

Microsoft sets Xbox launch for China (Update)

April 30 2014



An advertising gate presenting the new Xbox One game console is pictured in a store in Paris on November 22, 2013

Microsoft said Wednesday it would launch the Xbox One in China in September, the first game console to be announced after Beijing lifted a ban on the devices.

"Today marks a monumental day for Xbox, as together with our partner

BesTV New Media Co., we announced we will bring Xbox One to China in September of this year," said Yusuf Mehdi, vice president at Microsoft for the Xbox division.

"This is a historic moment in our partnership as we work toward the first official Xbox launch in China. Xbox One will also be the first system of its kind to launch in China."

Chinese authorities announced in January they had formally authorized game consoles made in a new Shanghai free-trade zone to be sold in the country, potentially opening its lucrative market.

The move effectively lifts a ban imposed in 2000 on console sales; imports have been officially blocked, but illicit machines are already widely available.

Under the new rules, foreign firms will be allowed to make machines in the free trade-zone (FTZ) and sell the equipment into the domestic market after passing inspection by cultural authorities.

The State Council has "temporarily" suspended a regulation introduced in June 2000 when the government said games had an adverse effect on the mental health of young people.

Microsoft will work with BesTV, a subsidiary of Shanghai Media Group in a joint venture, called E-Home Entertainment.

"Our joint venture is committed to providing opportunities for creators to unleash their imaginations for games, online education and fitness experiences for China and beyond," said Mehdi.

"As part of our partnership, E-Home Entertainment is investing to establish an innovation program that will enable creators and developers

to build, publish, and sell their games on Xbox One in China and in other markets where Xbox is available."

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Citation: Microsoft sets Xbox launch for China (Update) (2014, April 30) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-04-microsoft-xbox-console-china.html>

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