Microsoft confirms $499 Xbox Series X for Nov. 10

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- No, that’s not a Series X-compatible smart-speaker. That’s the Xbox Series S.
- Don’t talk to me or my son ever again.
- The Series S is nearly 60 percent smaller than the Series X, Microsoft says.
- The Series S comes with a controller that Microsoft is calling “Robot White.”
- Despite the Eye of Sauron design, the Xbox Series S is not watching you through its unblinking circular vent.
- A console that’s thinner than the controller it uses? What will they think of next?

Microsoft has finally revealed a $499 “estimated retail price” for its top-end Xbox Series X. That system will launch alongside the $299 Xbox Series S on November 10, the company confirmed this morning.

Microsoft is also expanding its existing “All Access” subscription program to give customers access to its next-gen hardware with no upfront cost. Qualifying players who commit to a $25/month subscription for the Series S (or $35/month for the Series X) for two years get the console as well as access to all the games available on Xbox Game Pass Ultimate (and its attendant xCloud streaming options).

That Game Pass subscription now also includes access to EA Play (previously known as EA Access/Origin Access), adding downloadable versions of 60 legacy titles from the publisher to the package.

A smaller, cheaper option

Following yesterday's leak and Microsoft's subsequent confirmation of the lower-end, next-gen Xbox Series S, today Microsoft is detailing the differences between its two next-gen boxes. The primary difference between the two, Microsoft says, is resolution. While Series X games will be aiming at a "performance target" of 4K resolution at 60fps, the Series S will instead aim for 1440p games at the same frame rate (though some developers may opt for fewer frames). Microsoft says the Series S "delivers approximately 3x the GPU performance of Xbox One," compared to an 8x relative boost for the Series X. Those ratios would translate to about 4.5 teraflops of GPU power on the Series S, for those keeping count of such things.

The CPUs on the Series S and X are "similar," Microsoft says, while the I/O system behind the heavily touted "Velocity Architecture" is identical on both consoles, Microsoft says. But the Series S has only 512GB of fast-access storage built-in, compared to a full 1TB on the Series X (adding more fast storage is possible but could be quite expensive).

[embedded content]
The Series S and Series X will both play the same games, including thousands of titles designed for older Xbox systems, Microsoft says. Games that can take particular advantage of the Series S/X hardware will be labeled as "optimized" for the new generation of consoles.

While Microsoft hasn't detailed the physical dimensions of the Series S box yet, it is selling the disc-drive-free unit as "the smallest Xbox ever created" and "nearly 60% smaller" than

the Series X. That could be a particularly savvy marketing move, considering the PlayStation 5 is shaping up to be among the largest home consoles ever created.

Preorders for the Xbox Series X will begin on September 22.

Listing image by Microsoft

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