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Microsoft unveils the successor to the Xbox 360 (released 2005), the Xbox One-- and positions the device less as a games console and more an all-in-one living room entertainment hub.

That leaves the hardcore gamers feeling a little nervous but leaves the industry wondering: Can this Xbox One be "The One," the one device that pulls it altogether in the home?



A sharp angled two-tone (half gloss, half matte) black box with industrial design reminiscent of a 1980's VCR, according to Microsoft Interactive Entertainment Business president Don Mattrick the Xbox One is, "where all of your entertainment comes alive in one place." And just as well, seeing how the launch presentation focused mainly on connectivity with TV STBs and media deals with the likes of the NFL (no details on a similar, more Euro-centric deal are yet available) and Steven Spielberg (who is working a TV show based on the Halo franchise).

The box itself carries 8GB RAM, 8-core 64-bit CPU, 500GB built-in HDD, Blu-ray drive, 802.11n wifi x2 USB 3.0 ports, x2 HDMI, toslink audio (for legacy surround systems) and IR blaster. Spec-wise it all sounds fairly similar to the Playstation 4 (up to and including a PC-style processor made by no other than AMD), even if the XBox One offers a unique addition-- HDMI passthrough allowing the direct connection of cable/satellite/DVR STBs to the console.

The package includes an upgrade on the Kinect peripheral, now with 1080p RGB camera and a CMOS sensor Microsoft claims is sensitive enough to measure heart rates just by checking blood flow around the viewer's face. Like the previous model, the new Kinect allows voice

control (saying "Xbox on" turns on the an entire living room setup) and handles obligatory social duties.

A Windows 8-style "Snap Mode" multitasking interface allows simultaneous Skype chatting and TV watching/game playing.

Also on the receiving end of various improvements is a controller featuring "HD" rumble (adds force feedback to the triggers) and a 15% reduction in input latency.

With Sony and Microsoft finally showing off the big guns, which company will win the hearts (and wallets) of the gamer and living room entertainment market? No one can tell yet, but we should learn more on both devices come E3 2013...

Go Xbox One