

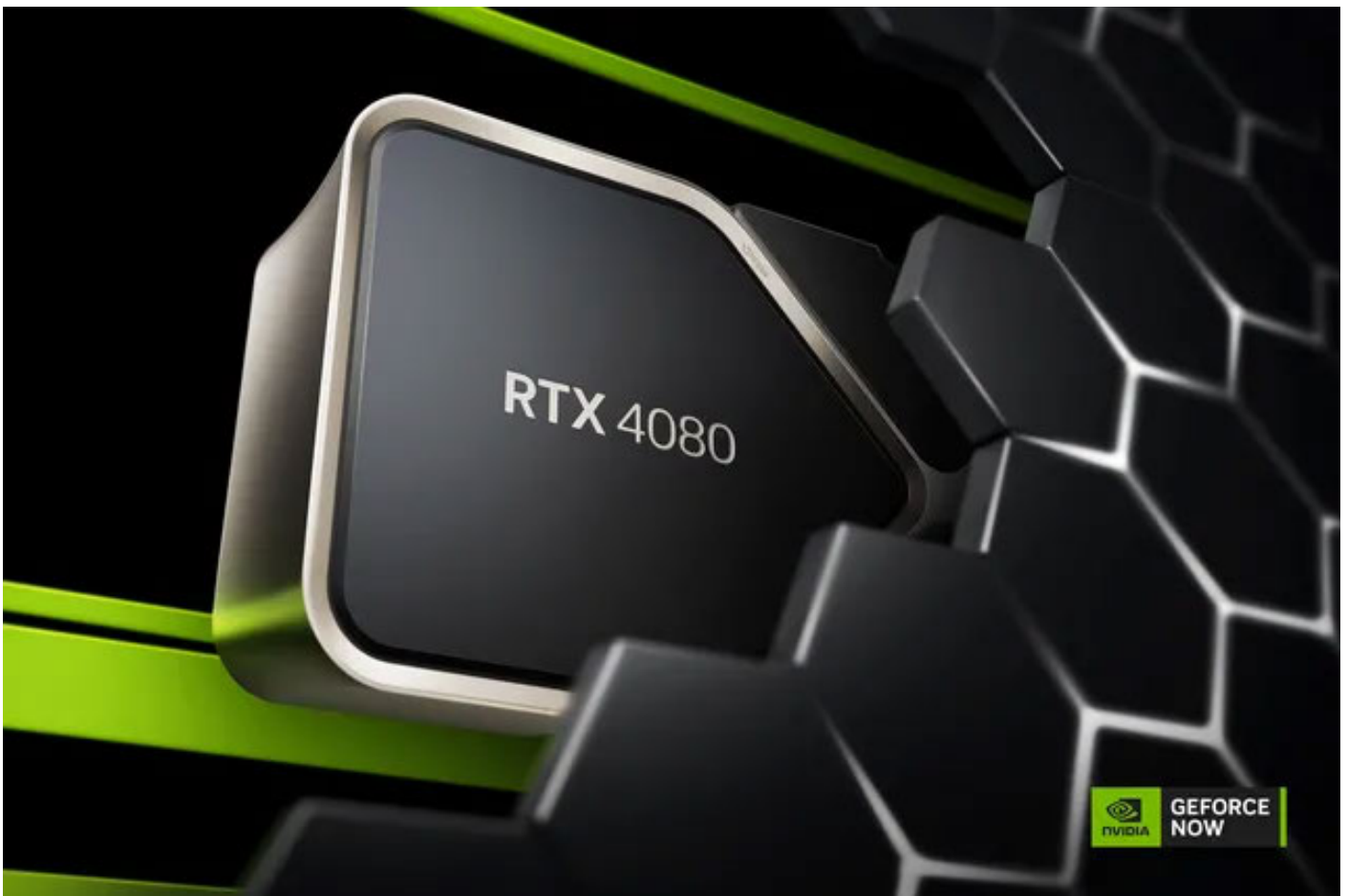
NVIDIA / TECH / MICROSOFT

How Microsoft's Nvidia deal works for gamers – with or without Activision / Nvidia VP Phil Eisler thinks it could break the cloud gaming 'chicken-and-egg' cycle.

By [Sean Hollister](#), a senior editor and founding member of The Verge who covers gadgets, games, and toys. He spent 15 years editing the likes of CNET, Gizmodo, and Engadget.

