

Microsoft to shutter Xbox television show studio

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People silhouetted against an Xbox display at annual E3 video game extravaganza in Los Angeles, California on June 10, 2014

Microsoft on Thursday confirmed that its studio devoted to original television programs for Xbox consoles will be shuttered as part a massive overhaul of the workforce.

Projects started by Xbox Entertainment Studios will be completed, but the unit launched as part of a push to expand the consoles beyond

gaming will be shuttered in coming months, the US technology titan told AFP.

During a major E3 [video game](#) industry gathering in Los Angeles in June Microsoft brought the focus back to games in a shift from stressing how Xbox is evolving into a multipurpose entertainment center for films, television, music, and more.

Closing Xbox Entertainment Studios is part of an unprecedented workforce reduction announced by Microsoft chief Satya Nadella, according to a copy of a memo sent by Xbox head Phil Spencer to his team.

Leaked copies of Spencer's memo were posted online.

"We will continue to enhance our entertainment offering on console by innovating the TV experience through the monthly console updates," Spencer said in the memo.

"Additionally, our app partnerships with world-class content providers bringing entertainment, sports and TV content to Xbox customers around the world are not impacted by this organizational change in any way and remain an important component of our Xbox strategy."

Programming already in production included a documentary looking at the rise and fall of video game pioneer Atari and a series spun from blockbuster video game "Halo."

Word that Xbox Entertainment Studios is being closed came shortly after Microsoft announced that US sales of its new-generation Xbox One console more than doubled in June.

The jump in sale was credited to the release of a version of the Xbox

One priced \$100 less than the original packaged model because a gesture-sensing Kinect camera accessory was removed from the bundle.

The Xbox One launched in November priced at \$499 and included Kinect.

Microsoft did not provide sales numbers for Xbox consoles in June.

Microsoft's new chief Thursday unveiled the biggest job cuts ever at the US tech giant, aiming for a new strategic direction while integrating the Nokia phone division.

The company said it would slash 18,000 jobs from its global workforce over the next year, the majority from the Nokia unit acquired this year.

The cuts represent about 14 percent of Microsoft's global payroll of some 127,000. The company will take a charge of between \$1.1 billion and \$1.6 billion for costs related to the layoffs.

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