

Nintendo debuts touchscreen Wii successor

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Reggie Fils-Aime, President of Nintendo of America, introduces their new gaming console the Wii U during a news conference at the E3 Gaming Convention in Los Angeles, Tuesday, June 7, 2011. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)

Nintendo has introduced the world to the Wii's touchy new big brother: the Wii U.

The Japanese gaming giant on Tuesday unveiled the Wii video game console's successor, which will broadcast high-definition video and feature a touchscreen controller that can detect motion and interact with what appears on a television display.

"Up until now, home console games had to occupy the TV screen in order to be played," said Nintendo president Satoru Iwata. "The new controller for Wii U, with its 6.2-inch screen built in, means you won't need to give up your gameplay when someone else comes in the room and wants to watch a TV program."

The white touchscreen controller, reminiscent of Apple Inc.'s iPad and other tablet computers, can broadcast standard-definition video but also features a directional pad, microphone, dual analog sticks, speakers, two pairs of shoulder buttons and a front-facing camera, which can be used to make video calls.



Global president of Nintendo Satoru Iwata (L) president of Nintendo America Reggie Fils-Aime, speak during a news conference after the unveiling of the new Wii U game console at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles.

The console itself will use proprietary high-definition optical discs, 1080p HDMI output and internal memory that can be upgraded with USB and SD technology. No other technical specifications were provided.

The prototype controller was demonstrated during the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the gaming industry's annual convention, in several ways: displaying a player's inventory in a "Legend of Zelda" game, offering an alternative way to play a chasing game, being used as a shield from incoming attacks in a first-person shooter game and showing the image of a teed-up golf ball on the ground before it was struck to a putting green depicted on a TV.

The controller was also shown being used to browse the Internet both on a TV and the controller. Reggie Fils-Aime, Nintendo of America president, noted that the touchscreen controller is not meant to be a portable gaming device and that the system is dubbed the Wii U because its "unique, unifying and maybe even utopian."



A key feature to the Wii U controller is a 6.2-inch (16-centimeter) screen that displays maps or other information to complement game play, acts as a touchscreen game board and serves as a second monitor.

Nintendo said the Wii U will be released between April and December next year and will be backward-compatible with Wii games and controllers.

"Smash Brothers," "Darksiders II," "Batman: Arkham City," "Tekken," "Assassin's Creed" and "Metro: Last Light" were among the titles announced that would be released for the system.

The price for Wii U was not revealed.



The new Wii U will have HD graphics, a controller with a 6.2 inch touchscreen

and be compatible with all other Wii accessories.

The unveiling of the Wii U comes after two years of slumping sales for Nintendo's Wii, which remains the overall top-selling home video game console against Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360 and Sony Corp.'s PlayStation 3. Those consoles already feature high-definition graphics and added motion-sensing capabilities similar to the Wii last year with their respective Kinect and Move camera systems.

More information: <http://e3.nintendo.com/>

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