



Everything We Know About Google Stadia - So Far

Every year the gaming industry gathers in San Francisco for the annual Game Developers Conference, the industry's largest professional event. GDC is mostly focused on learning, networking, and sharing knowledge. Most major announcements such as new console releases or major new intellectual properties are announced at other industry events such as E3.

This year was different, with rumors and teases of an upcoming major announcement from Google. That announcement was the reveal of Project Yeti, Google's streaming games service. Or as it is now known, Google Stadia, a cross-platform game and entertainment service. During their hour-long presentation, Google gave us a glimpse of what Stadia is. Despite that, there's still a lot of misinformation and confusion about Stadia. Google has promised us more Stadia details at a later date. In the meantime, here's a roundup about everything we know about Google Stadia so far.

1. Stadia is a Game Platform for Everyone

Google wants Stadia to be for everyone: players, viewers, and developers. As Google VP and General Manager Phil Harrison said, "This new generation of gaming is not a box."

The hint is in the name. Stadia is a plural of stadiums. It's not just about participating in games, it's about watching and being entertained by them, and sometimes deciding to jump in immediately and play. That's the kind of message Google wants to create around Stadia.

2. Stadia's Tech Specs

Google released some of the technical specs for Stadia:

- Supports desktops, laptops, TVs, tablets, and phones at launch
- Will work with existing USB controllers and mouse and keyboards
- Will also work with the Stadia controller
- 4K 60 fps with HDR and surround sound support
- Will support up to 8K resolution in the future
- Built to scale up
- Linux operating system
- Open graphics API Vulkan
- Unreal and Unity engine support
- Supports many middleware software, including the Havok physics engine

- Developers can develop locally, via the Google Cloud, or via their own developer cloud
- GPU: custom AMD 10.7 teraflops
- CPU: custom x86 processor, 2.77 GHz, hyperthreaded
- Memory: 16 GB ram, up to 484 GB/s transfer speed

3. Stadia means full YouTube integration

Google boasted that over 200 million gamers visit YouTube every day. Stadia aims to take advantage of that. The Stadia controller will include a capture button that will share and save your game experience to YouTube.

Streamers and their audiences will also be able to take advantage of crowd play. Crowd play will allow stream viewers to click a button in the stream to play with the streamer they are watching. They will be placed in a queue, waiting their turn. Google didn't go into further specifics, but they have said that YouTube creators will have full management capabilities for Crowd Play.

4. Google Assistant and State Share

During their keynote, Google also touched on a couple of other features. Google Assistant will be accessible via a button on the Stadia controller. Pressing it will activate the microphone allowing you to ask Google Assistant for help, integrating with YouTube to pull up relevant videos. Stadia aims to eliminate the second screen experience.

State share allows a user to share a playable snapshot of their game and send it to others. This snapshot can include whatever information the developer wants to include, such as inventory data, player location, and more. Game state sharing will allow a player to save their spot inside a game and share it with others via a playable link.

5. Stadia will have First Party Titles

Google announced they have formed Stadia Games and Entertainment, their first-party Stadia initiative. Stadia Games and Entertainment will be led by industry veteran Jade Raymond, who has years of experience serving in leadership roles at Ubisoft and EA. The studio did not announce what projects they were currently working on.

6. The Near Future of Stadia

Google has said they will launch Stadia in 2019, and that we'll get more details on Stadia this summer. Right now we don't know how many games or what titles will be available at launch. We also don't know what the focus will be. Google touted its previous stream testing of Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed Odyssey and mentioned that Doom Eternal, the successor to the 2016 Doom, will be available on Stadia. But we don't know what other developers will have their games at launch, or what the balance between AAA and smaller, indie titles will be like.

They also didn't mention store prices. Will you be able to purchase games or rent them? Will there be a subscription-based game service? Then there's the issue of discovery. How easy will it be to find new games, upcoming releases, or specific genres? How will the store be curated?

Regardless of how Stadia's future will turn out, it's an incredibly interesting and ambitious project. Pulling off a project as massive as Stadia would be difficult for any company, but Google has the resources to expand and outspend others in the space to potentially create something very impressive very quickly.

We'll find out more when Stadia launches this year.

What are your thoughts on Google Stadia? Do you see it as the future of gaming, or an impossible dream? Drop Alpha a line and let us know your impressions.

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