Google Stadia ‘founders’ can now give away another three-month free trial to a friend

Google’s Stadia cloud gaming service hasn’t exactly had a stellar launch, leaving those who purchased the $130 “Founder’s Edition” effectively paying for a beta without the features or graphical fidelity that Google promised it would deliver at its debut. That’s not to mention the day-one distribution hang-ups. But it is throwing in a freebie to help placate early adopters: a second Buddy Pass, which should be waiting in Stadia Founder’s inboxes right now.

Basically, it’s a free three-month trial of the Stadia Pro subscription that you can use on a Pixel phone or in the Chrome web browser, giving you access to a copy of *Destiny 2* that you can play with a friend anywhere you’ve got an excellent Wi-Fi connection. (You’ll also need a gamepad or keyboard and mouse, of course.)

> *In the spirit of the holidays, we have an early surprise gift for Stadia Founders: an extra Buddy Pass. Give it to a friend, a family member… anybody you know who loves games. pic.twitter.com/cn7muBPgfS*
>
> *— Stadia (@GoogleStadia) December 16, 2019*

Presumably, the Buddy Pass will also let you play *Samurai Shodown*, *Tomb Raider,* and *Farming Simulator 19* for free since those games were also added to the Pro subscription that lets players continue to access them as long as they’re signed up.

Without looking a gift horse in the mouth too much — because

Stadia is a cool idea, it works reasonably well, and here's a chance to try it sooner — it's hard to see this as much of a "gift" right now. Free trials are generally, well, *free* because they're designed to rope people into paying a recurring subscription fee. And if gamers want to try games other than the ones mentioned above, they'll need to buy them from Google. The company benefits from more Buddy Passes being out in the wild; it's a sales and marketing tool.

Surprise and frustration

Over the past few weeks, the tone on the official Stadia subreddit has continually been one of mixed surprise and frustration: surprise that cloud gaming works as well as it does and frustration that Google isn't being more communicative and careful during the launch. Some are worried why trailers during The Game Awards didn't bear any Stadia logos — even for games that have been confirmed for the platform like *Doom Eternal* and *Cyberpunk 2077*. There was also frustration when Google blamed developers for graphical fidelity issues with Stadia since it was Google, not developers that promised games like *Destiny 2* and *Red Dead Redemption 2* would run at the highest graphical fidelity.

We're eager to see what Stadia will be like when it becomes a free service sometime in 2020 where you'll be able to pay for games individually instead of needing to shell out for a Founder's Edition kit and a monthly subscription.

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