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PS3 Slim is Sony's Big Chance at Success

When the original PS3 debuted in late 2006, many saw it as the big, bad bully of gaming consoles. In terms of processing power alone, the 3.2GHz PowerPC-case Core cell processor was a monster.



The PS3's large chassis was reminiscent of a large muscle car with a lot of shiny chrome, vents and blowers needed to dissipate the waves of heat generated by the mind-numbing, game-crunching console.

The PS3 Slim, on the other hand, is a study in reductivism and simplification. More like a souped-up roadster, it weighs 4 pounds less, it sheds a lot of the clutter, shine and weight the earlier model had while improving on the essentials.

As a result it is 33% smaller, 36% lighter and consumes 34% less power. The cooling system has also been streamlined and the Cell processor has been efficiently reduced to a 45nm version from the original 60nm powerhouse. It is a greener, kinder, more economical console.



head on with Nintendo's Wii. Analysts believe Sony can **regain its footing in the console and gaming market** by selling more PS3 slims now that they are more affordable and economical.

Slim is In

A more practical console, the PS3 slim doesn't skimp on all the great features that made the first version popular with PlayStation loyalists. Out of the box, the slimmer chassis feels solid and well put together. The Slim is also extremely well mannered, it can fit into any existing home theatre and gaming set-up. It is quiet, and runs cooler.

We put the PS3 Slim through the paces with **Gran Turismo 5 Prologue** and as anyone who has played this game will tell you, the photorealistic supercars, detailed environments and racetracks are rendered with uncanny accuracy at a glorious 60 frames per second.

Despite pounding the PS3 Slim with single player and two player races for over three hours, it remained cool and hummed along nicely. A big departure from the 2006 PS3, which when pushed, kicked in its noisy fans and generated substantial amount of heat.

Sony's PlayStation Store, the online marketplace of the PS3 has added substantial content in the past two years. While not as extensive or as diverse as the functionality offered by Xbox Live marketplace, one can find a host of PSOne games as well as a smattering of video.

Canadian versions of these online services offer less content than their US counterparts. Access to Sony's store is free and included with the PS3 but you do need to pay for the content and the games.

Sony's got game

The PS3 Slim sheds a lot of technologies and features that, through the past two years, were deemed by Sony and its users as non-essential. Gone, for example, is the "Install Other OS" feature that was popular with the homebrew crowd who relished in the fact that the PS3 could run Linux.

PS2 Emulation, a half-hearted feature on the previous model that allowed the playing of a limited number of PlayStation2 games, is also gone; this has been missing from recent non-slim PS3 models. Sony also peeled away two USB ports some time ago. Gone too is the card reader, which was a neat addition to the original PS3 that generated slick slideshows once an SD Card was plugged in.



The larger PS3 also featured touch sensitive controls for powering on and ejecting discs, the touch element has been replaced by real buttons now.

While these were all cool features, they do detract from the PS3's mission, which is to dominate the gaming and entertainment market as well as push the Blu-Ray video standard forward.

Sony did the most logical thing to get back in the game, revise the console, streamline the system and remove unwanted clutter. The next step would be to find a way to offer a diverse selection of compelling games on the platform. The PlayStation Store and online component can also use an overhaul to attract more users.

For those not heavily invested in PS2 games and who have been toying with the idea of owning a PS3 or a even a Blu-Ray player, the PS3 Slim is great value for the money specially if you consider the substantial savings one can get from buying second hand games and used accessories.

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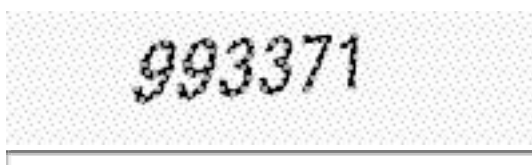
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