

Remodeled PlayStation Home opening doors

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A Sony employee installs games consoles in 2007 at Berlin's Sony Center. Sony on Thursday will open the doors of a remodeled PlayStation Home that puts the focus on games in a virtual world that merges console-quality play with hot trends in online social gaming.

Sony on Thursday will open the doors of a remodeled PlayStation Home that puts the focus on games in a virtual world that merges console-quality play with hot trends in online social gaming.

"This is a major milestone for PlayStation [Network](#), and we are thrilled to bring a new core experience to PlayStation Home where games are front and center," PlayStation Home director Jack Buser said Wednesday.

"This redesign marks a new beginning for PlayStation Home, and players can expect much more to come," he said.

[Sony Computer Entertainment](#) America announced in August that it was remodeling Home, which is used by more than 23 million people worldwide, as part of an evolution from a social network into a [social gaming](#) platform.

"We discovered that if you put a lot of gamers in a room together and tell them to get to know each other, they don't necessarily do that," Buser told AFP.

"We find if you put them together and give them a [game](#), they play and get to know each other," he added while discussing the inspiration for the redesign.

Home launched in late 2008 as an online world in which [PlayStation 3](#) videogame console users represented by animated figures referred to as "avatars" could socialize and play.

The Home redesign, which will debut in Canada and the United States beginning Thursday, includes the creation of a "hub" that integrates games, quests, community events, user-generated content, shopping and more.

PlayStation users will be able to "transport" their animated characters to game districts with themes such as action, sports, and adventure.

"Under the hood of all this we will be deploying a quest system that will turn Home itself into a game," Buser said.

Home is at the heart of Sony's PlayStation Network that lets owners of PS3 consoles access games, films, and other entertainment.

Home has more than 230 titles available and has been incorporating successful social game models such as free play supported by advertising

or sales of premium content.

Free-to-play games accompanying the Home launch will include Prohibition era shooter "Bootleggers 29" along with poker, sports trivia, and car racing titles.

The redesign comes as Sony rebuilds its image in the aftermath of a cyber attack earlier this year that caused the PlayStation Network to be shut down temporarily.

Sony has reported that use of the PlayStation Network has since risen above pre-hack levels.

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