Valve releases both Steam Machine and SteamOS

December 16 2013, by Bob Yirka

(Phys.org) —Video game maker Valve Corporation has officially made SteamOS available for download for anyone who wishes to do so. At the same time, the company announced that it has also shipped Steam Machines to 300 preselected beta testers.

With all the advertising for Xbox and PlayStation game consoles this [holiday season](#), it might be easy to overlook a relative newcomer to the home game console: the Steam Machine, which runs SteamOS, an [open source](#) operating system based on Linux.

Executives at Valve have been vocal about their disappointment with Microsoft's (closed) Windows 8 operating system as it pertains to gamers, suggesting that open source is the better way to go. With this latest move, the company appears to be backing up their words—SteamOS can be downloaded (960MBs) for free. What this means is that anyone that wishes to do so, can download the OS and begin writing games for Steam Machines. And that's not all, Steam Machines won't be proprietary either—the company has made specs for the console available to anyone that wants them—also free of charge. The idea, the company says, is to get the gaming industry to move away from proprietary systems to those based on [open source software](#).

The company does have a word of caution however, SteamOS is still in beta, which means that not only is it a little shaky, but it's in a form that requires a great deal of knowledge of Linux. That's going to change, of course, the company says, so those that aren't quite so hard-core may want to wait till a more mature front end has been developed and released, hopefully sometime next year.

In the meantime, those that *are* more hardcore—the lucky 300—will be installing the OS on their new consoles, testing prewritten code and of course, writing new code, some of it games, some of it most likely code intended to improve SteamOS itself. If all goes well, at some point in the future, a commercial version of Valve's Steam Machine will go on sale to the public, as will such machine's by other makers, all running SteamOS. Once that happens, it's possible non-professionals may begin writing games for the devices, similar to what has happened with apps makers writing for smartphones. And the gaming world will hopefully be

better for it.

More information: store.steampowered.com/steamos/

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