

Netflix adds virtual assistant for PlayStation 3 viewers

June 28 2013



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"Max, rumored to be the child of Siri and HAL 9000, asks a few

questions about your mood or movie and TV show tastes to arrive at a suggestion," Netflix vice president of product innovation Todd Yellin said in a blog post.

"Of course, (suggestions are) based on your tastes and taking advantage of the Netflix algorithms that predict what you'd enjoy watching."

Siri is what Apple calls the virtual assistant it added to its popular [mobile devices](#), while HAL is a fictional, self-aware computer made famous in the 1968 film '2001: A Space Odyssey.'

California-based Netflix has an array of applications that let subscribers access the service from major [videogame consoles](#) as well as mobile devices.

Max is making its debut on Sony's PS3 consoles in the United States and, if the conversational recommendation service performs as expected, it will spread to more devices with Apple's iPad likely to be next, according to Yellin.

Netflix created a "ratings game" to playfully teach Max what viewers like by picking genres that fit their moods and then rating a few titles in the categories on a five-star scale.

"Sometimes, when Max feels particularly confident, he will offer a fun, personalized suggestion after asking only one simple question," Yellin said.

"Other times, when intoxicated by past success, Max will get a little cocky and offer a suggestion right away, no questions required."

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Citation: Netflix adds virtual assistant for PlayStation 3 viewers (2013, June 28) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-06-netflix-virtual-playstation-viewers.html>

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