

Console Wars: Holiday Season 2020

Special **InvestorIntel** feature, written by contributing editors Ben Feferman and Nate Trewin

PlayStation 5 vs. Xbox Series X/S vs Oculus Quest 2

Who doesn't love a good old fashion console war. Every time there's a new console, the war picks up against and this holiday season we have two stalwarts in the industry going head-to-head with a third party candidate, picking up momentum.

Most pollsters, (and we know they are never accurate) will tell you, PlayStation 5 is the runaway favorite, even with a higher price point and supply shortages. But the Xbox Series X and the Oculus Quest 2, should give our frontrunner a good fight. Here's the breakdown on the current candidates:

PlayStation 5 – Sony Corporation (NYSE: SNE)

Sony's PlayStation 5 was officially released on November 12. There are two versions that are able to be purchased. There the standard PS5 at \$500 USD (\$629 CAD) or there is the new digital edition at USD\$400 (CAD\$499). The main difference between these two systems is that the standard version includes a disk drive and supports physical copies of games. Whereas, the digital version does not have a disk drives and is only compatible with games purchased through the PlayStation store. Looking at the specs of the PS5, it possesses as 8-core 3.5 Ghz AMD Zen2 CPU, a 10.3 teraflop AMD RDNA 2 GPU, has 16 GB GDDR6 RAM, has 825 GB of custom SSD. It can support up to 8k in resolution, a blue ray drive (on the standard version only) and up to 120 FPS on certain games.

Regarding the looks of the PS5, its main colour has switched from the tradition all black to white with black accents. Each system comes with the one DualSense wireless controller. If you are looking to buy an extra controller that will be an additional USD\$69 or (CAD\$89).

Now that we have looked at the specs, let's look at the reasons to buy a PS5. If you have been a PlayStation fan, from previous generations you expect much of the same. Another reason besides the consistency on the PlayStation is the great exclusive games that are available. Some of these key exclusive games include Spider-Man: Miles Morales, Horizon II: Forbidden West, Gran Turismo 7. Another reason to purchase the PS5 is the backwards compatibility. For the first time, almost all PS4 games, as well as optimized PS4 Pro games are able to be played on the PS5. This means that you don't have to sell all of those old PS4 games as they can be enjoyed for years to come.

Xbox Series X/S – Microsoft Corporation (NASDAQ: MSFT)

Looking at the new Xbox, there again is two new models, as with the PS5. There is the Xbox series X which is their flagship, and there is the series S. Similar to the PS5, both the Series X and S consoles have backwards compatibility. This means that you can play you all of your past favourite games on the present generation. Xbox also has their own line of exciting exclusive games. Such games include Halo Infinite, Senua's Saga: Hellblade 2, Forza Motorsport 8, State of Decay 3. As well there is the new Xbox controller which comes in three different colourways (Robot white, Shock Blue and Carbon Black). Both the series X and the S come with one controller and additional controllers are USD\$60 (CAD\$74.99).

The new Series X is priced at USD\$499 (CAD\$599). Aesthetically, the Series X comes in one colour (black), and

it is a rectangular box that won't take up too much room. The specs for the series X are 8-core, 3.8 GHz AMD Zen 2 CPU, 12.0 teraflop AMD RDNA 2. GPU, 16 GB GDDR6 of RAM, 1 TB custom NVMe SSD. Similar to the PlayStation, it can support up to 8k in resolution, and up to 120 FPS on certain games. This system serves as direct competition to both PS5 systems.

There is also the new Series S which is priced at a surprisingly at USD\$299 (CAD\$379). Aesthetically, the Series S comes in a smaller form factor but remains the box shape, but this time is white. This console is the less powerful little brother of the Series X. The Series S has the same processor as its big brother, but it will have slower loading times, a less powerful GPU and has only 10GB of Ram compared to 16GB. The Series S targets 1440p gamers rather than the Series X which is at 4k gamer. It will run some games at 120 FPS, but it does not possess as much storage. This console has a 512GB SSD and is **digital storage only**. However, it does support the ability to add extra Seagate SSD (but this comes at an expensive additional cost).

Oculus Quest 2 – Facebook (NASDAQ: FB)

The last item to look at is Facebook's Oculus Quest 2. This is the newest Virtual Reality (VR) system. Starting at USD\$299 (CAD\$399) for the 65 GB and USD\$399 (CAD\$549) for the 256GB, these systems allow you to experience VR in the comfort of your own home. Although these devices require a Facebook account to log in (hello big brother), they have a ton of options for use. You can get the best seat in the house to live concerts, ground-breaking films, exclusive events, and more from the comfort of your own home. The Quest 2 is also backwards compatible, so you explore all past titles from previous models. Now is probably one of the best times to explore the world of VR. With the coronavirus pandemic and looming global lockdowns incoming this means not leaving your house. So instead of watching more regular YouTube, fire up the Quest and check out YouTube's their vast 3D and 360 video

catalogue.

The Verdict:

If you're a hard-core gamer you're likely not even in this discussion because you have or are buying a PC. But for everyone else, there may be enough to convince some Xbox loyalists to make the move to PS5 but likely it's a case preference with the entire ecosystem. Neither are so revolutionary that they could steal the others fan base to make the move. If this is your first console, well, my vote would be for the PS5.

Oculus is 'wear' it gets interesting. It really doesn't compete with a traditional console and provides a completely different experience. Given that we maybe at home for longer than expected and a long winter ahead, might be worth it to splurge and pick one up as well.