

Xbox Live could soon be coming to iOS, Android and the Nintendo Switch

12 February 2019, by Eli Blumenthal, Usa Today

Playing games between an Xbox and Nintendo Switch may soon expand beyond "Fortnite," "Minecraft" and "Rocket League."

According to a session posted for the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco this March, Microsoft is hosting a presentation not-so-subtly titled "Xbox Live: Growing & Engaging Your Gaming Community Across iOS, Android, Switch, Xbox, and PC."

Run by two members of Microsoft's Xbox team, notes for the session lay out the company's plan to release a new cross-platform developer kit that will bring its Xbox Live functionality from 400 million gaming devices and over 68 million active players to "over 2B devices."

First spotted by Windows Central, it remains to be seen exactly how the new software will work. Microsoft already has gaming apps for iOS and Android, though they don't let you play against gamers on a PC or Xbox One. PC gamers and Xbox One players can compete against one another in certain games.

Microsoft is pitching cross-platform play as part of its pitch to developers and producers saying the new software is designed for those "looking to plan a multi-platform strategy that brings the most active, engaged players into a community where they can watch, buy, play, pause, and continue their games from one device to the next on top of the most reliable social and multiplayer network in the world."

While the expansion for iOS and Android would make sense—and Microsoft has already teased its ambitions with its Project xCloud idea—the ability to possibly play more games between the Xbox and Nintendo Switch is intriguing, particularly since Nintendo already has its own paid online service called Nintendo Switch Online.

Unlike iOS and Android, Nintendo runs a more closed platform, with stricter controls over what apps and games are available. Beyond Hulu and YouTube, the Switch lacks most seemingly standard streaming apps such as Amazon Prime Video and Netflix. If Microsoft is going to be expanding to the Switch, it likely will be doing so with Nintendo's blessings.

Though that type of cooperation wouldn't be a complete surprise. After an update to "Minecraft" last year, Nintendo and Microsoft even teamed up to release an add touting the ability to play together on an Xbox One or Switch.

Microsoft and Nintendo did not immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

The idea of cross-platform play picked up new momentum last year as "Fortnite" grew in popularity, with publisher Epic Games making the free title available on all major platforms and working with the gaming powerhouses to allow players to battle each other regardless of device or system.

However, for gamers hoping to be able to play with friends regardless of what device is used, this move would be long overdue and welcome.

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