

Sleek new PlayStation 3 model makes US debut

September 28 2012, by Glenn Chapman



The president of Sony Computer Entertainment Andrew House introduces the new PlayStation 3 during a press conference in Tokyo on September 19, 2012, one day before the Tokyo Game Show.

Sleek new PlayStation 3 consoles took their places in US homes as Sony tapped into its video game prowess to put itself at the heart of Internet Age entertainment.

The PS3 model that made its US debut was slimmed to be stylishly unobtrusive but featured a beefy 250-gigabyte hard drive to store more films, music, games and other [digital content](#).

A version with a 500-gigabyte hard drive will hit the US market on Sunday. The models are priced at \$249 and \$299.

The 500-[gigabyte](#) PS3 will be released in Europe on Friday with a price tag of 299 euros (\$386). A version of the console based on [Flash memory](#) was set for an exclusive debut there on October 12 for 229 euros.

"While we certainly use gaming as our foundation, the PS3 is a complete [entertainment center](#) in the living room," John Koller of the PlayStation hardware team told AFP.

"We added higher [hard drive](#) space because consumers have become much more digitally inclined; it is a significant area for all of us in the industry."

[Memory capacity](#) for consoles has become increasingly important to users as lifestyles shift to downloading games, films and other digital content from the Internet.

Sony has ramped up its PlayStation Network online service for games, movies and music and made free games available for PlayStation Plus members.

More than 4,000 games have become available for download for PS3 since the console was launched in November of 2006, according to Sony.

Sony completely redesigned console innards, reducing volume and weight.



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"It is certainly a cleaner, sleeker model that takes up less space and looks cool," said National Alliance [video game industry](#) analyst Mike Hickey.

However, he noted, powerful and pretty new PS3 models might have to come with a price cut to lure a significant number of new users to PS3 this late in the life cycle of the console.

Sony spiced up the PS3 package here by adding a "[game](#) of the year"

edition of hit title "Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception" and digital content for massive online multiplayer science fiction shooter game "Dust 514."

Sony chief Kazuo Hirai has a long history with the company that includes helping PlayStation consoles become a hit in the United States.

Hirai has put in motion a strategy to revitalize the financially battered company by combining strengths of its film, music, game, hardware, and distribution arms.

"Kaz basically made his career from PlayStation and the success of that brand," Hickey said.

"Strategically, it appears to be very important," the analyst continued.

"Games are a great way to orchestrate leading technology in televisions, phones and other areas."

Hot trends include people playing games and enjoying digital music, films or television shows across an array of devices including smartphones, tablets, consoles and computers.

Sony could benefit because it makes an array of devices on which content is consumed and has a PlayStation Network for distribution.

"The console plays a significant role in bringing those pieces together," Koller said. "We start with the people who come in first for the games and then progress to other elements like video streaming, music, and renting content."

"Gaming consumers are in many ways holding up lots of parts of the entertainment world."

Koller said the "developer spigot stays hot" for new, immersive titles for

play on the PS3.

Sony faces tough competition from Microsoft's Xbox consoles in the battle to be the heart of home entertainment.

"Once you start to catalogue a library of content you have an anchor in someone's personal technology ecosystem," Hickey said.

"You get a new TV; you get a new camera... but it is hard to replace two cycles of playing 'Modern Warfare,'" he continued, referring to a blockbuster military [video game](#). "Where you store your pictures or movies or songs is important."

Hickey expected Sony to unveil a next-generation PlayStation console next year.

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