PS4 gamepads won’t work for PS5 games, Sony says



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- The PlayStation 5’s new gamepad is called DualSense and sports a bold two-toned design. Did Aperture Science make this?
- The massive touchpad returns, as do the general slope and style of the triggers on the body. But, hey, a new Type-C connector!
- A tighter zoom on the d-pad, the new “PlayStation” button (now a perfect mold of the classic “PS” logo), a new “mute” button, and the new “create’ button. Any hopes for improved joystick material, compared to the crumbling stuff on DualShock 4 gamepads, aren’t looking good.

You won’t be able to use Sony’s DualShock 4 or other third-party PS4 gamepads to play PlayStation 5 games, Sony confirmed in a blog post today.

Those older gamepads will still work with “supported PS4 games” running on the PS5, Sony said, and PS5 software will work with “specialty peripherals” designed for the PS4—including “officially licensed racing wheels, arcade sticks, and flight sticks.” Those caveats highlight the fact that there’s no technical limitation or communication protocol mismatch stopping the upcoming hardware from communicating with legacy controllers.

But Sony says it “believe[s] that PS5 games should take advantage of the new capabilities and features we’re bringing to the platform, including the features of DualSense wireless controller.” Those features include what Sony is calling “haptic feedback and dynamic trigger effects” and a built-in microphone (last month, Geoff Keighley hosted what is, thus far, the only public hands-on impressions of these new controller features).

The DualSense compatibility decision casts Sony in contrast to Microsoft, which is promising that “your Xbox One gaming accessories come into the future with you, too” with the coming Xbox Series X. While that promise doesn’t extend to the defunct Kinect camera, it does include specialty pads like the Xbox Elite Controller and Xbox Adaptive Controller. “We believe that your investments in gaming should move with you into the next generation,” Microsoft wrote in a blog post last month.

PlayStation Move controllers—first released in 2010 for use with the PS3—will continue to work with PlayStation VR games on the PS5, Sony said. The PS4’s existing PlayStation Camera accessory will also work on the PS5, though it will require an adaptor that Sony says it will be providing to users for free.

While original DualShock controllers designed for the PS1 worked with certain PS2 games (and all backward-compatible PS1 titles running on the PS2), most Sony systems have not officially supported gamepads designed for previous generations. Third-party peripherals have filled in the gap during previous console generation transitions, though, including a $40 converter that enables PS3 controllers on the PS4 and a Dualshock-2-to-PS3 controller converter I reviewed back in 2007.

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