



Microsoft Unveils Xbox One Entertainment Console



Microsoft unveiled a new system Tuesday that fuses video gaming, music and interactive television, all of which is designed to be easily controlled with arm motions and voice commands.

Dubbed Xbox One and due out later this year, the system includes access to Skype and lets users watch TV, play games and talk with friends simultaneously via a split screen on a single TV set.

The aggressive move into living rooms nationwide was previewed at an event at Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Wash., and coincided with the announcement that Steven Spielberg would executive produce a live-action TV series based on the Halo video game available exclusively on Xbox One.

The Halo TV show will be the first from Xbox Entertainment Studios, an entity created in September and run by former CBS executive Nancy Tellem.

"I thought this was a good first announcement, but we have a lot more in the hopper that we will announce later," Tellem told The Hollywood Reporter. She described the Halo show as "a premium television series with an appropriate budget" that might one day also be available beyond the Xbox platform.

Also signing on to Xbox One is the National Football League, which will allow Microsoft to create exclusive interactive content around NFL programming. Tellem is also overseeing the NFL initiative and while she wasn't specific on Tuesday about the programming she and her team will create, she said it will include a bold move into fantasy football.

Xbox One is also a Blu-ray disc player but it will not replace the cable or satellite box, nor will it replace the DVR. It will, though, make those devices work more in concert with video-gaming, music and Skype.

The voice system, which is designed to work well even when background noise is present, allows users to switch channels, bring up a guide for a specific channel, display a custom home page containing a user's favorite TV shows and music, and more, all done with simple, spoken commands.

The Xbox One will compete with Wii U, Nintendo's next-generation gaming system launched in November, and Sony's upcoming PlayStation 4. It's also likely taking aim at Apple TV, Roku and other boxes that deliver TV shows and movies on demand.



Xbox One's 5 billion transistors and other advanced technology will keep things loading fast, according to Microsoft, and will help the user jump between video games and TV shows almost instantly and without changing TV inputs.

"Our unique, modern architecture brings simplicity to the living room and, for the first time ever, the ability to instantly switch across your games and entertainment," said Don Mattrick, Microsoft's president of interactive entertainment business.

Microsoft also said several updated game titles are in the works for Xbox One, including Forza Motorsport 5 from Turn 10 Studios; Call of Duty: Ghosts from Activision; Quantum Break from Remedy Entertainment; and four sports games from Electronic Arts.

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