

# Nintendo's Wii successor to dominate E3 expo

June 6 2011, By DERRIK J. LANG , AP Entertainment Writer

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In this June 16, 2010 file photo, show attendees play video games on Nintendo 3DS at the Nintendo booth at the E3 Expo in Los Angeles. After two years of shrinking Wii sales, the gamemaker will fully raise the curtain on the Wii's successor at the gaming industry's annual convention beginning June 7, 2011 in Los Angeles. Nintendo Co. has remained silent about just what the doodad will do, but gamers are anticipating features like high-definition graphics and touchscreen controllers. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

(AP) -- Almost six years ago at the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo, Nintendo unveiled what would eventually become known as the Wii. But the Japanese gaming giant didn't show off the new console's distinctive motion-sensing capabilities until later that year at the Tokyo Game Show. Nintendo won't be such a tease at this year's E3.

After two years of shrinking [Wii](#) sales, the gamemaker will fully raise

the curtain on the Wii's successor at the gaming industry's annual convention in downtown Los Angeles this week. Nintendo Co. has remained silent about just what the doodad will do, but gamers are anticipating features like high-definition graphics and touchscreen controllers.

"What's interesting about it is that it's a platform that seems much more oriented to the core gamer, in terms of its capabilities and specifications," said Ken Levine, the Irrational Games creative director who will tear into E3 with "Bioshock Infinite," an airy in-the-clouds follow-up to the stylish undersea saga "Bioshock," published by [2K Games](#).

Meanwhile, [Sony Corp.](#) will try to rebound from the embarrassment of a massive security breach that recently crippled the PlayStation Network, affecting more than 100 million online accounts. Sony plans to introduce several new [PlayStation 3](#) titles, as well as detail the name, price and sale date of a new hand-held device code-named Next Generation Portable.

John Koller, director of PlayStation hardware marketing, said the NGP will be slightly larger than the [PlayStation Portable](#) and will feature a touchscreen, touchpad, two cameras and an accelerometer, meaning it can react to motion. It will also be able to connect over cellphone networks and Wi-Fi hotspots and use GPS location-tracking technology.

"The NGP is not a singular experience as a lot of other portable and mobile devices are," said Koller. "There's augmented reality, location-based and [social gaming](#) experiences. All those things add up to a much greater whole than what we think is available on the market or will be on the market over the next four to five years."

Following last year's flashy Cirque du Soleil production to introduce Kinect, the motion-sensing camera system for Xbox 360, Microsoft

Corp. will likely take a different tactic than Nintendo and Sony and keep the focus on new games instead of new devices. The gaming industry's current champion hasn't announced any plans to debut a new console.

The most explosive battle for hype will involve Electronic Arts vs. Activision, who will simultaneously use E3 as a theater for their military shoot-'em-up franchises. Activision Blizzard Inc. aims to continue to dominate with the globe-trotting "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3," while Electronic Arts Inc. hopes to capture interest with "Battlefield 3."

"These are the type of heavyweight fights that I think are good for customers and the marketplace," said Frank Gibeau, president of EA Games. "It brings a lot of attention, gets people excited and gives customers a choice. We like our chances. We're an underdog, for sure. They're the big kids on the block, but we're giving it everything we've got."

Other games scheduled to be on display on the show floor include the third-person alien blaster "Gears of War 3," sweeping role-playing game "The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim," moody Dark Knight sequel "Batman: Arkham City," ambitious zombie slasher "Dead Island," virtual demolition derby "Twisted Metal" and violent shape-shifting adventure "Prototype 2."

"E3 is still one of the largest showcases for all games out there," said Jonathan Lim, a Radical Entertainment assistant producer currently working on "Prototype 2," published by Activision. "For us to be able to have such a large presence is really rewarding. I personally haven't been part of something that's going to be so large at E3."

Several unannounced games are rumored to be making their debut at this year's E3, including a 3-D "Super Mario" game for the Nintendo 3DS, new installments of choreography game "Dance Central" and

supernatural thriller "Alan Wake" and a "Star Wars" title that utilizes Xbox 360's Kinect system to transform players' movements into the powers of The Force.

The convention will also serve as a celebration for the gaming industry, which has been bouncing back in the wake of the recession and rise of inexpensive social and casual games. The NPD Group, a research firm that tracks sales, said last month that the U.S. sales of consoles, software and accessories were up 20 percent over last year to \$961.2 million.

While mobile gamemakers like Gameloft and EA Mobile will be at E3, casual gaming giants like Rovio and Zynga, the creators of "Angry Birds" and "FarmVille," as well as Apple Inc., aren't expected to have a presence at the show. The iPhone and iPad maker is throwing its own party in San Francisco this week: Apple's Worldwide Developer Conference.

"I think the mood at this year's E3 will be healthy," said Adam Sessler, editorial director and co-host of G4's "X-Play." "The gaming industry has been wandering in the forest a little bit in regards to this whole causal gaming thing. This might be a year of refocusing on the style of games and attention to the audience that has supported the industry."

**More information:** <http://www.e3expo.com/>

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Citation: Nintendo's Wii successor to dominate E3 expo (2011, June 6) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-nintendo-wii-successor-dominate-e3.html>

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