

# The five biggest-selling gaming consoles

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A Game Boy handheld video game console manufactured by Nintendo on display at the Francois-Mitterrand National Library of France in Paris.

Since video game consoles first emerged in the early 1970s, hundreds of millions have been sold to players eager to immerse themselves in their favorite franchises, from Assassin's Creed to Zelda.

The five most popular consoles have sold around 700 million units between them.

## **PlayStation 2: 155-160 million**

Japanese tech and entertainment giant Sony sparked a global frenzy with the release of PlayStation 2 in 2000.

A midnight launch in the United States stoked excitement and in some areas people stormed the shops to make sure they got their hands on a unit.

Its initial success was built on its back compatibility—players could still enjoy original PlayStation games—and its ability to play DVDs.

Ironically critics were unimpressed with the initial slate of games for the console.

But a string of hits from franchises including "Grand Theft Auto", "Grand Turismo", "Final Fantasy", "Tekken" and "Metal Gear Solid" helped kick the console into stratospheric popularity.

Former Sony Interactive Entertainment CEO Jim Ryan said earlier this year sales had reached 160 million—though the company's official count has stayed at 155 million.

## **Nintendo DS: 154 million**

The Nintendo DS revolutionized the world of gaming when it hit shelves in 2004 and 2005.



A boy tries out the new PlayStation video game console from Sony at the 10th anniversary of the new generation world hobby fair in Makuhari, Chiba Prefecture 12 June 1999.

Its foldable two-screen design, complete with built-in mic and internet connection, improved on the already incredible 1990s success of the Game Boy.

Its success was built on a solid stable of hit adaptations—Mario, Zelda and Pokemon among them.

But it also became famous for breakout cultural phenomena like

"Animal Crossing" and "Nintendogs"—a real-time pet simulation game where players groomed and virtually walked their dogs.

The Japanese firm said it had sold more than 154 million units.

## **Nintendo Switch: 143 million**

The Nintendo Switch, released in 2017, has a tablet format that allows users to play on a large screen at home or on public transport, helping to turn it into a sensation.

It burnished its success with stellar sales of the latest chapters of the "Zelda" franchise.

And "Animal Crossing: New Horizons"—a game about social interaction—became a global mega-hit after launching in 2020, when much of the world faced some kind of confinement as a result of the COVID pandemic.

The Switch, still the Japanese giant's current premium product, had reached 143.4 million sales by the end of June this year, the firm said.



A young girl tries out a game on a Nintendo DS console.

## **Game Boy: 118 million**

The Game Boy and its 1998 Color spin-off were a cultural phenomenon in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The tiny handheld consoles helped launch some of the world's most recognizable characters.

Pokemon's Pikachu first appeared on the Gameboy in 1996, spawning a globe-conquering franchise of films, series, games and toys.

With hits like "Tetris" and "Super Mario Land", it helped crown Nintendo as a market leader in the 1990s, and eventually recorded more than 118 million sales, according to the firm.

## PlayStation 4: 117 million

While the PlayStation 2 helped kill Sega's Dreamcast at the turn of the millennia, the PlayStation 4 did battle with Microsoft's Xbox series—and won.

Released in 2013, it sold 117 million units, according to the Japanese firm's data from 2022, far outstripping its Microsoft rival.



A visitor tries out the Switch at a Tokyo event after Nintendo unveiled the console in January 2017.



A PlayStation 4 console and its controllers on display in 2013.

Success was secured with well-received additions to popular franchises like "Grand Theft Auto" and "The Last of Us".

Film spin-offs like "Marvel's Spider-Man" and "Star Wars Battlefront" also did solid business.

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