



IS THIS THE LAST GENERATION OF CONSOLES?

ASIF AYON

On March 3, with the release of the Nintendo Switch, we ushered in the 9th generation of console gaming. The console-tablet hybrid has come under fire because of its wonky architecture and barebones UI. Nintendo haven't found the flawless success they were looking for with this machine. And it all boils down to one key issue which had been the bane of the 8th Generation and it's that, consoles are becoming less and less user-friendly.

The perks of console gaming have always been their ease of accessibility and plug and play capabilities. And a loss of this practicality is going to lead to the death of console gaming.

There are two things to take note of when talking about the death of console gaming as we know it, one the casual consumer bias and the other being the interests of the three main manufacturers and where their priorities lie. So let's get into it:

Mass market appeal: Easy as they come.

Let's think about the scenario in Bangladesh. To this day, when comparing between the Xbox 360 and PS3, more people in Bangladesh opt for the Xbox 360.

Looking at the console wars globally, the highest selling console of the 8th Generation is the PS4 and the only differences it has to its competitors are a simple architecture from the get go and a stellar line up of games. The PS3, with its foreign architecture and hefty price tag, did not appeal to consumers and they opted for the simpler, cheaper and more reliable Xbox 360; Sony was quick to catch on to

this and kept the PS4 simple and it has paid off.

On the flipside, while Nintendo appealed to the casual market with the motion control gimmick of the Wii, sales have been hard to come by for Nintendo with the Wii U due to poor marketing strategies and because the console was too weak to compete with its counterparts.

Fearing the demand of the majority.



Just ask yourself, "Why is the Nintendo Switch a console-tablet hybrid?" then look around you and you'll see a lot of Clash of Clan players staring at their phones. Nintendo understands the current demand from gaming and the Switch is their way of offsetting the inevitable demise of consoles.

Let's face it; gaming to the masses is now a means to let off

steam.

More people play games on their smart phones now than they ever did before, and this has affected the demand for home consoles as a whole. Compare the PS2's sales numbers with the PS4's. Sony has pushed triple the number of PS2s than they could with the PS4.

Demands have changed.

The only way for gaming to move forward is to move out of living rooms.

is, Sony sells the PS4 at a lower price than what it takes for them to make it. They did the same with the PS3, a decision which still haunts Ken Kutaragi when he sleeps at night.

Even Nintendo are worth more than Sony and they only make video game hardware and games. Sony doesn't even make their own games but all their profit comes from the games and Sony's PS+ subscription. In fact, for Sony to make a profit on each PS4, they'd have to rely on the fact that the consumer is going to get 2 or more games and a subscription to PlayStation Plus. And with the introduction of the PlayStation Now service, Sony is taking the digital route. The only thing I can see them doing after the PS4 Pro, is concentrating on their PS Now service and linking the PlayStation division with their line of televisions and sort of salvage the PlayStation brand through this format. PS Now has been available for some time now but it's only gotten mixed reviews so far, but with how demands are changing to a more digital and out-of-home experience, it might just turn around.

As for Microsoft, every decision they've taken last year and from the start of this one all points towards them making their own Steam competitor with the introduction of the Xbox Game Pass and with their integration with Windows 10 So essentially Console gaming will move to the clouds and live on digitally and on our cell phones.

Coming back full circle, props to Nintendo for being courageous enough to get the Switch out there and usher in the 9th generation. However I believe it's not too long before we'd have to switch off our beloved consoles and move on to other methods for enjoying video games.

Asif Ayon's favorite color is a particular shade of ash but he tells everyone that his favorite color is blue. The alliteration in his

Nintendo has found a supposed fix in the form of the Switch but with Sony and Microsoft, their demeanor and their goals point towards them bowing out. For Sony, they just cannot hope to sustain themselves with just the PS4. They are a multinational conglomerate corporation running on roughly 17 billion dollars currently and they cannot hope to sustain the production costs of new consoles considering the fact Sony sell all models of the PS4 at a loss. What I mean by that