



Home™ Development Q&A

Wed 7th March 2007

General Features

Q: What is Home™?

Home™ is a real-time 3D, networked community that serves as a meeting place for PLAYSTATION®3 (PS3™) users from around the world, where they can interact, communicate, join online games, shop, share content and even build and show off their own personal spaces. Home will be available as a free download from the PLAYSTATION®Store and will launch directly from the PS3 XMB™ (XrossMediaBar).

Q: What is the target demographic of Home users?

Home is for everybody. It is a global platform and the aim is to populate it with a broad and rich content experience, the diversity of which will create a broad and diverse community of users.

Q: How do consumers use it?

For the user, Home is a new experience in social networking. It's a way to meet new friends online, or hang out with old friends and family. It's also a rich media experience outside of the fundamental game-based activities on PS3. It will reside on the XMB between Game and Network.

Q: What features does it have?

Communication between users, creation and customisation of your own personal avatar, creation and customisation of your own personal space. Ability to share media with friends, and to experience media from publishers. Users will be able to benefit from game matchmaking, search facilities, seamless transition between game and Home.

Q: What is the timeline for rollout?

Closed Beta (appx. 15,000 users): April - August
Open Beta (appx. 50,000 users): August - October
Service Live (50,000+): October

Q: What is the function of the Central Lounge?

The lobby is the central meeting place where you can meet new friends or arrange to meet old friends, before transferring to a private meeting place.

The current maximum of concurrent users in a lobby is 64. But a multitude of lobbies can be active at any time to accommodate all users.

Q: What other lobbies will exist within Home?

Over time Home will expand to include many different locations. It is our intention that ultimately anyone can create a Home Space, be they a publisher, a developer or a Non-game Company.

Q: What is the Hall of Fame?

The trophy room is a Home Space where users are able to display their gaming accomplishments.

Q: How do I win Trophies?

Players will be able to win Home Trophies when they play games that support the Home Trophy system. publishers and developers will be able to support Trophies by building them into their games' architecture. Further information on how to develop trophies within games will be available soon.

Q: What content will users be able to purchase from within Home?

Over time the range of content available to users will expand dramatically. If you consider Home to be a simulacra of the real world then most goods and services found within the real world could theoretically be replicated within Home. Initially all commercial transaction will be via the PLAYSTATION®Network (PSN) Store. Eventually users will be able to transact within the Home environment.

Q: Will I be able to attend ticketed (paid-for) special events?

Yes, in time Home will play host to many types of event. Bespoke events such as exclusive game previews and developer interviews will be organised by Home and its affiliated content providers. Live events such as sports and concerts may also be broadcast within Home.

Q: Can Home users win non-purchased prizes and items?

Yes, it will be possible to give prizes to users.

Q: Will all billing have to be via Sony Wallet?

Yes, all transactions will use the Sony Wallet system within the PSN Store, although ultimately transactions will be possible without leaving Home.

Q: Can users share their favourite bookmarked Home Spaces with one another?

Currently there isn't a way to do this, but this is a feature that we'd like to implement in the future.

Q: When can users have / manage their own spaces?

Every user has a private apartment space that users can modify and change over time. The basic apartment is free and will offer users lots of options for customization and personalization. In the future we will provide tools that will enable users to have an even greater ability to create their own Home spaces and content.

Commerce & Partnerships

Q: Is Home a commercial environment?

Home is primarily a platform for social interaction and the intention is not to create a space for purely conducting ecommerce. Home prioritises community and entertainment over ecommerce. That said, we believe that there will be ample opportunities for businesses and individuals alike to generate significant revenues from the Home platform.

Q: When can I start to develop for Home?

You can register your interest to develop for the Home platform immediately at <http://home.scedev.net>

Q: Who should I contact about developing for Home?

If you are an existing licence holder you should channel requests for information through your existing 3rd Party Account Manager. If you do not have a license agreement, please visit <http://home.scedev.net> where you will find more information and an application to register your interest.

Q: I don't have an existing PlayStation® licence agreement – how can get involved in developing content for Home?

See above.

Q: I'm an IP / content holder / aggregator – how can I get involved in Home?

See above.

Q: How soon can publishers and developers have and manage their own spaces?

We would like to engage with interested publishers and developers immediately. If you are an existing licence holder you should channel requests for information through your existing 3rd Party Account Manager. If you do not have a licence agreement, please visit <http://home.scedev.net> where you will find more information and an application to register your interest.

