Nvidia’s GeForce Now Windows app can transform your cheap laptop into a gaming PC

Nvidia announced a beta for its GeForce Now game streaming service for the Mac last year, and now it’s finally coming to Windows PCs. Starting this week, beta users of the GeForce Now Mac client will be able to install and run the Windows app. This brings the beta service far beyond its roots as an exclusive to for Nvidia’s Android-based Shield devices, and more into the core Windows gaming PC audience.

I got a chance to play with an early beta of the GeForce Now service on a $400 Windows PC at CES today. My biggest concerns about game streaming services are latency and internet connections, but Nvidia had the service setup using a 50mbps connection on the Wynn hotel’s Wi-Fi. I didn’t notice a single issue, and it honestly felt like I was playing Player Unknown’s Battlegrounds directly on the cheap laptop in front of me. If I actually tried to play the game locally, it would be impossible as the game was barely rendering at all or at 2fps.

Latency is key

Nvidia is streaming these games from seven datacenters across the US, and some located in Europe. I was playing in a Las Vegas casino from a server located in Los Angeles, and Nvidia tells me it’s aiming to keep latency under 30ms for most customers. There’s obviously going to be some big exceptions here, especially if you don’t live near a datacenter or your internet connectivity isn’t reliable. We’ll need to test GeForce now for Windows across a number of different locations, as the service is separate from the one running on the company’s Shield.

The game streaming works by dedicating a GPU to each customer, so performance and frame rates should be pretty solid. Nvidia is also importing Steam game collections into the GeForce Now service for Windows, making it even more intriguing for PC gamers who are interested in playing their collection on the go on a laptop that wouldn’t normally handle such games. The service is still in beta for now, and Nvidia hasn’t announced pricing details or exact availability, but you can .

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