

From virtual reality to androids, five expectations for E3

June 11 2016, by Derrik J. Lang



In this June 15, 2015 file photo, Andrew House, president and global CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc., talks about the Sony Morpheus virtual reality headset at the Sony Playstation at E3 2015 news conference in Los Angeles. From virtual reality to the latest installments of "Gears of War" and "Battlefield," the newest hardware and software will be hyped by nearly 300 exhibitors at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the gaming industry's annual trade show kicking off Sunday, June 12, 2016. (Photo by Chris Pizzello/Invision/AP, File)

E3 is at a crossroads.

While the allure of the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo remains blockbuster console and PC games, virtual reality and mobile gaming will have a bigger presence at this year's game industry gathering. It'll kick off Sunday with briefings from Electronic Arts and Bethesda Softworks and continue through Thursday at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

"There are 2,000 products that are going to be shown to consumers and 130 announcements that are going to be made next week about experiences and games that no one has seen before," said Michael Gallagher, president and CEO of the Entertainment Software Association, which organizes E3. "There's tremendous momentum going into E3."

The festivities will spill out onto nearby streets and venues in downtown Los Angeles with companies such as Electronic Arts, Microsoft and Sony hosting fan-centric events. The organizers of E3 are joining them for the first time with their own public event, E3 Live . Gallagher expects 20,000 fans to show up for game demonstrations and other revelry.

Here's a look at other E3 prospects:

SECOND WIND

As has become familiar practice at E3, a litany of sequels and prequels will be on hand at the convention, including several sophomore outings. They include the stealth adventure "Dishonored 2," mech-heavy shooter "Titanfall 2," superhero mash-up "Injustice 2," hacker tale "Watch Dogs

2" and sci-fi strategy game "Halo Wars 2." There will likely be many more franchise follow-ups unveiled at publishers' splashy press conferences Sunday and Monday.

NEW REALITY

Following the rocky launches of the Oculus Rift and HTC Vive virtual reality systems earlier this year, the immersive medium will be on the mind—and noggins—of many of the 50,000 attendees expected at E3. Gallagher said the number of VR exhibitors has doubled since last year's expo. Sony is likely to dedicate lots of energy on hyping PlayStation VR , which works in tandem with the PlayStation 4 console and is scheduled to debut this fall.

FRESH FACES



In this June 15, 2015 file photo, Phil Spencer, head of Microsoft's Xbox division and Microsoft Studios, opens the Xbox E3 2015 briefing ahead of the Electronic Entertainment Expo at the University of Southern California's Galen Center in Los Angeles. From virtual reality to the latest installments of "Gears of War" and "Battlefield," the newest hardware and software will be hyped by nearly 300 exhibitors at the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the gaming industry's annual trade show kicks off Sunday, June 12, 2016. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes, File)

There are several titles at E3 starring unlikely protagonists, such as scrappy survivor Joule of "ReCore" and introspective android Kara of "Detroit: Become Human." A few sequels are adding new heroes to the fray. The young heir Emily Kaldwin is a grown-up assassin in "Dishonored 2," and "Watch Dogs 2" will introduce an Oakland-born hacker named Marcus Holloway. "Gears of War 4" is centered on the son of the series' hulking star Marcus Fenix.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Despite the prevalence of sequels, many publishers are touting a change of scenery at E3. "Watch Dogs 2" is swapping Chicago for San Francisco. "Battlefield 1" will ditch the military shooter series' modern-day conflicts for an epic World War I setting. The true-crime romp "Mafia III" is moving to New Orleans in the 1960s, while the tactical shooter "Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Wildlands" will take on corruption in an open-world rendition of Bolivia.

GENERATION X

There could be a few new pieces of hardware dramatically unveiled at E3 press conferences and on the show floor—but probably not. Nintendo is creating a new system codenamed NX, and Sony is working on an upgraded PlayStation 4 featuring 4K resolution, but both companies have maintained that they won't show them off at E3. Meanwhile, Microsoft may be developing its own updated version of the Xbox One that could make an E3 debut.

More information: www.e3expo.com

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