Q: When can IP holders have / manage their own Home Spaces?

We would like to engage with interested IP and content rights holders immediately. If you are an interested non-games company or IP holder, please register your interest with us at <http://home.scedev.net> . An appropriate representative will follow up your enquiry.

Q: What support will SCE give to 3rd Parties?

Support to publishers and developers with existing licence agreements will be provided by the Third Party Relations groups within each region. If you are a non-game content provider or do not have a license agreement, please visit <http://home.scedev.net> where you will find more information and an application to register your interest.

Q: Who should our developers call for support?

Registered developers should request information through their existing support relationships. Information will be available on <http://home.scedev.net>

Q: Who will run Home?

SCE has created a Home Platform Group that will provide the technology, strategic direction and support to each of the SCE regional headquarters.

Q: Home looks so great – how do publishers ensure that users continue to play their games rather than spending all their time in Home?

There is a huge scope for publishers and developers to promote their current and future IPs - as well as exploiting their back-catalogue. For example, it will be possible to develop small demo-areas within Home that promote new titles, or to re-publish an old IP as mini-game within their Home Space.

Q: Is Home just a platform for SCE-published games?

Absolutely not. Home will not be a success without broad support and adoption by our Publishing and Development partners and indeed from non-game companies and services.

Q: Is Home a PS3 specific service? Will users be able to access Home through other devices?

Initially Home will only be accessible via that PLAYSTATION®3, although over time our intention is to enable users to interface certain Home features and services via other networked devices such as PlayStation®Portable (PSP®) and mobile phones.

Q: Can I launch and watch a BD movie from within Home?

Launch, yes. Watch, no. (This means you would leave Home to watch the BD™.)

Q: What is the business model?

The proposed business model for Home is still under review and we'll announce the details in due course.

Q: How will publishers make money from it?

Initially we predict that the primary areas for generating revenues will come from the following areas:

- Content purchases (e.g. avatar clothing and accessories)
- Advertising
- Content Auctions

Q: What will be the upfront investment and development costs be for me as a Home content provider?

The tools and technology required to build and maintain a presence on the Home Platform are being designed to enable fast and efficient development, and use industry-standard processes and techniques. The resources required are surprisingly low and entirely scaleable.

Q: How will businesses be able to promote their products?

The possibilities for promotion and advertising of products and services within Home Spaces are virtually limitless. Given the initial broad set of functions and features the possibilities are limited only by creative vision. As the native features of Home will be continually growing, the creative possibilities will grow also. The Home Platform Team will also take feature requests to support our partners in their creative endeavours.

Q: Will we be able to sell products (other than Home assets) online?

Eventually Home will not only support the merchandising of virtual assets, but also will provide cross-promotional opportunities for selling physical goods online.

Q: Could publishers sell tutorials to their games through Home?

Yes, the commercial services and features that publishers and developers will be able to support is extremely broad. Further discussion of specific content ideas that you may have, please consult with your 3rd Party Account Manager or register your interest in the Home platform at <http://home.scedev.net>

Q: What tools will be available for creating content, and when will they be available?

The Home Platform Group will be providing a roadmap for the deployment and content of Home Tools. Over time the Tools package will develop into a comprehensive set of enabling technologies that we can provide to our partners to assist them with their Home Platform content creation.

Q: Can we reserve a number of seats for the closed & open betas?

Yes, please liaise with your 3rd Party Account Manager and request the number of seats that your company requires. If you do not have a TMLA, please register your interest at <http://home.scedev.net> and an appropriate Home Platform representative will contact you shortly.

Q: Will it be possible to have territory based promotions for regional content?

Yes, although Home is a global platform there are regional Home Spaces that users within each regional area will access by default (based upon their registration details). There is no restriction on where a user can go from their default starting location (other than any content age restrictions). Because there are regional Home spaces, each region will operate its own promotional events and activities.

Technical & Extended Features

Q: How large is the download?

We're aiming for the initial download to be under 500MB. Subsequent downloads will hopefully integrate a streaming method that makes them negligible.

Q: How do users find friends and spaces within Home?

There is an integrated PSN Friends list, and search functionality for spaces.

Q: How many friends can I have?

As many as the PSN friends list allows, which is currently 50.

Q: Will I be able to trade items that I have bought or won with other Home users?

Ultimately, an auction service will be implemented that will allow users to sell their Home assets and user-created content to other users.

Q: How often will the content in Home change?

