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Microsoft xCloud: Everything we know

From supported games to the beta, here's what we know about Microsoft xCloud


Gabe Gurwin @GamingAngelGabe

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GAMING

Microsoft xCloud: Everything we know

From supported games to the beta, here's what we know about Microsoft xCloud




Microsoft remains committed to offering Xbox One and PC fans a variety of ways to play their favorite games, whether that be through physical discs, paid digital downloads, free Xbox Games With Gold titles, and the vault from Xbox Game Pass. One upcoming service, Project xCloud will allow players to enjoy their favorite games instantly, whether they are playing on a console, PC, or even a mobile phone. The

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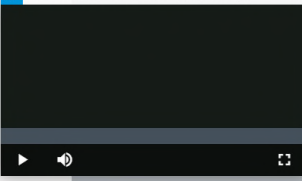
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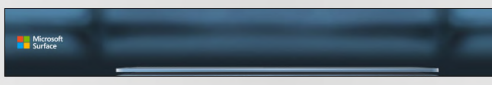
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WHAT IS PROJECT XCLOUD?

Project xCloud is Microsoft's video game streaming service, allowing players to instantly stream console and PC games to their device of choice using an internet connection. Similar to the system used by Google Stadia, you won't download the games you play in Project xCloud. Instead, they'll be streamed from Microsoft's own servers, which make use of the Azure Cloud architecture that has been implemented in games like *Crackdown 3* and *Titanfall*. There are 54 different Azure regions around the globe, which should provide stable service to users regardless of their location.


Project xCloud is not designed to replace traditional disc-based and digital gaming. Instead, Microsoft hopes for it to open up console-quality gaming to those who currently lack the necessary hardware to do so or can only play on mobile devices. It also means players will be able to enjoy a particular Xbox or PC game they're interested in without having to purchase an entire system.

It isn't clear yet what the quality limit will be on Project xCloud. In a [blog post in March 2019](#), Microsoft CVP of gaming cloud Kareem Choudhry said that the company still values the console experience, as it allows for 4K gaming with HDR. It's possible that this could mean Project xCloud will not hit these numbers, which would make its quality less impressive than Google Stadia.

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Inside Xbox: Introducing Project xCloud

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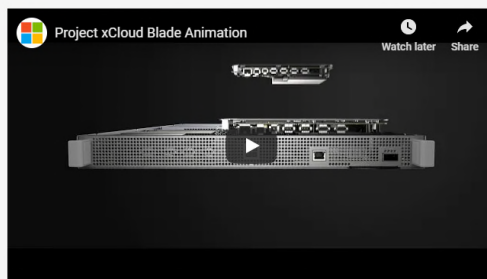


HOW WILL PROJECT XCLOUD WORK?

Project xCloud will use Microsoft's Azure data centers' hardware to render gaming experiences remotely, and the games will then be streamed to your device of choice. The only requirement is that you have a strong network connection so you will be able to play games at home, as well as while you are traveling. Each server blade has the internals of four Xbox One S systems. If the demonstration video Microsoft released is accurate.

The same cloud saving system currently used to make Xbox Play Anywhere – the cross-buy program for Xbox One and PC – possible will also be used in Project xCloud. This means that if you are playing a game at home and need to leave, you will be able to pick up directly where you left off.

During a demonstration on Inside Xbox in March, we got to see our first look at Project xCloud in action. Running on the Azure data centers' servers, *Forza Horizon 4* was shown streaming to an Android phone, with quality similar to that of the console game. The framerate appeared to be identical, allowing for an experience that was not pared down in any way to work through streaming.

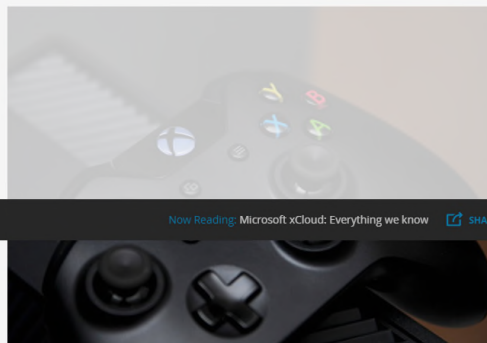


It's unclear how this quality will compare to the upcoming next-generation Xbox system or systems. According to 3D Realms VP Frederik Schreiber, the console will exceed the capabilities of Google Stadia. When we have concrete technical details on xCloud, it will be easier to make a direct comparison.

