PlayStation 5 review: Not just a more-powerful PS4

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- The PS5 will stand vertically on its own without the stand, but it can easily be bumped over.
- Behind the square white panels are gentle curves on the black body.
- The PS logo etched into the corner of the “top” panel is a nice touch.
- Close up on the rear ports.
- Some additional vents and fine print on the bottom. Also note the small dot, which hides the thread for the base screw.
- Close up on the front USB ports and the very hard-to-find physical eject and power buttons.
- The PS5 does indeed come in a box.
- Load speeds and haptic feedback continue to be the main selling points on the packaging.
- The system comes carefully encased to prevent bumping in the box.
- Bundled accessories! Left to right: HDMI cable, stand, USB-C cable, power cable, controller.

Back in 2016, when the mid-generation hardware upgrades of the Xbox One X and PS4 Pro were still just mere announcements, we publicly wondered if we had seen the last truly distinct break

between console generations. Instead of releasing completely new console platforms—with exclusive games and features that just don't work on the previous model—Microsoft and Sony at the time both seemed to be leaning towards a smartphone-style model, with regular releases of more powerful consoles that share a common software platform with what came before.

This seems to be the direction Microsoft is heading with the Xbox Series X and S, two console options that serve as baseline hardware power upgrades in a consistent Xbox ecosystem. But Sony is going for more of a hard break with the PS5. In addition to the usual horsepower boost (and standardization of quick-loading NVMe storage), Sony has put extra effort into a new controller and system-level features that try to make the new console more distinct from PlayStations past.

After a few weeks with the console, there's a lot to like about the PS5's new vision for the PlayStation line. Whether those improvements are worth $500 at the moment, though, is a harder question to answer.

Spec Comparison			
PS4	**PS4 Pro**	**PS5**	
GPU	18 Radeon GCN compute units @ 800 Mhz	36 improved GCN compute units @ 911 Mhz	36 RDNA2 compute units @ up to 2.23 Ghz (variable freq.)
CPU	8 Jaguar cores @ 1.6Ghz	8 Jaguar cores @ 2.1Ghz	8 Zen 2 Cores @ up to 3.5 Ghz (variable freq.)
RAM	8GB GDDR5 @ 176GB/s	8GB GDDR5 @ 218GB/s (plus 1GB DDR3)	16GB GDDR6 @ 448GB/s

Max power consumption (gameplay)	148W (79W for PS4 Slim)	154W	205W
USB ports	2 USB 3.0	3 USB 3.0	2 USB 3.1, 1 USB 2.0, 1 USB-C
Storage	1TB (PS4 Slim)	1TB HDD	825GB NVMe
Size (widest points)	265 x 39 x 288mm (10.4 x 1.5 x 11.3″) (PS4 Slim)	295 x 55 x 327mm (11.6 x 2.2 x 12.9″)	390 x 104 x 260mm (15.4 x 10.2 x 4.1″)
MSRP	$300	$400	$500 ($400 for All-Digital) w/ *Astro's Playroom*

The Shell

We've already talked quite a bit about the PS5's unique, curvy exterior, but in case you're just catching up, the first thing to know about the PS5 is that it comes in a historically massive shell for a console. You'll want to break out the measuring tape to make sure the 15.4″ x 10.2″ x 4.1″ system (slightly smaller for the $400 all-digital edition) will fit in your entertainment center.

PS5 power usage	
Rest mode	28-32W
Rest mode (w/ download)	42-45W
Idle on menu	67W
Netflix	71-73W
Playing 4K Blu-ray	76-79W

Gameplay (Downwell PS4)	70-76W
Gameplay (Tony Hawk 1+2 PS4)	116-130W
Gameplay (Miles Morales PS5)	156-205W
Installing Knack from disc	124 – 134W
Playing Knack (w/ disc in drive)	116-127W

Sony has said this physical design was made in part to help with cooling and reduce the system's apparent fan noise in the system. So far, that decision has been borne out in our testing. The PS5 doesn't run completely silently (and is a tad noisier than the Xbox Series X, in our direct comparisons), but the gentle hum of the system's cooling fan is only apparent in a completely quiet room (or right up close to the system). That's true even when the system is drawing over 200W at its heaviest gaming load, a welcome change from the high-speed fan whine of the PS4 and PS4 Pro during high-end gameplay.

Unfortunately, the system's disc drive is not nearly as quiet. Despite Sony's attempts at insulation, you'll easily make out the whirring of the spinning drive from across the room when installing a game from a disc or watching a disc-based movie. External spinning hard drives can also make their own noise, so invest in an external SSD if you want to reduce the racket.

- The Xbox Series X is plenty big, too, but it doesn't compare to Sony's big boy.
  Sam Machkovech
- Both systems add a little bit of visual flair when you look at them from an angle.

Sam Machkovech

- As far as horizontal footprints go, it’s no contest.
  Sam Machkovech
- With its stand attached in horizontal position, PlayStation 5’s body (with white shell attached) maxes out at roughly 4.25-inches high. Xbox Series X’s horizontal orientation is a bit taller, at 6-inches of height.
  Sam Machkovech
- Even horizontally, the PS4 Pro has quite a bit of height compared to previous PlayStations.
  Sam Machkovech
- From square to rectangle.
  Sam Machkovech
- Step aside, PS3 Phat—the PlayStation line has a new big boy.
- PS5 vs. PSOne vs. PS Classic.
- Even with a screen, the Switch isn’t even close to the size of the PS5.

The PS5’s fan system is aided by a massive array of vents that run up and down all sides of the system. These let out a stream of noticeably hot air when you get up close to the system running at full horsepower. Even then, though, the massive white panels on either side of the system remain notably cool to the touch, a marked difference from the notably hot surface of a running PS4 Pro.

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