Ultimately content in Home will be updated weekly. All the participants in Home (the service itself, 1st Party and 3rd Party publishers, non-game brands and ultimately users themselves) will be creating new content, so the flow of new features will be will on a weekly basis.

Q: Can I create new items and content for Home myself?

This functionality is in the works for future release. We see user created content as a very important element of Home's ongoing success.

Q: How will users transact within Home?

During the Beta period, there will be no purchases within Home. Subsequently, commercial transactions will take place within Home.

Q: Can you enter, say, MotorStorm™ quickly through Home without having to travel to the specific MotorStorm™ lobby?

Currently, users can find each other in Home, and then arrange to go off and play MotorStorm™ at the same time. Eventually, users will be able to meet in Home and seamlessly launch into a game of MotorStorm™. Similarly, users will be able to exit to Home directly from the game.

Q: How often is incremental content being created for Home?

Content for Home will be developed continually. In addition to an ever increasing variety of items to customize avatars and Home Spaces, there will be special events such as Halloween and Christmas where special content will be available for a limited time.

Q: Will consumers be bombarded with advertising?

Advertising is a core revenue source for the publishers who will have to put a lot of resource and money into making the Home experience as fulfilling as it will be. As an offset to having to pay for the basic online service, and being able to enjoy the fundamental Home experience for free, some advertising is entirely reasonable. Advertising will be kept to palatable levels however. It is in no-one's interests to cause users to leave Home through excessive advertising.

Q: How will I protect my kids from seeing things they shouldn't?

Parental controls are available through PS3 and the PLAYSTATION Network. We encourage parents to take an active role in participating any time a child has access to an open communication network, such as the internet.

Q: How will age restrictions be applied?

Home employs the same age restriction policies as the PS3 system software and the PLAYSTATION Network.

Q: What's the development overhead?

Minimal. In the extreme, an application (say a mini-game) could be written in C++ as normal, and then a thin Home layer added to implement that application within Home.

Q: How quick and easy will it be to develop for?

Home will allow developers to use their own assets and code for applications, and export those assets into a Home wrapper, which will allow the minimum of bespoke work. The tools that will be available serve to provide that wrapper, they do not require developers to work to particular specifications or packages.

Q: Will developers be able to run existing code applications within Home?

Given that any application would have to fit within the available resources while running Home, and certain TRCs will need to be satisfied, yes.

Q: Will there be additional TRCs for games plugging into Home? When will these TRCs be released?

There will have to be base TRCs for Trophies and Matchmaking before the service hits the XMB™. Others will come online as they are needed.

Q: Will there be additional TRCs for Home game trophies? When will these TRCs be released?

See above.

Q: In terms of user's names are they exclusive and different from their network ID. E.g. PSN account = PeterE / Home name = Tarzan123?

Your Home user name will be the same as your PSN account ID.

Q: Can I log on to Home in addition to someone else from one PS3? E.g. at my friends and I want to log on...

This is technically quite an advanced problem. It effectively means logging in to two PSN accounts at the same time from one machine, which makes it unlikely.

Q: How will I navigate between spaces?

Within Home you can travel instantly (i.e. through the world map), or at your own pace on foot.

Q: How will the age restrictions work? Will I be able to see different content in the generic lobby depending on my age?

Home employs the same age restriction policies as the PS3 system software and the PLAYSTATION Network. These age restrictions will apply to both the areas that users are admitted to and the content that they are able to view.

Q: When I jump back from a game into Home, will I return with the same people next to me? Will I return to a default location?

Upon returning to Home, you will land in the same place which was your last position before you left (for instance, if you left Home from your apartment, that is where you will return to.) However, given that Home is an online world, other users will doubtless have moved on while you are off doing something else (unless you've specifically asked them to wait for you.) Currently Home is not a persistent world, so when you leave Home, all of your possessions go with you. For instance, it is not currently possible for other users to visit your apartment while you're not there. We are working on the persistent aspect of Home, and expect to implement it in the long term.

Q: Can I get media for my apartment from other devices such as PC?

Not yet; we are working on enabling this feature which is contingent upon firmware functionality.

Q: Would we be able to showcase bespoke events such a live broadcast of a multiplayer game?

Absolutely - it would even be possible to replicate a game that is being played by two players together on one PS3, replicating their avatars and movements on the "world stage". This could be an invitational match, with users paying to view the event live.

Q: How will the DRM of purchased items work?

