

Destiny 2 will become free-to-play later this year, cross-platform [Updated]

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- At least one new baddie in *Destiny 2: Shadowkeep*.
- Some new kind of enemy to face.
- A return to the Moon.
- Three heroes running toward adventure.
- A hint to a new “artifact” perk system that will be available to endgame players. Some pretty good Lorem Ipsum jokes in there.
- An image Bungie used to advertise the series’ new cross-platform support.

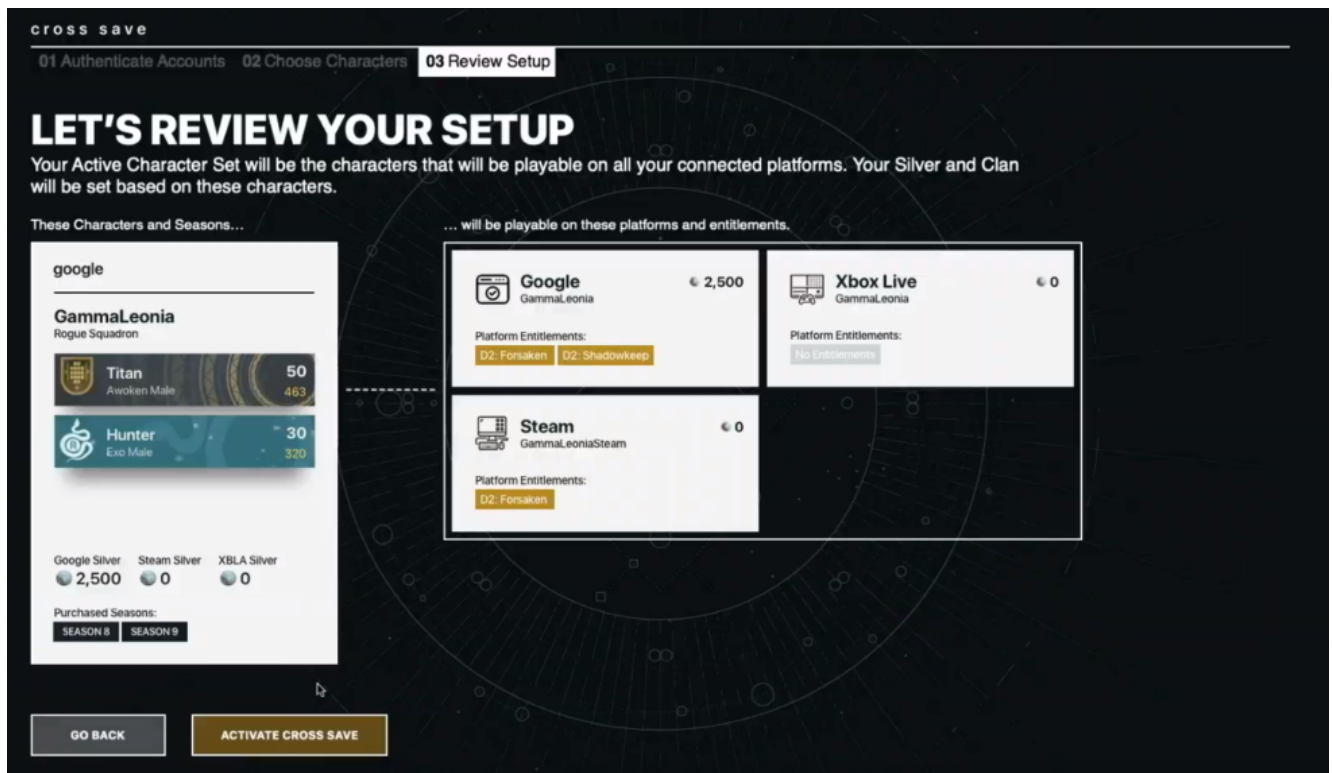
Shortly after Google’s Stadia reveal presentation on Thursday, the *Destiny 2* handlers at Bungie kicked off their own whopper of a livestream. While the broadcast revolved around the game’s upcoming paid expansion—*Shadowkeep*, out September 17—it arguably made a bigger splash with a free-to-play and cross-platform announcement.

