

Microsoft adding new ways for likeminded gamers to team up

June 15 2016, by Derrik J. Lang



Members of the media attend a briefing at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles on Monday, June 13, 2016. Microsoft unveiled a new, slimmer version of the video game console coming later this year and a more powerful one that's due in 2017. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

Microsoft is making it easier for gamers who share the same passions or even gender to meet and play with each other online, a step toward curbing online harassment.

The company is adding a feature called "looking for group" that will allow Xbox Live gamers to use search terms to find players interested in teaming up on certain games.

For example, if a female "Halo 5" fan only wants to blast away aliens with other women, or a dad gamer doesn't want any trash-talking during his "Killer Instinct" matches, they can use the new feature to search for compatible players online.

The "looking for group" feature will include pre-set [search terms](#) created by Microsoft, as well the option for users to make their own. It'll be available this fall, along with the ability for Xbox Live players to form "clubs" that can be private or open to all.

"I think it'll make safe spaces for people who are currently hesitant to go online," said Shannon Loftis, head of publishing at Microsoft Game Studios. "If you can make an environment more predictable by knowing who you'll be playing with and on what games, that's a way more inviting experience."

Loftis said the features will be moderated by both the public and by an internal enforcement team at Microsoft.



Members of the media attend a briefing at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles on Monday, June 13, 2016. Microsoft unveiled a new, slimmer version of the video game console coming later this year and a more powerful one that's due in 2017. Xbox One is shrinking in size and growing in power. (AP Photo/Nick Ut)

For years, online gaming communities have been criticized for harassment and exclusionary tendencies. While publishers such as Microsoft have rules in place to ban bad behavior on their online services, harassment continues to be prevalent in online games.

Loftis said the "looking for group" feature will make it more convenient for Xbox Live users to connect instead of utilizing online forums and social networks outside Xbox Live, which boasts 46 million members.

More information: www.xbox.com

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