Microsoft reveals first details on “Project Scarlett” game console for 2020

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LOS ANGELES—After an extremely brief tease at last year’s E3 presentation, Microsoft revealed the first details of the successor to the Xbox One today, called “Project Scarlett” for now. The hardware will launch in the 2020 holiday season, the company said.

Much like the Playstation 4 successor first discussed earlier this year, reduced loading times are a major focus for Microsoft’s next console hardware. The company said the system will sport high-bandwidth GDDR6 RAM, and a “new generation of SSD” will act as “virtual RAM,” leading to “more than 40 times

performance increases over the current generation” when it comes to data bus bandwidth. That means being able to “move through worlds without waiting for screnes to load,” and the end of those long “fake elevator” scenes that hide loading on previous platforms.

Microsoft didn’t go into too much detail on the system’s custom-designed AMD processor, but did say it will be utilizing “the latest Zen 2 and Navi technology.” The company said the system would be “four times more powerful than the Xbox One X,” with support for 120 fps, variable refresh rate, “real-time hardware accelerated ray-tracing” and resolution up to 8K. Whether the system can handle all of those things *at the same time*, though, seems doubtful, to say the least.

Xbox’s Phil Spencer said Project Scarlett was being developed by the same team behind the Xbox One and Xbox One X, and hinted that the company has learned from the less focused rollout of the Xbox One. “For us, the console is vital and central to our experience,” he said. “We heard you. A console should be designed and built and optimized for one thing and one thing only: gaming.”

While Spencer didn’t discuss features like backward compatibility on stage, a press release highlighted that “thousands of games across four console generations will look and play best on Project Scarlett.” In a video presentation on stage, the company also hinted that “your games, your achievements, your progression, your accessories, your console experience with Xbox: it all comes forward with Scarlett.”

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