Xbox vs PS5 Usability Test

Which console is more intuitive?

Research Question

Which console is more intuitive / usable?

The goal of this experiment is to compare the Xbox Series X and Playstation 5 consoles to see which is more usable and intuitive in design. This includes hardware and software interfaces, along with some gameplay. Our focus is how easily new players can use various features on each console.

Testing Methodology

Subjects were provided with a list of tasks that would take them across all aspects of the interface of both the consoles. Tasks ranged from something as simple as switching on the console to something a little more difficult like inviting a friend to play games together via the console. Subjects were attached to a heart rate sensor and wore Tobii eye tracking glasses, which were recorded during the experiment.

Referral:

A UX case study on Playstation 5 & Xbox Series X ✌️

Will Huang

Age: 24

Method of recruitment
Kevin Zhan's childhood friend

Background
Biology (pre-med track) going into MS in
Computer Science

Experience with gaming
- Owns a Switch and a non-gaming laptop
- Plays games casually
- some experience with Rocket League using
Keyboard & Mouse
- no experience with Xbox or PlayStation.

Testing
Subject is nearsighted and had to remove glasses, reducing
visibility. Despite this, he managed to complete all tasks
with relative ease and quickness. Subject had trouble
finding the PS5's power button, and found it's behavior
unintuitive with turning off the console. In both Rocket
League sessions the player looked at their car more than
the ball. Subject has little trouble figuring out game
controls despite the difference in configuration.

Thoughts
Subject was of the opinion that the PS5 interface could
only be properly understood with time and use. The Xbox,
however, was more intuitive and easy to use.

Ashmin Akbar

Age: 25

Method of recruitment
Zareen Thomas' roommate. Met her through another roommate before coming to Boston.

Background
Did her undergraduate in Pharm D

Experience with gaming
- Very little experience
- Occasionally plays online games on her laptop

Testing
Subject couldn't find the power button on the PS5. Struggled with other basic tasks and grew frustrated as she couldn't comprehend the controller layout. Researchers had to step in multiple times to guide her when she got stuck. Once the subject started playing Astro's Playroom and the tutorial guided her on the functions of all the buttons; she started enjoying the experience a lot more. Subject took 23 minutes to get through the task list.

Thoughts
Subject found the PS5 to be a completely new experience. Initially found it onerous to get a hang of the controls but with time found it easier to navigate.

Rajat Krishna

Age: 23

Method of recruitment
Zareen Thomas' friend and roommate. Met him last year through her cousin.

Background
Did his undergraduate in computer science engineering

Experience with gaming
- Some experience
- Plays FIFA on his laptop
- Has played on the PS4 a couple of times
- Has no experience with Xbox

Testing
Subject took a few minutes to orient himself with the controls and proceeded to breeze through the task list. Found it easy to navigate both console UIs. Needed no help from researchers. Subject finished the task list in 23 minutes.

Thoughts
Subject thought both consoles had intuitive UI; found it easy to sign in and just start playing games. On the contrary; he thought the other features like social networking, profile management etc. were harder to figure out and did not provide as consistent of an experience as can be found on PC or mobile phones.

Elio Issa

Age: 21

Method of recruitment
Nabil Oueida's friend. They met through Nabil's family friend and are currently roommates

Background
Did his undergraduate in Finance.

Experience with gaming
- owned a PS3 and a Wii
- Mainly USED to play FPS, racing, sports
- no experience with consoles past PS3.
- No experience with Xbox and other consoles.

Testing
Subject took a few minutes to orient himself with the controls and proceeded to breeze through the task list. Found it easy to navigate both console UIs. Needed no help from researchers. Subject finished the task list in 18 minutes.

Notes:
- 4 Min Faster on PS5
- Has been exposed to PS5 for 2 weeks

Thoughts
Subject found the PS5 interface to be much more interactive and straightforward as compared to the Xbox's. He found the Xbox UI to be much more complicated and took time to adjust to it's layout.

David Amado

Age: 28

Method of recruitment
Nabil Oueida's friend. David was a senior when Nabil was a freshman at Syracuse University. They met through a mutual friend and stayed connected even after David graduated.

Background
Did his undergraduate in IT, currently works as an IT Consultant in Boston.

Experience with gaming
- Has good experience with gaming consoles
- Can navigate without problems.
- He owned Xbox consoles mostly and currently owns a Switch.
- On the lookout for a next gen console.

Testing
Subject took no time to orient himself with the controls and proceeded to breeze through the task list. Found it easy to navigate both console UIs. Needed no help from researchers. Subject finished the task list in around 15 minutes per console.

Thoughts

Xbox Series X Notes: David

Xbox Series X:

Was able to navigate everything, his line sight was never scribbling around the screen and was rather more focused near the middle and the left side thanks to the user menu. The eyesight was dotted and precise.

