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Tech News on G4

Hands on with Xbox One

Nov 6, 2013

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The lid is off the box.

At the exclusive Toronto media event Microsoft previewed Xbox One, their next-gen all-in-one entertainment system launching November 22.

Although Xbox One will integrate Skype, keep track of all your favorite television series, have a built-in television guide, allow you to record in-game footage and much more, the media event put gaming goodness in the spotlight. We got our paws on a wide-ranging portfolio of launch titles which will appeal to hard-core and casual gamers alike.

Ryse: Son of Rome

Developer: Crytek

Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

Hoisting our shield and sword high, we sliced and diced our way through much of the first level. While Rome and Caesar are besieged by barbarian hordes, we as Roman general Marius Titus take the fight to the invaders which included manning a ballista and raining hellfire down upon them.

The combat itself reminded us of the 'Arkham Asylum' games with Marius bouncing between multiple targets at times. You do command your troops as well to accomplish various tasks. Those events though are seamlessly woven in and don't appear to disrupt the gameplay. Great, sharp graphics – We could see the sweat dripping off Caesar's brow – and fantastic sound.

Verdict: Cannot wait to waste more barbarians.

Zoo Tycoon

Developer: Blue Fang Games

Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

This sure ain't your daddy's Zoo Tycoon. Sure, you cannot run over visitors with zoo carts or allow the wild animals to run amok any longer but there is so much more to the Xbox One release. Capitalizing on the Minecraft, Animal Crossing multiplayer experiences, online players will be able assist each other with their zoos, start one together from scratch or even trade animals.

The good news is the in-game animal encyclopedia remains as a reference and learning resource. The better news is Blue Fang and Microsoft will be including real world events into the game and supporting a multitude of charitable endeavours or organizations. Example: If there is a breaking news story concerning the rise of rhino poaching, the developers will launch a challenge for all players to incorporate or breed so many rhinos. If the goal is reached, Microsoft will donate to a charity that protects endangered animals. Absolutely brilliant stuff.

Verdict: A new and improved console version that also has a heart. How can you not like?

Killer Instinct

Developer: Double Helix Games

Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

It's baaaack. The classic Mortal Kombat – Street Fighter hybrid has a new coat of paint and it is looking great. Ultra Combos are back along with new Counter Breakers. New is the Instinct Mode which produces unique enhancements for limited periods.

Verdict: Looking good but we need to see more to really get a sense of the overall title.

Dead Rising 3

Developer: Capcom Vancouver

Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

Thrilled the series has gotten a much-needed overhaul. It plays and looks better than ever. As survivor Nick Ramos, you scrounge an open-world environment for supplies and weapons to survive a zombie apocalypse. At one point, like a knight of old, we were clanking around in a stolen suit of armour as we waded our way through the hordes of walking



dead. Thankfully, it appears all the time limits have been tossed. An aspect of the original series we really, really disliked.

Verdict: Send more braiiiiins. We want this...yesterday.

Kinect Sports Rivals
Developer: Rare
Publisher: Microsoft Game Studios

'Sports' takes it up a notch. Much more refined and much more competitive than the others in the series. The jetski racing and soccer were our immediate faves. Just simple, addictive fun.

Verdict: A step up for the series.

Reader Update - Alert: After the media event, the location - 11 Bloor Street West - is slated to become an Xbox One store front where consumers can give the console a test drive and purchase games, accessories and the console itself.



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