

OnLive takes videogames into the Internet 'cloud'

June 18 2010, by Glenn Chapman



Visitors are seen arriving at the 2010 E3 Expo in Los Angeles, on June 16. OnLive took videogames into the "cloud" on Thursday with the US launch of a service that hosts hot titles as services on the Internet, eliminating the need for consoles.

OnLive took videogames into the "cloud" on Thursday with the US launch of a service that hosts hot titles as services on the Internet, eliminating the need for consoles.

"We are showing off what we've got," OnLive senior product manager Michael Miller said as the service was demonstrated at the company's booth at the [Electronic Entertainment Expo](#) in Los Angeles.

"We are excited because we know this is the first step in cloud gaming."

Videogame industry insiders have been watching OnLive since the California start-up debuted its technology a year ago at a [game developers conference](#) in San Francisco.

OnLive has spent the time beefing up its data centers and building relationships with videogame makers, according to Miller. It has also been handling countless hours of play logged by thousands of "beta testers."

OnLive planned to go live in the contiguous United States at 6:00 pm in California (0100 GMT, Friday) with 23 titles including "Assassin's Creed 2," "Batman Arkham Asylum," and the new "Lego: Harry Potter."

The service lets people play videogames online using computers running on Microsoft or Apple operating systems. Controllers typically used in the consoles can be plugged into computers to play OnLive.

"Nobody else offers a one-click, instant-on gaming experience with these high quality titles," Miller said. "We think we've taken a huge step forward but we still have a ways to go."

OnLive hosts videogame software at whichever of its three US data centers is closest to players to optimize the speed at which data travels.

Progress made in games is saved, so players can log in from any Internet-linked computer and pick up where they left off. OnLive tends to keeping [gaming hardware](#) and software updated.

"Saved games, configurations, purchases are saved and accessible from anywhere," Miller said. "You can log-off at home, travel to another state and pick up in a game where you left off. We think that's really powerful."

A micro-console that connects to television sets and the Internet so people can play OnLive without computers is a "coming soon device," according to Miller.

OnLive micro-consoles are about the size of a deck of cards and wirelessly link to hand-held controllers.

"This is the device that is going to bring on-demand gaming into the living room," Miller said. "Plug into the Internet, plug into the TV and you are ready to play the hottest games. This is cloud gaming."

OnLive was promoting its launch with an offer of a year-long free membership to the onlive.com service, which will then cost 4.95 dollars monthly.

[Videogame](#) publishers and studios signed on with OnLive get to set their own rates for titles, which can be rented for three days, five days or unlimited "full pass" play.

OnLive at E3 also had prototype versions of its service tailored for Apple's hot iPhones and iPads as well as smartphones based on Android software backed by Internet giant Google.

"Being on-demand and a cloud gaming company means the end device is less important," Miller said shortly before a large white cake was wheeled into the booth to celebrate the launch.

OnLive partners include telecom titans AT&T, British Telecom (BT) and Belgicom.

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Citation: OnLive takes videogames into the Internet 'cloud' (2010, June 18) retrieved 20 April

2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-06-online-videogames-internet-cloud.html>

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