

Sony unveils social-focused PlayStation 4

February 21 2013, by Derrick J. Lang



Video game designer Mark Cerny talks about the new controller as Sony introduces the PlayStation 4 at a news conference on February 20, 2013 in New York.

Sony is sharing the PlayStation 4 with the world. The Japanese electronics giant unveiled the new gaming system Wednesday, hyping the machine as a "supercharged PC" with the ability to effortlessly share interactive experiences, by instantly broadcasting video of gaming action or virtually handing out health potions to friends online.

"Today marks a moment of truth and a bold step forward for PlayStation," said Andrew House, CEO of [Sony Computer Entertainment](#).

Sony said the system will feature an eight-core processor that can juggle more tasks than the PlayStation 3 and be part of a new digital ecosystem that's "the fastest, most powerful gaming network."

"Our long-term vision is to reduce download times of digital titles to zero," said Mark Cerny, Sony's lead system architect on the PS4.

The PS4 is Sony's first major [game machine](#) since the PlayStation 3 went on sale in 2006. Wednesday's unveiling is [Sony Corp.](#)'s attempt to steal the spotlight from rivals Microsoft Corp. and Nintendo Co., at least until Microsoft unveils its next Xbox in June, as expected, at the E3 video game expo in Los Angeles.

But one thing Sony neglected to do: show the actual device.

Instead, the two-hour event involved executives from Sony and its video game partners touting features and showing demonstration video on stage.

There was no word on price or availability, other than a flash on the screen saying "holiday 2013."

When the PlayStation 3 went on sale in the U.S. on Nov. 17, 2006, the 20 gigabyte model had a \$500 price tag and the 60 GB version went for \$600. They are now cheaper and come with more storage—\$270 for 250 GB and \$300 for 500 GB. Comparable models of Nintendo's Wii U and Microsoft's Xbox 360 both start at \$300.

Among the PS4's revisions is an updated controller that adds a touchpad

and a "share" button. The controller also features a light bar, which means a new PlayStation camera can more easily track the device for motion control.

Sony also boasted at the New York launch event that the PS4 would work more seamlessly with its latest mobile gaming device, the PlayStation Vita, which debuted last year.

Among the games that were unveiled for the PS4 on Wednesday were the realistic racing simulator "Drive Club," super-powered action sequel "Infamous: Second Son," artsy puzzler "The Witness" and first-person shooter "Killzone: Shadow Fall."

Last fall, Nintendo launched the next generation of gaming consoles with the Wii U, which comes with a tablet-like controller called the GamePad. The controller allows two people playing the same game to have different experiences depending on whether they use the GamePad or a traditional Wii remote, which itself was revolutionary when it came out because of its motion-control features.

The original Wii has sold more units since its launch than both its rivals, but it has lost momentum in recent years as the novelty of its motion controller faded. Nintendo said it sold 3.1 million Wii Us by the end of 2012. It was a disappointing start for the first of a new generation of gaming systems.

In some ways, notably its ability to display high-definition games, the [Wii U](#) was just catching up to the [PlayStation 3](#) and the Xbox 360, the preferred consoles to play popular games like "Call of Duty."

The PS4 is arriving amid declines in [video game](#) hardware, software and accessory sales. Research firm NPD Group said game sales fell 22 percent to \$13.3 billion in 2012. With the launch of the PS4, Sony is

looking to attract audiences who may have shifted their attention to games on Facebook, tablet computers and mobile phones.

All three console makers are trying to position their devices as entertainment hubs that can deliver movies, music and social networking as they try to stay relevant in the age of smartphones and tablets. The PlayStation online network will have access to Sony's video and music services, as well as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon, with paid subscriptions to those services. People will also be able to access Facebook.

Beyond games, the PlayStation 4 will let people create animation in 3-D using a Move motion controller—all in real time.

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