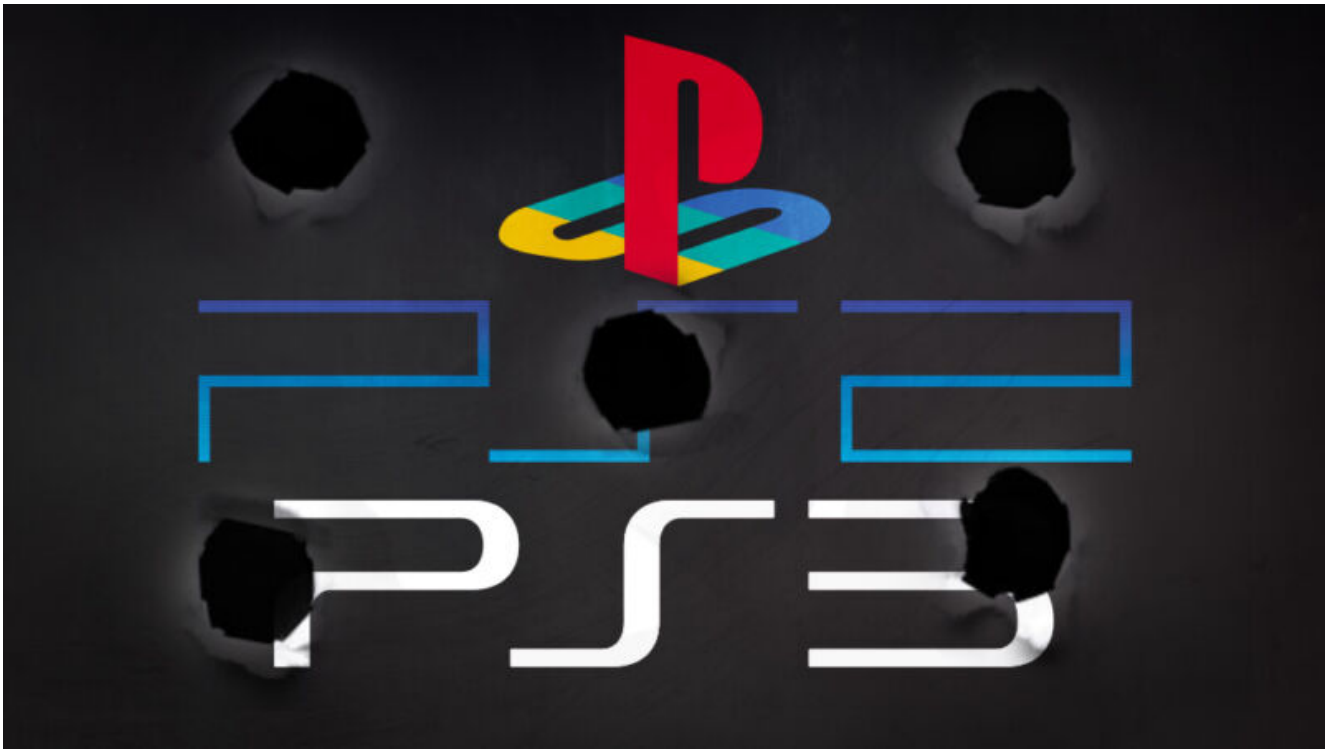
Sony makes it official: PlayStation 5 won’t natively support PS1, PS2, PS3



Enlarge / Were you hoping to play classic PlayStation discs on the newest PlayStation 5 console later this year? If so, we have bad news.

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Wednesday’s deluge of PlayStation 5 news mostly revolved around brand-new content launching alongside the console on November 12. Lost in the fray was a key detail that confirmed an August leak about PS5: its lack of sweeping backward-compatibility support.

In a Wednesday interview, Japanese gaming magazine Famitsu asked Sony Interactive Entertainment chief Jim Ryan about the

new console's compatibility with PS1, PS2, and PS3 discs or downloads. Ryan explained that "PS5-specific engineering" meant the design team was mostly focused on "the simultaneous use of high-speed SSDs and the new DualSense controller."

This prevented Sony from delivering compatibility with older consoles, Ryan told Famitsu, even though he made clear that Sony wanted to support PlayStation 4's "100 million players" by developing compatibility with "99%" of PS4 games, since "we thought that they would like to play PS4 titles on the PS5, as well."

"Why would anybody play this?"

This announcement doesn't clarify whether PS1 games purchased for use on PS4 will transfer to PS5. It also doesn't mention the existing ability for players to stream older-generation games to PS4 from the PlayStation Now cloud-subscription service or whether we should expect that functionality to seamlessly transfer to PS5 in November. SIE reps did not immediately respond to our questions about those possible features.

Ryan's current statement about affection for PS4 backward compatibility is curious, considering he has previously scoffed at affection for older console generations. As he told Time Magazine in 2017:

> *When we've dabbled with backward compatibility, I can say it is one of those features that is much requested, but not actually used much. That, and I was at a Gran Turismo event recently where they had PS1, PS2, PS3 and PS4 games, and the PS1 and the PS2 games, they looked ancient, like why would anybody play this?*

Ryan's take about that older generation probably wasn't helped by lackluster PlayStation Classic sales in 2018 (though those

were arguably less about classic games and more about iffy execution).

As I wrote about PS5's rumored back-compat news in August:

> *PlayStation 4 was the company's first console to not ship with native backward-compatibility support for disc-based games, along with incompatibility with download-only software that debuted on PlayStation 3. That meant you had to hold on to your old console to access those disc-less games. This followed the PS3 receiving a major revision early in its lifetime to remove support for PS2 discs (due to this feature running on PS2 "Emotion Engine" architecture built into early PS3s, which was dumped to cut costs).*
>
> *Comparatively, Microsoft has aggressively courted fans of older games with a backward-compatibility sales pitch on both Xbox One and Xbox Series consoles. That means gamers in the Xbox ecosystem can expect native access to previous purchases (whether in disc form or as a digital purchase) across multiple console generations and resolution and performance upgrades on a game-by-game basis. We're still waiting to hear whether PS4 games that struggled with performance issues might receive PS5-specific upgrades, though the PS4 Pro's optional "boost mode" already made clear that certain games (cough, cough, Bloodborne) would need special patches to take advantage of newer hardware.*

Wednesday's dump of PlayStation 5 news did not go into further detail about additional boosts to PS4 games as played on the upcoming console. Instead, we learned that some major PlayStation 5 games, particularly *Horizon: Forbidden West* and *Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales*, will launch simultaneously on PS5 and PS4. This appears to run somewhat counter to Sony's recent comments about maintaining "generations" instead of supporting an Xbox-style "forward-compatible" plan for its biggest games. https://arstechnica.com/?p=1707505