LG Is Bringing Free, Console-Quality Gaming to Its TVs—No Hardware Required



Over the last decade, smart televisions have almost entirely eliminated the need for hardware, making DVD players, cable boxes, and streaming sticks a relic of the past. Now, the videogame console could be next.

On Friday, the TV manufacturer LG launched a partnership with the cloud gaming startup Phynd, which will bring free, console-quality video games into the Samsung gaming library for anyone who owns an LG Smart TV made in 2021 or later.

The setup enables LG owners to play the games without any kind of subscription or payment; they can also, after downloading a mobile app, use their smart phones as controllers.

The move aims to transform consumers' living room TVs into standalone gaming setups, eliminating the need for expensive gaming consoles, subscriptions, game purchase, or even controllers. In doing so, the company aims to dramatically expand the potential market for gaming.

"The a-ha moment is when people realize the game comes right out of the TV," said vice president of its platform business Bo Moon.

Phynd is positioning itself against a wave of competitors, including a similar effort in the works from Netflix and FIFA, by emphasizing gaming fidelity.

Where other lightweight offerings resemble mobile gaming, Phynd is aiming to provide the quality of gaming experience previously only possible using dedicated consoles or

computers, according to founder and CEO André Swanston.

The technology to stream console-grade graphics affordably has only recently become viable, according to Swanston, whose background is in monetizing ad-supported content across connected TV.

“What we are going for with Phynd is to be the first to offer PC or console quality through the cloud,” Swanston said. “This is the full, premium, large-screen version of games for free.”

Uninterrupted attention

To monetize the games, Phynd plans to run brief pre-roll ad breaks, typically two 30-second spots, while a game loads, according to Swanston.

It is also experimenting with incorporating sponsored in-game rewards, such as a discount on a product after reaching a certain level, rather than imposing mid-session commercial breaks

That approach echoes an argument gaming companies have increasingly made to advertisers. Unlike TV or mobile, where audiences are often distracted or scrolling during commercial breaks, gamers hold a controller instead of a phone and stay locked into the experience.

Electronic Arts made a similar pitch to marketers last month when it launched its own in-game ad platform across titles like Madden NFL and EA Sports FC, arguing that gaming offers brands unusually engaged, leaned-in attention.

With Phynd, of course, gamers might have their phone in their hands, but the device becomes part of the gameplay, repurposed as a controller rather than a source of distraction.

For Swanston, the LG deal is part of a longer arc in which the smart TV absorbs functions once handled by separate boxes. Cable boxes and DVD players have already disappeared into the

television, and gaming consoles could be next.

“That is not a matter of if, but when,” Swanston said.

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