

# Microsoft's Xbox One; Game Over ?



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Images: Ray DiSilvestro / ML1Media 2013

It packs a punch. Microsoft's last edition of the Xbox (360) knocked out Nintendo's Wii like it was a past-prime fighter. The freely admitted goal of Microsoft's new Xbox One was to do the same to the Sony PlayStation. On paper, (see specifications at right), the Xbox is loaded to do just that. As we found out in our lab, the new Xbox doesn't quite have the muscle to put Sony down for the count.

Both Sony and Microsoft have made massive leaps in capability for their new generation game consoles when compared to previous editions, bearing in mind those previous editions are going on seven years old. Microsoft attempts to overthrow Sony's PlayStation by layering on exclusive content, including a promised live-action TV show based on Halo and produced by Steven Spielberg. But, how does it hold up in its prime objective? For a thorough game console vetting, we needed the proper test environment---a kid. Or in our case, our 19 year-old intern, Matt.

Establishing a testing baseline was rather easy. Matt had extensive experience with the Xbox 360 and Sony PlayStation, and, perhaps more importantly, already possessed an Xbox Live account. The Xbox One requested his email address and password and the revised Kinect sensor (included) immediately recognized him. Every function the Xbox offers -- music, games, interactive TV and movies --- all of it can be initiated through the Kinect sensor. Our intern was only barely impressed with the Xbox One cloud function -- the ability to store files and photos remotely. Blu-ray drive? Again, little interest or perceived value.

Matt quickly discovered that inserting a game DVD was a one-time

effort---DVD's are automatically 'ripped' to the internal hard drive. When we inquired about watching a movie using a DVD disc, Matt dismissed the idea as completely inferior to streaming. He did appreciate HDMI output that allowed him to watch the streaming on our 60" flat screen.

Of course, gaming was his primary interest: "Can it run Call of Duty?" This led to a discovery that left Matt with a rather unpleasant reaction. The switch to a PC-style architecture for the Xbox One eliminates backwards compatibility with Xbox 360 games. The library of Xbox 360 games that our intern had spent his hard earned dollars on was useless. Matt mused about going to a game store for trades-ins, and knew the pennies-on-the-dollar disappointment that he would face. Still, if

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## Tech Specs Xbox One

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|---|
| <b>Manufacturer:</b> Microsoft  |
| <b>Retail Price:</b> \$499.99 US  |
| <b>Optical Drive:</b> Blu-Ray/DVD   |
| <b>Game DVR:</b> Upload Studio  |
| <b>Internal RAM:</b> 8GB DDR SDRAM  |
| <b>CPU Clock:</b> 2133MHz Bandwidth: 68.26 GB/s + 32MB eSRAM  |
| <b>Flash Memory:</b> 8GB Flash Memory   |
| <b>CPU:</b> 8 Core AMD custom CPU   |
| <b>Frequency:</b> 1.75 GHz [5]  |
| <b>GPU:</b> NVIDIA; Clock Speed: 853 MHz (originally 800 MHz) Processor(s): Main processor: ARM Cortex™-A8, 32 bit, In-order, dual-issue, superscalar core @ 600 MHz; |
| <b>Storage:</b> 500 GB Hard Drive non-replaceable   |
| <b>Second Screen:</b> SmartGlass App on Android, iOS, Windows Phone and Windows 8   |
| <b>Cloud Storage:</b> Yes   |
| <b>Sound:</b> Dolby 7.1 Surround Sound  |
| <b>Mandatory Game Installs:</b> Yes   |
| <b>Required Internet Connection:</b> No   |
| <b>Used Game Fee:</b> No  |
| <b>Backwards Compatibility:</b> None  |
| <b>Cross Game Chat:</b> Skype, Party Chat   |
| <b>Motion Control:</b> Kinect 2   |
| <b>Voice Commands:</b> Kinect 2   |
| <b>Subscription Service:</b> Xbox Live Required for Online Play   |
| <b>USB:</b> USB 3.0 (2)   |
| <b>Network:</b> Gigabit Ethernet, WiFi (A/B/G/N dual-band at 2.4ghz and 5ghz)   |
| <b>A/V Hookups:</b> HDMI input and output (1080p w/4K support)  |
| <b>Power source:</b> External block 110v AC   |
| <b>Dimensions &amp; weight:</b> 12.6 in W x 10.2 in D x 3.9 in H; Weight: 8.8 lbs; Material: Plastic  |

"Ignore the competition... nothing offers more features"

- Matt, the Intern