Stuff to Point out:

David shows a kind of muscle memory related to how he handles and navigates the screens, sort of jumping from label to label and clicking The A button upon reading the label that would lead him where he needs.

Maybe this is due to his past experience with Xbox User Interface.The experience really shows.

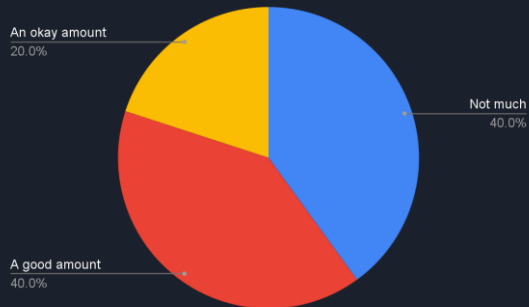# PS5 Notes: David

PlayStation 5:

Notes:

- User menu not really overly used even though emphasized for a lot of quick functionality, David ended up taking longer paths to complete some tasks instead of the optimal path due mayb to lack of knowledge or lack of emphasis from the icons maybe or lack of experience.
- interactive menus worked at guiding David and helping him complete the tasks.
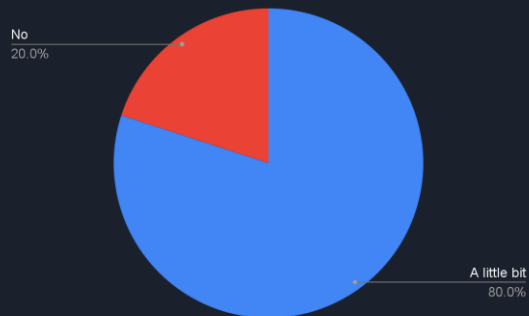- Everything else was pretty straight forward.

PS5
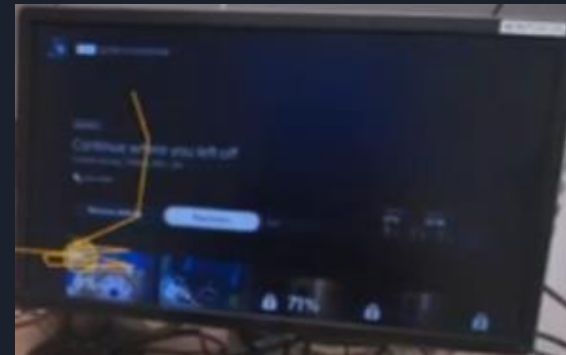
Xbox

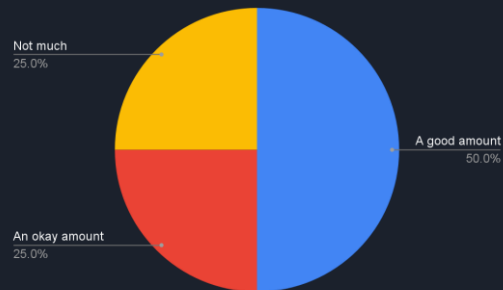For PS5, was the number of actions needed to finish some tasks too many?

An okay amount
20.0%

Not much
40.0%

A good amount
40.0%

For Xbox, was the number of actions needed to finish some tasks too many?

Not much
25.0%

A good amount
50.0%

An okay amount
25.0%

For PS5, did you feel like you had to go through too many screens to get to certain points in the UI?

No
20.0%

A little bit
80.0%

For Xbox, did you feel like you had to go through too many screens to get to certain points in the UI?

Yes
25.0%

No
25.0%

A little bit
50.0%

PS5

Xbox

Did you feel like the interface was consistent throughout your experience?

Mixed
20.0%

Yes it was
80.0%

Did you feel like the interface was consistent throughout your experience?

No it was not.
25.0%

Yes it was
50.0%

Mixed
25.0%

Do you feel like you had to process a lot of information on some screens?

Yes
20.0%

A little bit
20.0%

No
60.0%

Do you feel like you had to process a lot of information on some screens?

