

# The Ever-Increasing Discrepancy between PC and Console

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Over the past few years, the improvements in video game technology have been in very small increments. This is happening because the consoles have already reached their peak way too soon although a lot of people might be in denial about this fact.

Reality check: the 8th Generation of consoles brought with it the weakest performing machines in a long while. Seriously, the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One were both underpowered at launch in comparison to the consoles of the last generation. Neither of them could run graphically demanding titles at 60 fps so they had to resort to setting a framerate cap of 30. A lot of titles couldn't even be run at native 1080p resolution, resorting to 900p and 720p upscaled to 1080p. These include AAA titles like Battlefield 4 and Watch Dogs. It's not that the downgrades are limited to just framerate and resolution either. In most games, muddy textures, clippy shadows, and lacklustre draw distances ruin the experience on consoles.

I played The Witcher 3 on both my PC and PS4. Needless to say, there was a huge discrepancy in the experience between the two platforms. For one, in the PS4, I was limited to 30 fps which dropped to the 20s during action sequences with large numbers of particles and character models. Not only did it hinder my enjoyment of the game at times where it should be shining, it also broke any sense of immersion that I could salvage. The other problem I faced was the streaming of textures and objects at a certain distance away from my character. For example, in the city of Novigrad, a seemingly empty street would sequentially be filled up with stores, citizens and other game assets as I walked forward and the pop-in occurred at very close distance. This was no doubt because of the lack of adequate VRAM on the PS4 which uses a unified memory system for all functions including game assets, running the OS, video recording, etc.

On the PC, it was a totally different experience. High resolution textures, better anti-aliasing, vastly improved draw distance and less pop-in, and of course, 60 frames per second. I was extremely sceptical that the experience could be very different on the PC but I was proven wrong.

Now a lot of gamers might argue that you are paying a much lower price for a similar experience when you are buying a console. However, the price of PC components is not as high as everyone claims it to be. You can get a fairly competent PC at a slightly higher price which will provide you a much better experience. You really don't need a GTX 1080 with a Core i7 7700K and 32 GB of RAM to notice it.

Now why am I going about bashing the

consoles for no reason? Do I hate the platform? Absolutely not. The platform is one of my favourites for couch co-op gaming and I certainly can't take my huge PC to my TV and bring it back on my desk when I'm done gaming. The point I'm trying to get across is that there is a distinct lack of actual competition between different platforms.

