

DIFFICULTY IN BLOODBORNE

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Recently I've gotten back into Bloodborne, last year's infamously difficult PS4 exclusive successor to the Souls series of games. Alike its predecessor, Bloodborne is renowned for being unforgiving. While it is indeed challenging where every mistake is punished, I eventually finished it with ease particularly because I adapted to it early in the opening segments of the game. You could say Bloodborne just 'clicked' with me having found the game callously grotesque but fair. In spite of it all, I feel it should have an "Easy Mode" just as any other game reliant on player skill.

Consider a scenario where a gamer walks into a game shop and gets awestruck by the box art of Bloodborne. Now for argument's sake let's label him as a 'casual' gamer and do note that, just because one is into Call of Duty/Battlefield doesn't necessarily imply that they can't be into Bloodborne's Victorian Gothic premises. Moving on, said casual gamer having bought Bloodborne plays around for half an hour or so before realizing the game is too tough for him and eventually quits. Basically he has been excluded by virtue of savage difficulty and not because of lack of interest, endurance or commitment. 'Get good' or 'keep trying' isn't a plausible instruction as many don't play religiously as others do.

What must be comprehended over here is gamers love video games, however not everyone is a masterful player. You and I might dig Bloodborne's aesthetic as it takes us to a daunting trip of the hunt but do realize that Bloodborne takes advantage of this dichotomy by presenting the player with a punishing miasma of a flamboyant nightmare that

outnumbers and outmatches your insignificant, blood-starved character both in design and in combat. Not everyone has the capacity to endure such a trial and they are denied entry into Yharnam.

So the big question is whether or not From Software should implement an 'Easy Mode' into Bloodborne. Before answering, heed the idea of completing a game is marked differently to the concept of a game concluding. One implies victory and success, while the other connotes denouement. Did I 'beat' Bloodborne or just experienced its closing chapters? If veterans can demand New Game Plus's crushing difficulty, then all the more reason casual gamers have the right to play under an 'Easy Mode'. Speaking personally, reducing the toughness of the gameplay may dilute the overall impact; however introducing an 'Easy Mode' is not a sacrilegious feature. It's an option, not an enforcement. Matter of fact, it invites new players who were previously excluded with an opportunity to interpret its enigmatic lore and foreboding atmosphere which might be missed by hardcore gamers who have no issue dealing with the 'core' difficulty. This is essentially a win-win situation for all.

Lastly, video games are pieces of art and a form of entertainment which is all the more reason not to bar off folks from enjoying any game by not enabling the difficulty to be toned down. Video games should inspire debate and interpretation. Do not do the game you love a disservice as your experience is yours and yours alone. Why deny that for someone else?



PlayStation Neo: The What, Why and How

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If you are planning to get your hands on a PS4, hold off on your plans. Word around the interwebs is that Sony is working on a slightly upgraded version of the PS4 codenamed Neo.

The PlayStation 4.5/Neo is rumored to support 4K gaming. To do so, it will

need an excessive amount of power and if the leaked specs are to be believed, it will be packing a lot of it. The CPU performance is expected to increase by 1.3 times while the GPU will see a performance increase by a whopping 2.3 times. The memory is rumored to have 24% more bandwidth and 512MB of extra usable memory.

The rumor was started by the gaming website Giant Bomb but soon more sources started reporting the same rumor. AMD, the supplier of chips for PS4, has recently stated that they have received orders for customized chips from three different companies which will give the company a significant financial boost. With strong rumors of an

customized chips, the theory that these two events are linked can't, by no means, be laughed away.

The release of PlayStation Neo will not necessarily spell the end of the line for the PS4. Games will come in two versions – the base mode and the Neo mode. The base mode will be in 1080p resolution and will be optimized for the base model of PS4. The Neo mode can be either 1080p or 4K and will feature improvements in terms of frame-rate, graphical quality and image fidelity.

The motives behind releasing a new version of the console within just three years of launch are many. Firstly, the leap in hardware from the last-gen consoles to current-gen ones was never large

enough. With the rise of 4K and VR, the lack of hardware prowess is becoming more and more obvious. Secondly, the concept of releasing multiple consoles within the same

generation is not entirely new. This is usually done to keep the profit margin of the manufacturers a constant. While earlier, the consoles received upgrades only in terms of casing and storage capacity, this time the upgrade seems to be more significant.

