Xbox Series X won’t support Kinect hardware, games

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Roughly one year ago, Microsoft revealed the Xbox Series X (then referred to as “Project Scarlett”) in part by highlighting the system’s extensive backward compatibility: “Your games, your achievements, your progression, your accessories, your console experience with Xbox: it all comes forward with Scarlett.” Today, though, the company emphasized one slight exception to that general backward-compatibility rule: Kinect hardware and the games designed for it.

“It’s our intent for all Xbox One games *that do not require Kinect* to play on Xbox Series X at the launch of the console [emphasis added],” Microsoft Head of Xbox Phil Spencer wrote in a sentence buried in an extensive blog post about the company’s Xbox plans (including coming xCloud integration with Game Pass). Spencer later confirmed and clarified that statement to The Verge, saying point-blank that “[t]here’s no way for Kinect to work” on the Series X. In a sense, today’s confirmation isn’t a big surprise. We’ve known for months that the Series X is missing the proprietary Kinect port found on the original Xbox One (which was also removed from 2016’s Xbox One S and 2017’s Xbox One X). But Microsoft offered a USB

adapter for the Xbox One edition of the Kinect until 2018, and third-party accessory makers still offer similar USB solutions for the hardware (the Xbox 360 version of Kinect was designed for USB but required an included power adapter to work with older versions of the console).

It probably wouldn’t have taken too much work to simply let those adapters work with the Xbox Series X as well. But that would have meant emulation development, testing, and support work that Microsoft likely isn’t interested in undertaking for a device that it hasn’t produced since late 2017 and hasn’t bundled with the Xbox One hardware since 2014.

In practice, the lack of Series X Kinect support only affects a few dozen games from the Xbox One’s library of hundreds of titles. Of those, the ever-popular *Just Dance* series is likely to be the one still in active rotation among many Xbox players, but those games have let players use a smartphone as a controller for years now.

Elsewhere in the blog post, Microsoft clarifies that specialized Xbox One inputs like the Xbox Elite Controller and Xbox Adaptive Controller will still work with the Series X, which is probably more directly relevant to more Xbox One users. But we’re still a little bummed that Microsoft’s admirable commitment to “full” backward compatibility is leaving out one of the Xbox’s most unusual and memorable accessories.

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