Microsoft announces November launch for Xbox Series X, Halo Infinite delay

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- The system-on-a-chip at the heart of the system.
- Overhead view.
- A model of the airflow “vortex” helping to cool the long rectangular Series X chassis.
- This image is labeled as a “vapor chamber,” which we can only assume is used for cooling.
- The chassis used to mount the Series X boards.

Over a year after it first publicly revealed “Project Scarlett,” Microsoft announced today that the Xbox Series X console will be available in November. But while that launch will include what Microsoft says are “thousands of games spanning four generations”—including 50 new titles “optimized for Xbox Series X” planned for release this year—it will not include *Halo Infinite*.

That high-profile first-party shooter, originally announced for a “Holiday 2020” release, has now been pushed back to 2021. In announcing the delay, Microsoft cited “balancing the team’s well being” with “finish[ing] the critical work necessary to launch” the game. The official *Halo* Twitter account cited “the ongoing COVID-related impacts affecting all

of us this year" as one of multiple factors behind the delay.

Specific dates for the worldwide launch for the Series X console have not been announced, and a suggested price point has not been publicly confirmed for the hardware.

A different kind of console launch

Unlike pretty much every previous game console, the Xbox Series X will not be focused on exclusive titles that require the new hardware. Instead, new releases will continue to work across the Xbox One and Series X for the time being, with optional "optimization" to take advantage of the newer hardware.

In addition to upcoming titles that will be "optimized" for Series X, Microsoft is also promising at least 40 legacy titles that will be "newly optimized to take full advantage of Xbox Series X, including *Destiny 2*, *Forza Horizon 4*, *Gears 5*, *Ori and the Will of the Wisps*, and *Madden NFL 21*.

Microsoft continues to tout its Smart Delivery system, which allows players to buy games once in order to enjoy them across Xbox generations. Microsoft has confirmed that games like *Assassin's Creed Valhalla*, *Dirt 5*, *Gears Tactics*, *Yakuza: Like a Dragon*, and *Watch Dogs: Legion* will use that system. But not all third-party publishers are on board: Take-Two is asking players to spend an extra $30 on top of the $70 Xbox One price for a copy of *NBA2K11* that can be upgraded to full Series X optimization.

Unlike Sony's PlayStation 5, the Xbox Series X will maintain compatibility with all older Xbox One accessories (with one specific exception). Microsoft is also stressing Series X backward compatibility with a wide selection of titles dating back to the original Xbox, some with new optimizations including improved 4K resolution, HDR colors, anisotropic filtering, and doubled frame rates.

The Series X launch window announcement comes just days after Ars confirmed the existence of a currently unannounced Xbox Series S as well. Little is known for sure about that piece of hardware, but longstanding rumors of a console codenamed “Lockhart” suggest a lower-priced Series S box focused more on streaming or games running at sub-4K resolutions.

Listing image by Microsoft

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