

The new consoles from Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony (Update)

June 14 2013, by Barbara Ortutay



Show attendees walk down the aisle between the Sony and Microsoft booth during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, Wednesday, June 12, 2013. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

Microsoft and Sony offered new details this week on the game consoles they will start selling before the holiday shopping season. The Xbox One and the PlayStation 4 will join Nintendo's Wii U, which came out last year, in vying for shoppers' attention and dollars at a time many people are turning to phones and tablets for gaming.

Each machine has a set of features designed to draw gamers away from rival consoles. There's one thing all three have in common, though: They are about more than gaming and include entertainment services such as television, movies and music.

With the E3 video game conference in Los Angeles wrapping up, here's a closer look at the three systems, including details on pricing and specific games.

Wii U (Nintendo)

In November, the Japanese [gaming company](#) launched the Wii U, the follow-up to its popular Wii. That made Wii U the only new console out for last year's holiday season. The console features a tablet-like controller with a touch screen, called the GamePad, which can be used to control games on the TV set or to play games separately, as you would on a regular [tablet computer](#). It also allows someone with a GamePad to have a different experience with a game than someone playing it at the same time with a regular Wii controller.

The GamePad also serves as a fancy [remote controller](#) to navigate a TV-watching feature called TVii. The service groups your favorite shows and sports teams together, whether it's on live TV or an Internet [video service](#) such as Hulu Plus. And it offers water-cooler moments you can chat about on social media.

Unlike the Wii, the Wii U features high-definition graphics. In doing so, Nintendo's system catches up to the years-old Xbox 360 from Microsoft and the PlayStation 3 from Sony.



Show attendees Jason Rappaport, from left, Josh Jepson and Rafi Boghos play the video game "Just Dance 2014" at the Nintendo booth during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, Thursday, June 13, 2013. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

Sales of the Wii U have been disappointing, with 3.5 million sold as of March 31, the end of Nintendo's fiscal year. Nintendo Co. had originally expected to sell 5.5 million units and later lowered the forecast to 4 million, but it still fell short.

Because the Wii U is already available, Nintendo focused on games at E3 this week. It showed off new titles in its popular franchises, including the racing game "Mario Kart 8," along with "Donkey Kong Country Returns: Tropical Freeze" and a rendition of "The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker."

Price: Starts at \$300, but some retailers have offered it below that.

PlayStation 4 (Sony)

Sony shared some details about the PlayStation 4 in February, but it didn't show what the console would look like. That changed at E3, when the Japanese electronics giant showed off the slick new game machine along with new games and a price tag that undercuts Microsoft's Xbox One by \$100.

Sony said the PS4 would essentially be a "supercharged PC," much like the Xbox. That's a big departure from the old and idiosyncratic PlayStation design and should make it easier for developers to create games. But the adoption of PC chips also means that the new console won't be able to play games created for any of the three previous PlayStations. Players will have to stream older games over the Internet.

Other new features revolve around social networking and remote access. With one button, you can broadcast video of your game play so friends elsewhere can watch. You can also run a game on the PS4 to stream over the Internet to Sony's mobile gaming device, the PlayStation Vita, which debuted last year.



Show attendees play video games on the PlayStation 4 at the Sony booth during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, Thursday, June 13, 2013. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

The PlayStation online network will have access to Sony's video and music services, as well as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon—as long as you have subscriptions to those services. You'll also be able to access Facebook.

Sony said this week that it would not try to restrict sales of used games and that the PS4 would not require a persistent online connection. Microsoft has been criticized by gamers for being vague on whether Xbox One owners will be able to play used games. The company essentially leaves the decision to video game publishers, Wedbush analyst Michael Pachter said.

The PS4 will have a Blu-ray disc drive for movies, just like the PS3. The

console will go on sale this holiday season, though Sony has not given an exact date. Analysts expect that it will likely be before Black Friday, the unofficial start of the [holiday shopping](#) season on the day after Thanksgiving.

Price: \$399.



Ryan Hakik sports a Mohawk hairdo with the title of the video game "Titanfall" printed on it during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, Wednesday, June 12, 2013. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

Xbox One (Microsoft)

Microsoft's new console seeks to deliver the Holy Grail of home entertainment—an all-in-one device that lets you watch television, play movies, listen to music and browse the Internet as well as play video

games.

The Xbox One lets you use voice commands to switch between watching TV and playing "Call of Duty," or ask "What's on HBO" to view a TV channel guide. Simply connect your cable or satellite set-top box to the game machine with an HDMI cable.

A new version of Microsoft's camera-based Kinect controller offers better motion and voice detection than the one currently available. Unlike the Xbox 360, the Xbox One will require Kinect, which will come with the package.

The company said the Xbox One will have to be connected to the Internet at least once every 24 hours and ideally would always be online. During its E3 presentation, Microsoft showed off games such as "Ryse: Son of Rome," "Killer Instinct" and "Titanfall." "Titanfall" is the first [game](#) from Respawn Entertainment, which was founded by the creators of "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare."



Show attendee watch a presentation on the video game "Project Spark" at the Microsoft booth during the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, Wednesday, June 12, 2013. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

Although Nintendo's [Wii](#) was the most popular of the three at first, the Xbox 360 has outsold its rivals in recent years largely because of its robust online service, Xbox Live, which allows people to play games with others online for as much as \$60 a year with annual plans. Activision Blizzard Inc.'s "Call of Duty," has been a driving force behind Xbox Live, and Microsoft said players will be able to download new content for upcoming titles in the series on the Xbox One before any other system.

The new console will also add the ability to play Blu-ray discs, matching what Sony has in its older [PlayStation 3](#). What it won't play are games for the [Xbox 360](#).

Microsoft said the system will launch in time for the holidays.

Price: \$499.

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Citation: The new consoles from Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony (Update) (2013, June 14) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-06-consoles-microsoft-nintendo-sony.html>

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