

Old video games get new life on Xbox One consoles

June 15 2015, by Glenn Chapman



Phil Spencer, head of Microsoft's Xbox division addresses the media before the opening day of the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles, California on June 15, 2015

Microsoft played to the hearts of gamers on Monday with word that they will be able to switch on beloved old video games on new-generation

Xbox One consoles.

The announcement of long-desired "backward compatibility" for hit video games that typically cost \$60 new came at a flashy Xbox One event on the eve of the opening of an Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) extravaganza at the Los Angeles convention center.

Microsoft repeatedly touted "exclusive" blockbuster content, including "Halo 5 Guardians," from in-house teams and early availability of hotly-anticipated video games such as "Rise of the Tomb Raider," set for release late this year by outside studios.

"There has never been a better time to be an Xbox gamer," said Xbox division head Phil Spencer.

"If you have been waiting to move from your Xbox 360 to Xbox One, now is the time."

Sony PlayStation 4 consoles trounced Xbox One after the new generation consoles hit the market in late 2013.

Microsoft since lowered the price and increased the focus on game play, rather than features such as streaming films, and has begun narrowing the sales gap.

The ability of people to re-play previous generation Xbox games that they enjoyed promised to be a hit with gamers who have lamented that upgrading to new hardware, historically, has come with leaving behind old titles that don't work on new consoles.

"Xbox One backward capability allows you to play the games you have already invested in," Spencer said, eliciting raucous cheers from an audience of gamers, partners and the press.

By the year-end holiday season, Xbox One will support play of select Xbox 360 games for no charge. Spencer noted that it was one of the most requested features from fans.



The Microsoft's Xbox media briefing before the opening day of the Electronic Entertainment Expo, in Los Angeles, California on June 15, 2015

Xbox executive Mike Ybarra promised that more than 100 titles would be available by year's end in a library of games with backward compatibility, crowing that a personal favorite, "Mass Effect," will be among them.

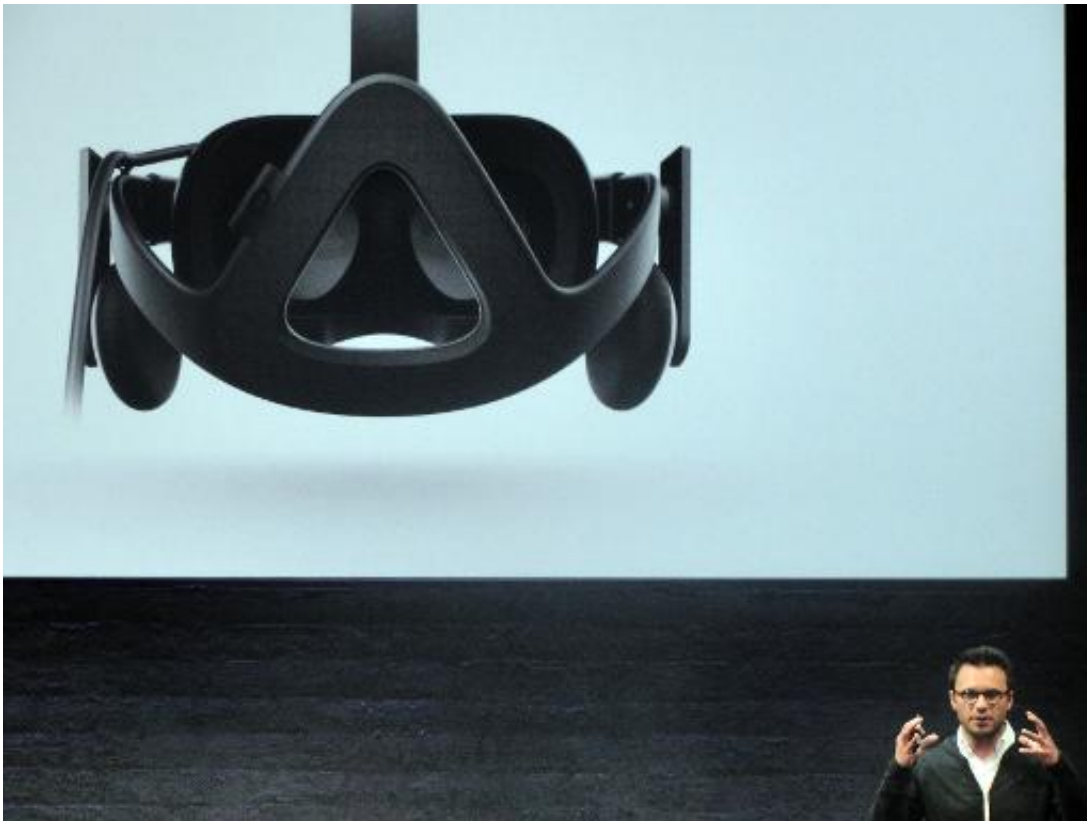
Exclusives and independents

Xbox is investing heavily in new franchises, along with cultivating creative original content from small independent studios.

Microsoft studios announced a partnership with famed Japanese game designer Keiji Inafune, Mark Pacini and teams at Comcept and Armature Studio to debut an all-new Xbox One exclusive titled "ReCore."

Independent games in the works included "Beyond Eyes," in which the main character is blind and engages her world using other senses, and a "Cuphead" game with the intentional vintage look of a 1930s era cartoon.

Microsoft played up the work done to harmonize play across Xbox One and computers powered by Windows 10 operating software due for release later this year.



Oculus CEO Brendan Iribe unveils Rift virtual reality head gear on June 11, 2015 in San Francisco, California

Virtual reality games

The US technology titan also announced a partnership with Valve VR to make Windows 10 a platform for play using virtual reality head gear.

Facebook-owned Oculus last week said that its Rift virtual reality head gear will come with an Xbox controller due to an alliance with console maker Microsoft.

"We believe we will be able to create state-of-the-art virtual reality experiences on the Oculus on top of Windows (computer operating system)," Spencer said at an Oculus media event.

Spencer said that virtual reality "experiences" would be built on top of Windows and that Xbox games will be playable on Rift.

Microsoft used the Xbox One event at E3 to show off a version of popular Minecraft game make for play using the augmented-reality visors, which have yet to hit the market.

Sony was expected to return fire at console rival Microsoft late on Monday, with its own grand presentation of what it has in store for PlayStation 4 and its Project Morpheus virtual reality headgear.

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