

Sony wins opening skirmish in new-gen console war

June 11 2013, by Michael Thurston



Andrew House, Sony President and CEO, holds up a PlayStation 4 at the Sony PlayStation E3 press conference June 10, 2013. The new-generation console scored an opening skirmish triumph over Microsoft's Xbox One on the eve of the Tuesday start of premier E3 videogame conference in Los Angeles.

Sony's new-generation PlayStation 4 console scored an opening skirmish triumph over Microsoft's Xbox One on the eve of the Tuesday start of

premier E3 videogame conference in Los Angeles.

Sony and Microsoft each hosted distinctly different private events on Monday to spotlight their new champions in long-running [console](#) wars.

Both titans showcased blockbuster games, but Sony triggered unbridled cheers with assurances it would not interfere with sales of used titles or require [Internet connections](#) for play.

The points were in sharp contrast to Microsoft, which designed [Xbox](#) One consoles to check-in on the Internet once every 24 hours for games to work, and set conditions on used games.

Sony also priced [PS4](#) at \$399 as compared to the \$499 Microsoft said it will charge for Xbox One consoles when they are released in the US and Europe in November.

"Clearly, Sony won the battle of the day," said Gartner analyst Brian Blau.

"The price point is going to be a big factor," he continued. "At a minimum, it is a poke in the eye because Sony is just cheaper."

Blau responded that the price divide widens when taking into account that Xbox One console owners must subscribe to an [Internet service](#), because the device requires an online connection if users want to play.



Phil Spencer, VP of Microsoft Game Studios, speaks at the Microsoft Xbox E3 press conference on June 10, 2013. Microsoft designed Xbox One consoles to check-in on the Internet once every 24 hours for games to work, and set conditions on used games.

He cautioned that it was still too early to tell which console would prove more popular because hardware and games, no matter how slickly they were presented at the media events, have yet to get into people's hands.

"Overall, they are both strong platforms," Blau said.

Microsoft fired the opening shot with a media event providing more details about the Xbox One [home entertainment](#) hub it revealed in May.

Microsoft focused on its core audience of gamers at the E3 presentation of a box designed to become a hub for films, television shows, music and other home entertainment streamed from the Internet.

"Xbox One is designed to deliver a whole [new generation](#) of blockbuster games, television and entertainment in a powerful, all-in-one device," said Microsoft president of interactive entertainment Don Mattrick.

The beefed-up hardware is powered by software that allows for instant switching between games, television, and Internet browsing.

Kinect motion and sound sensing accessories accompanying the consoles recognize users; respond instantly to commands spoken in natural language, and even detect a person's pulse.

Sony fired back with the first look at its new PS4 console, promising to combine its film, music, television and [game](#) strengths in a powerhouse home entertainment box.



Andrew House, Sony President and CEO, announces the pricing for PlayStation 4 consoles at a press conference on June 10, 2013. Sony priced PS4 at \$399 as compared to the \$499 Microsoft said it will charge for Xbox One consoles.

"This is a completely new platform and, in many ways, represents a completely new PlayStation," said Sony Computer Entertainment president Andrew House.

"We are more than ever capitalizing on the vast network of Sony divisions."

The PS4 will launch with beefed up offerings at Sony online movie and music services as the console moves to expand into a complete home entertainment center while remaining true to hardcore [gamers](#).

Sony will use the technology of recently acquired cloud gaming company Gaikai to launch a service next year that lets people use PS3 or PS4 consoles to play blockbuster games in the Internet "cloud" in real time.

More than 140 games are in development for the PS4, with at least 100 of the titles due out in the year following the consoles release, according to Sony Computer Entertainment of America president Jack Tretton.



Sony CEO Andrew House unveils the new PlayStation 4 at a press conference in Los Angeles on June 10, 2013. "This is a completely new platform and, in many ways, represents a completely new PlayStation," House said.

He promised that Sony had no plans to stop people from being able to play used games, and that PS4 consoles did not need to be connected to the Internet if people preferred to go it solo.

"When a player buys a PS4 disk they have the right to use that game; trade it in; lend it to a friend, or keep it forever," Tretton said.

Microsoft has sold some 77 million Xbox 360 consoles since they hit the market in late 2005. Console rival Sony has sold about the same number of PlayStation 3 consoles, which was introduced a year later.

Meanwhile, Nintendo sold nearly 100 million Wii consoles, which

became hits due to innovative motion-sensing controls after their debut in 2006. However, demand for Nintendo's recently released Wii U consoles has been disappointing.

While next-generation consoles will dominate E3, digital play has changed considerably from when their predecessors arrived.

Smartphones and tablet computers have powered a boom in games available for free, with money made from ads or in-game purchases.

"Both media events talked about the changing business models but there wasn't big news," said Blau, who predicted console and mobile games would increasingly intersect as play adapts to new gadgets and lifestyles.

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