

PlayStation Phone is Real, Say Analysts

By: Peter Pachal

12.09.2010 0 Comments



This week, several technology sites posted videos that purported to show a PlayStation Phone made by [Sony Ericsson](#) — a device that hasn't been officially announced or acknowledged by the company, if it even exists at all. But analysts covering the mobile gaming industry say it almost certainly does.

"This is something that we believe is coming," says Dave Halas, a gaming analyst with the New England Consulting Group, which advises telecom and gaming companies. "We're trying to prepare people we work with for the possibility of this."

Pietro Macchiarella, a gaming analyst for Parks Associates, agrees. "The rumors have been pretty consistent at this point. I think there's definitely some truth in there."

The PlayStation [Phone](#) — also known as the "Zeus Z1" — will likely be released in early 2011, says Halas. Photos and videos that have circulated online, the most recent purporting to show benchmark tests, reveal what looks like an Android-powered smartphone. However, instead of a slide-out QWERTY keyboard, the Sony Ericsson-branded device has controls for gaming.

Game controls might intimidate your average cellphone user, but the PlayStation Phone won't be built for them, says Halas. The whole thrust of such a device will be to go after a part of the cellphone market that no one is serving.

"If you look at the mobile market in the U.S., Ericsson's business used to be much more significant than it is now," he notes. "Now Sony Ericsson, though they do have some smartphone technology, they are smart to understand that they are probably going to want to go for a niche market, and bring better gaming to the mobile phone market."

On top of that, the PlayStation brand is very strong, which might be enough for some shoppers. "There's a loyal customer base," says Macchiarella. "People who will buy it just because it's a PlayStation."

Halas doesn't hold back when he talks about the potential effect a PlayStation Phone could have on mobile gaming. While Apple's iOS devices (iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad) have brought gaming on portable devices to a whole new level, Halas points out that those platforms are catered mainly to casual gaming with titles like "Angry Birds."

"If you think about the vast majority of these gaming apps are made by app producers," he says. "These aren't even the gaming companies. We haven't even begun to leverage what's possible. This is probably the joint venture to do it. This is something that will definitely revolutionize the mobile-gaming market and will create a new plateau for any true players in the industry will have to reach."

When contacted for comment, a rep for Sony Ericsson issued this statement: "We do not have any [information](#) on any products that will be launched in the near of far future that can give assurance that a phone with PlayStation's technology will be released by Sony Ericsson. We have heard many comments from different websites saying that such phone will be out in the market, but we can not say whether this will be an actual phone or not."

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