Home 's DRM system is based on the entitlements system which will be offered by the PSN.

Q: Will I be able to give a purchased / earned item to another user?

Not yet; however it is a feature which is planned.

Q. How will sharing media work within the private space? Will users be able to distribute content?

Users will not be able to broadcast their media to people outside their private space, but they will be able to show their own media to invited guests. We have deliberately chosen not to allow users to 'give' media to other users as this opens up serious risks of piracy and sharing of illegal content.

Q: How many lobby instances can be run?

This is down to the server infrastructure, and in theory is entirely scalable.

Q: How will the lobbies be regionalised? Would it be possible to have bespoke, selectable backgrounds for each regional lobby, e.g. Paris / London / Rome etc?

It is highly likely that the European, US and Japanese lobbies will be localised, but it is undecided as to whether individual lobbies within Europe will be.

Q: Could the global Hall of Fame be filtered by region?

This is possible, and also it is possible to have different levels of Halls of Fame - Junior league, Newbie league etc

Policy

Q: What is the policy on acceptable behaviour?

Within our public spaces, Home follows the same rules and guidelines as the PLAYSTATION Network with regard to age stipulations and acceptable behaviour. Home uses all the same age controls as the PS3 system software. Within users' own private spaces, we take the view that what people get up to in their own apartment is their own business, within reason.

Q: Will there be a restriction to the age you'll be able to give your avatar?

Yes. We will not have avatars which resemble children. The avatars are adult in appearance.

Q: Will users be able to make complaints about other users?

Of course. We will operate a system of logging complaints with our moderators, which will then be investigated. If necessary we are able to take away a user's login rights and ban them from the service.

Q: How much control will we have over what people get up to in their private spaces?

As stated before, our policy is that what people get up to in their own private spaces is up to them, and a user cannot be invited to another user's private space until they have accepted an invitation to be on their buddy list. However, the complaints process will still operate in these private spaces, so if people feel that they have been subjected to inappropriate behaviour while in someone's private space, they will be able to lodge a complaint by the usual process.

Q: What moderation is used in the system for vulgar / abusive language?

We will have a basic text profanity filter.

Q: Will users be able to sell things to each other?

Ultimately, an auction service will be implemented that will allow users to sell their Home assets and user-created content to other users.

Q: Can I earn money in Home?

As noted above, there will be eventually opportunities for user-to-user auctions.

Q: Will retailers (e.g. GAME) be able to have a presence in Home?

Yes. Retailers can create their own lobbies and deploy these for commercial operations.

Q: Can we use advertising within it?

Advertising will be a big part of Home. At first adverts will be fed through the Home advertising servers, but ultimately we may allow 3rd parties to integrate

their own advertising engines into the service. Dynamic advertising will also be implemented, allowing us to direct specific targeted ads at particular users.

Q: Are all games required to have trophies available for Home?

No, it's up to each game to do what they want. But we see a huge consumer appeal for games that support the trophy system.

Q: If a game does offer trophies, what is the maximum / minimum number of trophies required?

This is undecided, currently. We would like to feel this out during the beta period. Our inclination is to encourage a relatively small number of high value trophies.

About SCEI

Recognized as the global leader and company responsible for the progression of consumer-based computer entertainment, Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. (SCEI) manufactures, distributes and markets the PlayStation® game console, the PlayStation®2 computer entertainment system, the PSP® (PlayStation®Portable) handheld entertainment system and the upcoming, much-anticipated PLAYSTATION®3 (PS3™) system. PlayStation® has revolutionized Home entertainment by introducing advanced 3D graphic processing, and PlayStation®2 further enhances the PlayStation® legacy as the core of Home networked entertainment. PSP® is a new handheld entertainment system that allows users to enjoy 3D games, with high-quality full-motion video, and high-fidelity stereo audio. PS3™ is an advanced computer system, incorporating the state-of-the-art Cell processor with super computer like power. SCEI, along with its subsidiary divisions Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc., Sony Computer Entertainment Europe Ltd., and Sony Computer Entertainment Korea Inc. develops, publishes, markets and distributes software, and manages the third party licensing programs for these platforms in the respective markets worldwide. Headquartered in Tokyo, Japan, Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. is an independent business unit of the Sony Group.

“PlayStation”, “PLAYSTATION”, “PSP”, “PS3” and “XMB” are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. “MotorStorm” and the “Home icons” are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe. “Blu-ray Disc” and “BD” are trademarks. All rights reserved.