Yes
25.0%

A little bit
25.0%

No
50.0%
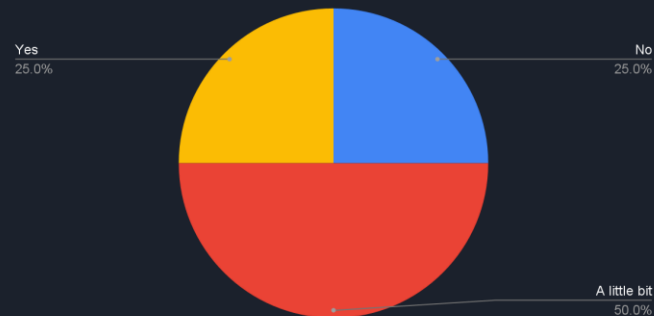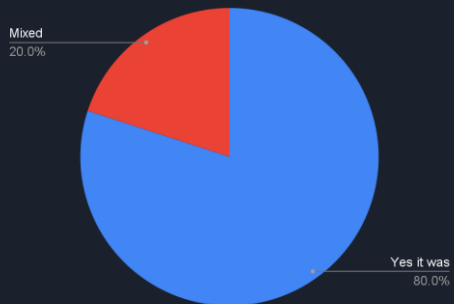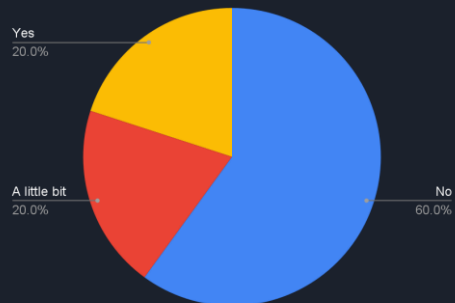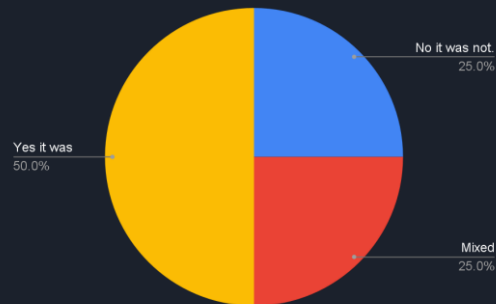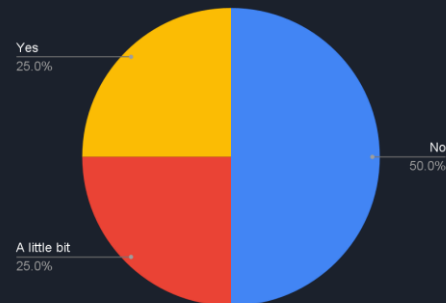
Overall Analysis

Xbox is more conventional / intuitive
- Users figured out where to go quickly
- Little confusion of functionality
- Ex: Power button is easy to find, behaves as expected

Playstation is less intuitive, more efficient
- Users often took longer / less ideal paths
- Skipped useful shortcuts like the PS button
- Resulting in less efficient usage than possible
- Innovative but needs time to learn
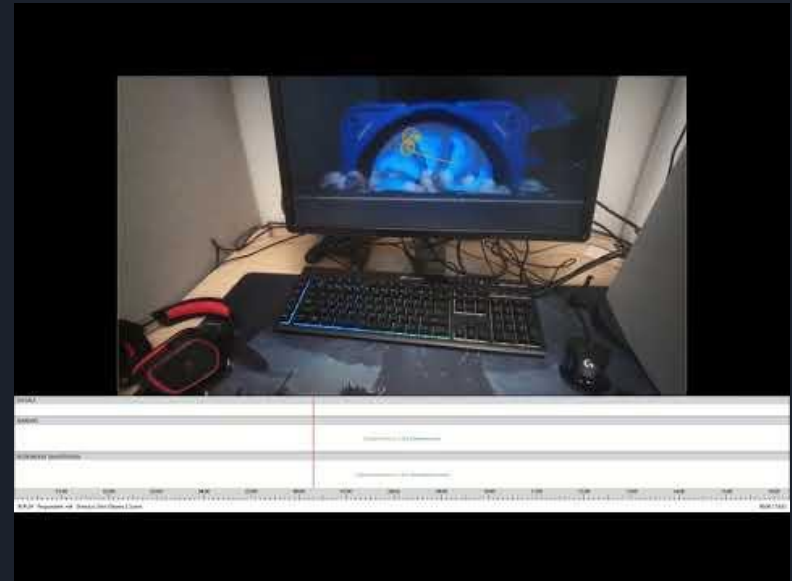
Relation to Literature

[A UX case study on Playstation 5 & Xbox Series X](#) ✌️
Found in lit review:

- On average, the PS5 requires 29.8% more input than the Xbox to complete a comparative task.
- the PlayStation wasn't just slightly more awkward at some tasks but required more effort for most tasks.
- On average, completing tasks on the Xbox require 19% more 'significant screen changes.
- 1% Difference in Possible Actions in Views

Hypothesis Drawn From Literature Review that were proven:

- The Xbox requires less input because its menus are more efficient. It's configured in a way that makes everyday tasks easier to do than the PlayStation 5.
- Both the PlayStation and Xbox lack empathetic design or any real onboarding, and they make hundreds of obvious UX mistakes.
- Most software we use daily will be better than either console.
- Muscle Memory in User Interface amongst older players is real, which may be kept in mind during the design stage.

Usability Conclusions

Sometimes the most efficient way isn't the most intuitive

- Intuitive and conventional design makes the Xbox easier to pick up
- The PS5 takes more time to learn is but is faster for experienced users

Which is Better?

- Depends on use case and audience
- Given the results from our last project, this makes sense
    - Sony is more focused on long time fans
    - Xbox is more open and accessible

Thoughts?