Once *Shadowkeep* goes live this September on PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Windows 10, and Google Stadia, *Destiny 2*’s base version will become wholly free to download, boot, and play on Bungie’s live servers. The “New Light” version may be better described as “*Destiny 2 Year One*,” which includes the overworld and campaign content from the 2016 SKU and the game’s first pair of paid expansions, *Warmind* and *Curse of*

Osiris.

From there, the rest of the game's existing and future content—meaning, full expansion packs and paid “season” content bumps—will be sold “a la carte” without requiring other purchases. “None of the existing content is required to access *Shadowkeep*,” one Bungie staffer said when explaining this retail model. “All expansions going forward will be simple and a la carte.” (The staffers also admitted that “pre-purchasing content wasn’t as cool as it could be,” referring specifically to the “season” content bumps being sold before their contents were advertised.)

Bungie describes this version as “tailored towards new players,” as it drops players into *Destiny 2*'s first campaign chapter before dumping them into a social hub. The hub is where online players connect to the “full breadth” of content like destinations, strikes, free-roam, and lost sectors, along with versus modes like Crucible and Gambit. Some paid-expansion content, particularly basic “destination content,” will unlock “over time” for free players. These will essentially tease free players to pay for *Forsaken* and *Shadowkeep* content like campaign missions and exotic quests.



Enlarge / This is the only technical hint to how cross-save support will work once this feature is added to *Destiny 2* in September of this year. As you can see, this player is connecting multiple platforms' accounts with character progress *and* entitlements. Will we be able to move expansion pack payments from one platform to another? We don't yet know. Additionally, if you've made progress on one supported *Destiny 2* platform, you'll be able to transfer characters to other platforms. This includes Sony's PlayStation 4, a platform that has been notorious for gating its content and accounts behind "only on PS4" restrictions. However, Bungie was more tight-lipped on exactly how this account- and character-transition process will work. The above image hints to the considerations that must be minded when moving one platform's characters and entitlements (meaning, what you've paid for) to another. Will an expansion-pack purchase on PS4 count toward PC? If I started a character on a non-expansion account, can I shift that one to a platform where I *have* paid for that content? We'll have to wait and see.

[**Update**, 3:20pm ET: After reviewing Bungie's "cross-save" page, which went live shortly before this article went live, we wanted to clarify our original article's "cross-play"

claim. It appears that *Destiny 2* players will still be restricted within their platform of choice for matchmaking and grouping up with friends, as opposed to, say, Windows 10 players joining groups with Stadia and PS4 players in the same instance. We have adjusted the original headline as a result, which previously read “fully cross-platform.”]

In related news: *Destiny 2* will no longer feature any “platform-exclusive” content. Wherever you buy the game’s future expansions and season packs, you can expect to see the same gear, missions, multiplayer levels, and more.

There’s also a major change coming for Windows 10 players. By the end of this year, all of those *Destiny 2* accounts will have a required merge from Blizzard’s Battle.net launcher to Valve’s Steam. Bungie compared this process to having a moving service show up to your house, take your possessions and furniture, and set them up neatly at your new location. We’ll have to wait to see whether Bungie makes the PC-launcher shift as smooth as that sounds.

Bungie was coy when explaining why these features (free-to-play, cross-platform) hadn’t come to the game before: “capital-R reasons.” But frequent mentions of the series’ former publishing partner in Activision (as well as reminders that Bungie bought itself out of the deal earlier this year) seemed to clearly hint that Activision had been a major preventative factor up until now.

For more on the sales pitch of *Destiny 2: Shadowkeep*, check out the video below, which details the series’ return to the Moon and the paid campaign content it will include.

[embedded content]

Destiny 2: Shadowkeep trailer.

Listing image by Bungie

<https://arstechnica.com/?p=1517939>