In order to optimize the experience for mobile players, Microsoft will offer multiple control options. These include the ability to use an Xbox One controller via Bluetooth – a feature all new Xbox One controllers have – and touch support will also be offered. Rather than using a one-size-fits-all control scheme for touchscreens, games will also get their own unique setups to best suit the actions players will be doing.

You won't be limited to just a handful of Project xCloud enabled games, either. Microsoft plans to allow users to play their entire library of Xbox One games, as well as those Microsoft has released on PC. With more than 3,000 games available on Xbox One alone, it's an enormous library, and developers won't have to do anything on their end to make their games work with the Project xCloud service.

PRICING



Thus far, Microsoft has not revealed pricing information for Project xCloud. Seeing as the recently-announced Xbox Game Pass Ultimate will set subscribers back \$15 per month, we anticipate Project xCloud will cost around the same. PlayStation Now, Sony's streaming service, costs \$20 per month, so there is a chance the price could be slightly higher.

Microsoft has also not shared how - if at all - it will support game purchases. For those who want to play games the traditional way at home, you'll have to wait and see if you will receive any credits or discounts for already purchasing games you plan to use in Project xCloud.

BETA

Microsoft will hold public trials for Project xCloud later in 2019. More information will be provided in the future on how to get into the trials and the exact dates when you'll be able to do so. Prior to its official announcement, Google Stadia held its own technical test as "Project Stream" in late 2018.

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RELEASE DATE

No final release date is yet available for Project xCloud. Because public trials are planned for later this year, however, we anticipate the full service being available in 2020. More information on this will likely be shared at [Microsoft's E3 press conference](#) on June 9.

Editors' Recommendations

- [Google Stadia vs. Project xCloud: Here's what we know so far](#)
- [How to watch the Xbox E3 Briefing, and what to expect](#)
- [Everything announced at Microsoft Build 2019, from Edge to Azure](#)
- [Rivals Sony and Microsoft team up for cloud-based gaming solutions](#)
- [Achievements unlocked: Xbox Live is coming to mobile devices](#)

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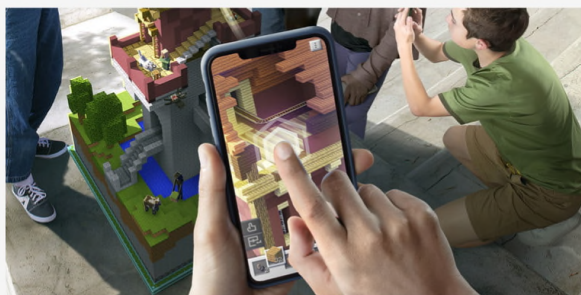


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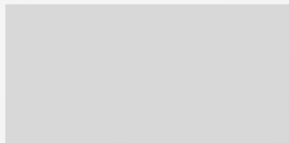
Minecraft Earth hands-on preview: The next big AR craze is coming

Minecraft Earth is a new mobile augmented reality game from Microsoft that has Pokémon Go dead in its sites. The cute monster collect-them-all started the genre, but Minecraft Earth hopes to redefine it.

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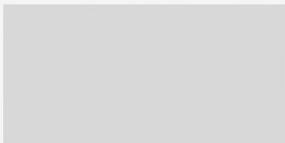
DEAL



Sony and Microsoft bury the hatchet to beat Google on cloud gaming

Sony and Microsoft announced a new partnership focused on direct-to-consumer, cloud-based gaming and A.I. solutions. Sony will be bringing its video game and content-streaming services to Microsoft Azure data centers.

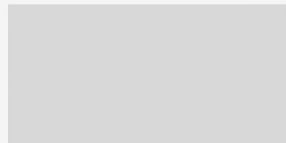
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Sale at Microsoft Store knocks 20% off Samsung SmartThings devices

Looking to make your home even smarter? Samsung SmartThings is the electronics manufacturer's smart home hub, sensor, and most recently a decent mesh Wi-Fi router system, and everything's on sale for 20% off at the Microsoft Store at the...

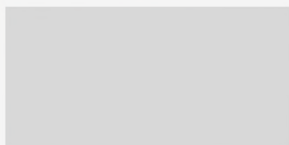
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From new games to hardware, here's what to expect from the Xbox E3 Briefing

Unlike Sony, Microsoft will once again hold its own E3 press briefing in 2019. Here's how, when, and where to watch the conference, as well as what kinds of announcements to expect from the event.

