

Sony plans slimmer PlayStation 3 before year end

September 19 2012, by Yuri Kageyama



Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. President and CEO, Andrew House, right, and Sony Computer Entertainment Japan President Hiroshi Kawano show the new PlayStation 3 and PS VITA during a news conference in Tokyo, Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2012. Sony Corp. is introducing a smaller, slimmer and lighter version of its PlayStation 3 home console ahead of the year-end holidays as it gears up for growing competition in games from smartphones. (AP Photo/Itsuo Inouye)

Sony Corp. is introducing a smaller, slimmer and lighter version of its PlayStation 3 home console ahead of the year-end holidays as it gears up for growing competition in games from smartphones.

The announcement Wednesday from the [Japanese electronics](#) and [entertainment company](#) comes a day ahead of the annual [Tokyo Game Show](#), where [game makers](#) show their wares. But the timing also coincides with Friday's launch of the [iPhone 5](#) smartphone, which is already drawing long lines at some retailers.

The new PlayStation 3, closer to the size of a laptop, is half the size of the original model, introduced in 2006. It also offers more hard-drive memory at 500 gigabytes and 250 gigabytes, up from the current 320 and 160 options.

The global rollout starts Sept. 25 in North America, where the 250 [gigabyte](#) version will sell for \$269. The other version sells for \$299 from Oct. 30. In Japan, the models go on sale Oct. 4 for 29,980 yen (\$380) and 24,980 yen (\$316).

Tokyo-based Sony is struggling as its other electronics businesses get battered by competition from Apple Inc.'s [iPhone](#) models as well as by cheaper Asian rivals.

The maker of Bravia TVs and Walkman portable players posted its worst loss in its 66-year history for the fiscal year ended in March—its fourth straight year of red ink.

The company is banking on games to help steer a turnaround. President Kazuo Hirai has shaped much of his career by leading the game division.



Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. President and CEO, Andrew House introduces the new PlayStation 3 during a news conference in Tokyo, Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2012. Sony Corp. is introducing a smaller, slimmer and lighter version of its PlayStation 3 home console ahead of the year-end holidays as it gears up for growing competition in games from smartphones. The global rollout starts Sept. 25 in North America, where the 250 gigabyte version will sell for \$269. The other version sells for \$299 from Oct. 30. In Japan, the models go on sale Oct. 4 for 29,980 yen (\$380) and 24,980 yen (\$316). (AP Photo/Itsuo Inouye)

To woo consumers, Sony is slashing the price on its [PlayStation Portable](#), or PSP, mobile device as it increasingly moves on to focus on its upgraded PlayStation Vita, which went on sale last year, for on-the-go games.

The PSP, which first went on sale in 2004, comes down Thursday to

13,800 yen (\$175) in Japan from 16,800 yen (\$213). There is no change to the U.S. price now at about \$130.

Sony plans to expand entertainment based on cloud computing, which offers storage and other computer services over the network, after recently acquiring Gaikai Inc., a U.S. game company.

The PlayStation Vita won't be getting any upgrades just yet. But it will be available in new colors, blue and red, in addition to white and black, but only in Japan.

Some speculation is buzzing about a PlayStation 4, possibly before the end of next year, but officials were mum on that topic.

The PS Vita, which has a touch-panel, allows users to live-stream video and works as an electronic book function for colorful comics, according to Sony.

But Sony has already slashed its PS Vita sales target for this fiscal year through March 2013, to 12 million units, down from 16 million that was given three months earlier.

In lowering the target, Sony pointed to the economic slowdown, especially in Europe. But it also noted the intense competition from smartphones and social-networking entertainment.

Hiroshi Kawano, who heads Sony's game business in Japan, said the networking feature of PlayStation 3 allows users to enjoy millions of tunes, karaoke at home and a growing library of movies.

"Even after six years, the [PlayStation 3](#) has not lost momentum and continues to deliver powerful home entertainment," he said at a Tokyo hall.

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Citation: Sony plans slimmer PlayStation 3 before year end (2012, September 19) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-09-sony-slimmer-playstation-year.html>

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