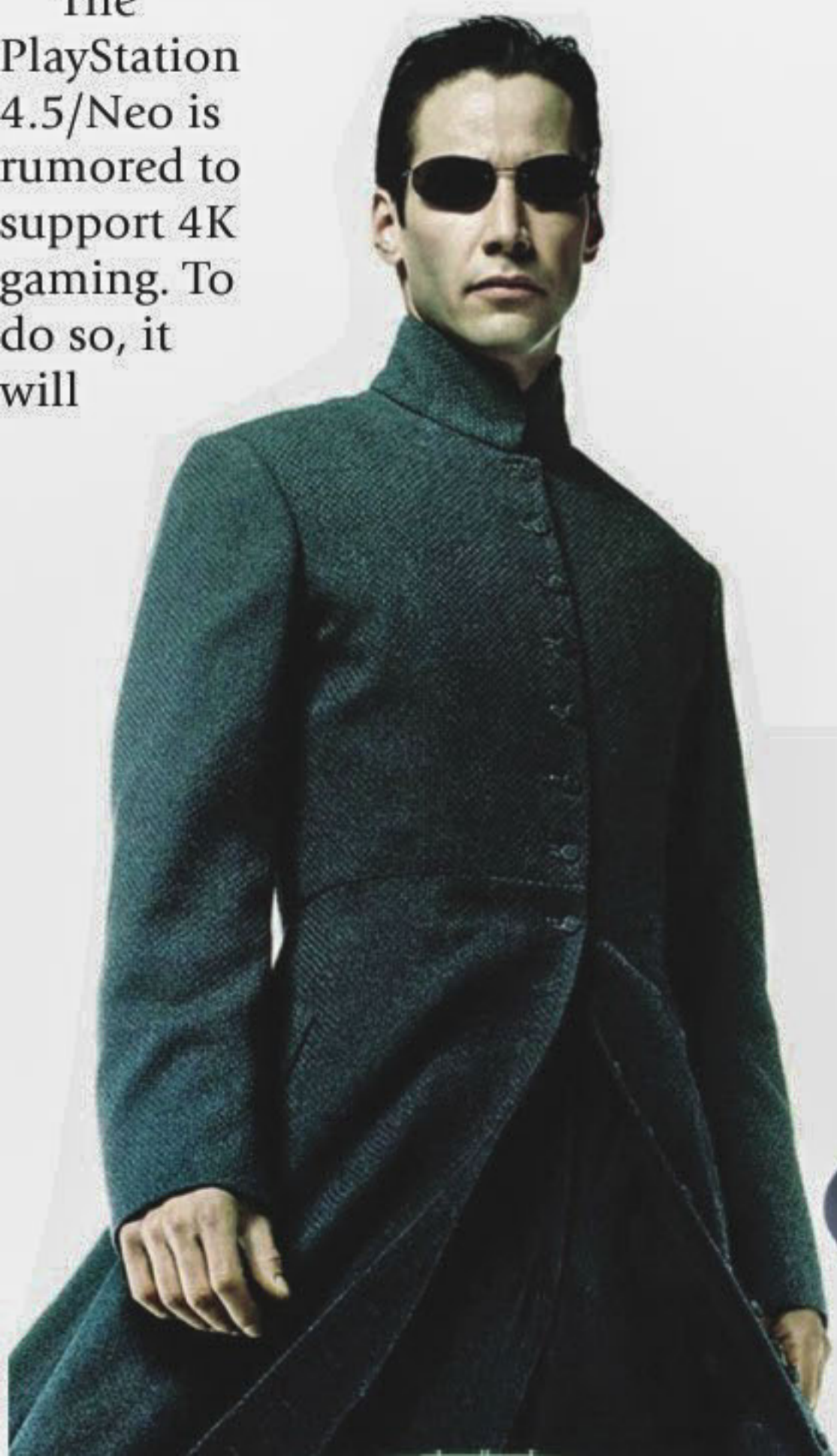
The release of an upgraded PS4 is

likely to cause more trouble than good. Current users, who bought the system just three or even fewer years ago, will find their consoles antiquated and obsolete. Even if they get to play the base mode of future games, there will always be the dissatisfaction of missing out on the Neo mode.

Gamers will not be the only one affected though. Having to develop two modes of the same game will essentially mean increased development time and effort. BioWare co-founder Greg Zeschuk says that the process is "painful". The reason PC games often get poorly optimized ports is because developers have to optimize their games for a large number of hardware setups and they eventually choose to neglect it. With multiple versions of PS4 surfacing on the market, the same amount of "laziness" may also haunt future PS4 titles.

Despite the presence of strong evidence, none of this is still official. The best course of action for gamers is now to wait for an official confirmation/cancellation.

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upgraded PS4 circling around the same time AMD received the orders for producing new