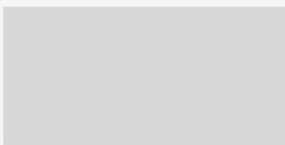
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Story Mode and multiplayer are coming to Super Mario Maker 2

Nintendo broadcast a new Direct livestream dedicated to Super Mario Maker 2. In the livestream, we got a look at how players will share their interactions, play together, and work through 100 Nintendo-created levels.

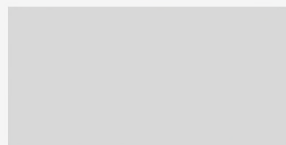
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Super Mario Maker 2 for Nintendo Switch: Everything we know

Super Mario Maker 2 will let Nintendo Switch users create, play, and share 2D Mario levels at home and on the go when it launches June 28. The sequel adds elements from Super Mario 3D World, a story mode, and much more.

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YouTube VR app to bring more than 1 million experiences to Oculus Quest at launch

YouTube has announced that the company's VR application will be a part of the Quest launch, which goes down at the end of May. It will be delivering and over one million videos, including Emmy-award winning content.

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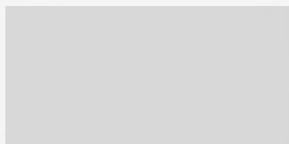
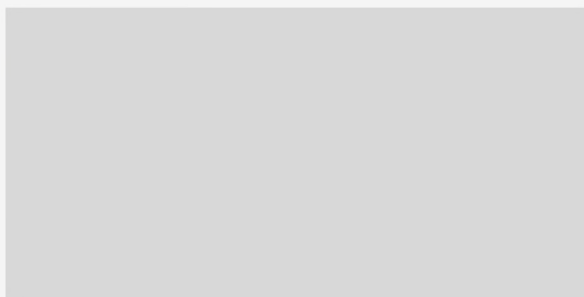
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GAMING

Schell Games has bucked game industry layoffs for 16 years. Here's their secret

Pittsburgh-based game developer Schell Games thrived for more than 16 years without laying off a single employee. How is this possible in an industry so well known for turmoil and volatility?

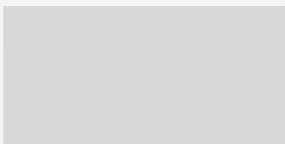
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From the games to the hardware, here's what we know about the Sega Genesis Mini

The Sega Genesis Mini console was just announced, and it's set to release later this year. Here is everything we know about the console, including its hardware, as well as a list of included games.

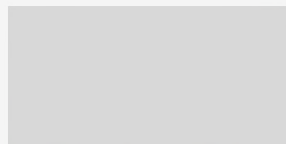
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How to find the oversized phone, big piano, and dancing fish statue in Fortnite

The Fortnite week 2 challenges are now available as part of season 9. The biggest challenge this week has players visit an oversized phone, a big piano, and a giant dancing fish trophy on the island. We've got the locations of all three...

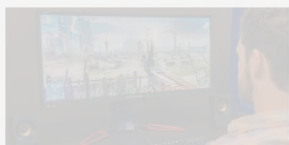
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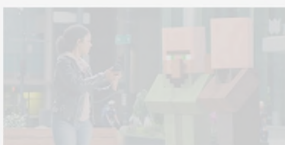
Splinter Cell may not be one of Ubisoft's three unannounced games

Ubisoft's fiscal report included the news that pirate game Skull & Bones is delayed a year, but also included plans for three unannounced games. A Ubisoft dev tweeted that Splinter Cell was in development, but the company said otherwise.

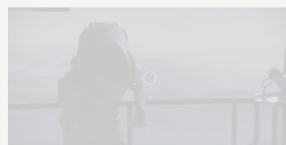
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G-Sync is a game-changer. These are the best monitors with Nvidia's display tech



Get ready to slay spiders and skeletons in real life with Minecraft Earth



Here's where Xur is and what he has for wares this week in Destiny 2: Forsaken

Looking for a monitor that plays well with Nvidia GPUs? You need G-Sync and we have picked the best G-Sync monitors available. Take a look and find out which monitor works best for your PC upgrade.

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Minecraft Earth is the new augmented reality mobile game that uses the Minecraft engine. We have everything you need to know including the release date, features, price, phone compatibility, and more.

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The weekly vendor in Destiny 2: Forsaken always brings Exotic weapons and armor, some of the toughest loot to find in the game. Here's everything you need to know to track down Xur: Where he is, when he shows up, and what he's stocking.

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