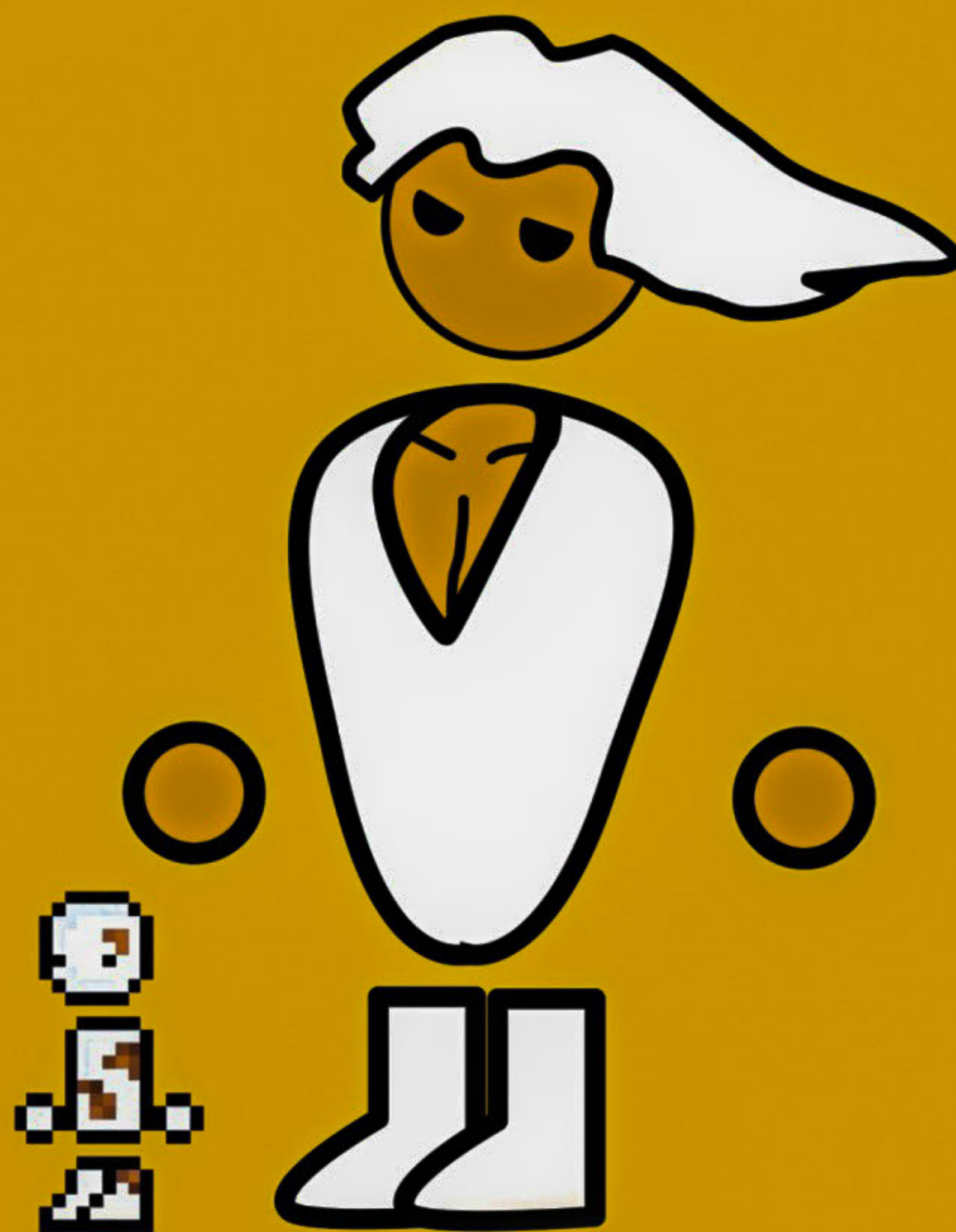
Let me go into why this discrepancy in hardware is bad for gamers in the long run. Remember when the 7th Generation came out? The improvements in graphical fidelity were jaw-dropping. For quite a while, PC actually fell behind the consoles or was barely on par. Revolutionary titles like Uncharted and Gears of War led the way for their respective machines, showcasing the myriad technological improvements that were present in the new hardware.

Compared to this,

that the improvements are all that great. The promised 4K resolution on a majority of the games is upscaled from 1440p. Microsoft has been quite mum on Project Scorpio but I am not expecting anything mind blowing here.

The holding back of progress in terms of both gameplay and graphics is ushering in titles that all play the same. I've seen the same open-world formula being reused in so many games in the past few years that it isn't even funny. Most of the games still use old gameplay mechanics in stark contrast to the past gen.

It's time a lot of consumers understood that price wars are never a good thing for any product in the long run. Manufacturers will keep



as I mentioned, the 8th Generation was underwhelming. This resulted in actual improvements being seen 1-2 years after the launch of the new consoles but by then, the PC platform was already running rings around them. As of now, we've reached a plateau where games all have the same bells and whistles as their predecessors. Any improvement above this, and the legacy versions of the consoles struggled to keep up. The problem has gotten so out of hand that many people are switching over from consoles to PC.

This is what led to Sony and Microsoft coming up with newer, more powerful versions of their consoles. We've seen with the PS4 Pro

cutting costs, removing essential features from their products which has led to the weak consoles of this generation. This sort of mundane monotony is exactly what is detrimental for the enjoyment of gamers. Let's hope the next generation doesn't resort to holding gaming back like this one. Consoles need a drastic shuffling up of their architecture in order to stay relevant in the long run. Or it risks becoming part of the mobile gaming ecosystem in the future.

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