Expo press conference at University of Southern California's Galen Center.

But the biggest gee-whiz moment came when Microsoft senior vice president Don Mattrick and Steven Spielberg introduced "Project Natal."

"Two months ago, Don shared with me the 'Natal' experience, and the gamer in me went out of my mind when I got to be really interactive with this," said Spielberg, a game developer as well as filmmaker. "More dramatically, I felt like I was present for a historic moment, a moment as significant as the transformation from the square-shaped movie screen to CinemaScope and then to IMAX."

During the press conference, "Project Natal" was demonstrated with three prototype programs: "Ricochet," a soccer-like game which required the player to use their entire body to bounce balls at targets; "Paint Party," an art-making program that used the player's body as the brush; and "Milo," a virtual boy who communicated and interacted with the player.

"This is all about breaking down barriers the only way Xbox 360 can," Microsoft corporate vice president Shane Kim said before the conference. "For far too long, the controller has kept people from playing games. 'Project Natal' totally eliminates the need for a controller, and we believe it's going to bring people together in a way we haven't seen before."

The "Project Natal" prototype device showcased at the E3 press conference combines a camera, depth sensor, microphone and processor running proprietary software. Kim said game developers would receive

"Project Natal" development kits Monday, and that there was no date set for when the device and accompanying software would be available to the public.

The loud event wasn't all about "Project Natal." Several announcements were made about Xbox 360's video capabilities including increased functionality with the Netflix online service, streaming 1080p high-definition video, live TV in the United Kingdom via the Sky network and the ability to watch selected movies online with friends with Xbox Live Party.

Among the 10 new games announced that will be released exclusively on the Xbox 360: the open-world action sequel "Crackdown 2," New Orleans-set zombie-killing sequel "Left 4 Dead 2," stealthy third-person shooter "Splinter Cell Conviction," sleek racer "Forza Motorsport 3," first-person shooter "Halo: ODST" and psychological thriller "Alan Wake."

For the Xbox Live online service, Microsoft announced the ability to access streaming music service Last.fm as well as the social networking sites [Facebook](#) and Twitter beginning this fall. The [social networking sites](#) will be fully integrated into the Xbox Live interface, allowing users to send messages, upload photos and tweet with their Xbox 360.

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Citation: Microsoft unveils motion control for Xbox 360 (2009, June 1) retrieved 31 January 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-06-microsoft-unveils-motion-xbox.html>

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