Feb 21, 2023, 1:02 PM PST

[7 Comments](#) / [7 New](#)



An artistic representation of GeForce Now cloud gaming. Image: Nvidia

Microsoft is trying to convince the entire world that it should be allowed to buy Activision Blizzard for \$69 billion — and it just bartered for Nvidia's support,

signing a 10-year contract that gives Nvidia the right to stream Xbox PC games over its GeForce Now cloud gaming subscription service.

[Related /](#)

- **Microsoft recruited Nintendo and Nvidia to help fight Sony over the Activision deal**
- **Microsoft is bringing Xbox PC games to Nvidia's GeForce Now service**

What does that mean for gamers like you and me? Well, I just got off the phone with Nvidia GeForce Now VP Phil Eisler, who gave me both a big-picture answer and the shorter-term practical details to go with it.

Big picture, Eisler thinks this deal could finally break the cloud gaming “chicken-and-egg” cycle — providing enough games to attract enough gamers to convince publishers to provide more games, too.

That's because this deal isn't just for *Halo* or *Forza Motorsport*, he tells me; it also covers the Bethesda games like *Fallout* and *The Elder Scrolls*. *Minecraft* is coming to GeForce Now, he confirms. And if the Activision Blizzard deal goes through, it won't just be *Call of Duty* on GeForce Now; it'll be the entire Battle.net catalog — including *Overwatch* and presumably *StarCraft*, *Warcraft*, and *Diablo*.

Optimally, you shouldn't have to wait for future Microsoft-owned games to appear in GeForce Now, either. “The agreement is to release new titles day-and-date or as close to day-and-date as we can with the PC release of the games,” Eisler says. (The rights are tied to the PC versions of games, not the Xbox console versions, he explains later.)

You might be able to stream Xbox PC games on launch day

Even though Microsoft has its own Xbox Cloud Gaming service, GeForce Now may soon become *the* place to play Xbox games that live in the cloud. Right now, GeForce Now is a little north of 1,500 titles, a tiny fraction of the tens of thousands

you'd find on the Steam platform, but he's hoping that could change following a deal of this magnitude.

And though Microsoft, Activision Blizzard, and Bethesda were among the first companies to pull their games from GeForce Now back in 2020, that shouldn't happen again under the terms of this agreement. "Once we onboard them, we'll have the rights to them for 10 years," says Eisler. (If Microsoft later decides to sell off studios, though, he's not sure the agreement would bind future owners.)

Sound neat? Just remember that we're just talking about *streaming rights* for games that you've already purchased and games that are free to play — and even then, you shouldn't expect to have access to every Microsoft game right away.

GeForce Now doesn't sell games. Unless they're free to play, you have to buy them from Steam, the Epic Games Store, and / or the Microsoft Store for now — and possibly Battle.net in the future should the Activision Blizzard deal go through. "That's how GeForce Now works," he says. "We can stream them to authorized owners."

Related /

- **Xbox boss says Microsoft's Bethesda deal was all about exclusive games for Game Pass**
- **Hands-on: Nvidia's GeForce Now just leapfrogged Google Stadia**
- **Testing Nvidia's GeForce Now RTX 4080, the most advanced cloud gaming platform yet**

Practically speaking, Nvidia plans to roll out just a few games a week, says Eisler. The company doesn't have the capacity to do more than maybe 10 games per week at present, he suggests. While Nvidia plans to make the first Microsoft games available in the next few weeks from Steam and the Epic Games Store, he estimates it'll take between six and 12 months to enable the Microsoft Store catalog and enable all existing games.

That's just an estimate, by the way. Eisler says the deal came together just last week, and the companies "haven't worked on detailed implementation plans yet."

The big question in my mind: if I have the rights to play a game because I subscribe to Xbox Game Pass, will I be able to play those games on GeForce Now? Will

Microsoft make me buy the game all over again? Eisler won't say. "We have no announcement about Game Pass right now."

When I ask him yes or no — "does the contract give you the rights or not?" — he says simply: "I can't answer that question."

It wouldn't be surprising if Game Pass is entirely separate: in 2021, Microsoft gaming boss Phil Spencer made it clear that studio acquisitions like Bethesda were about securing exclusive games for Game Pass.

But it also wouldn't surprise me if Microsoft did agree to let Game Pass subscribers play those games on GeForce Now. If Microsoft's already getting its money, why not let Nvidia shoulder the server costs? I suppose it depends how much Microsoft cares about its own cloud gaming future. The vision I laid out in this editorial doesn't come true unless Xbox and Xbox Cloud Gaming become one seamless whole.

 7 COMMENTS (7 NEW)

More from [Tech](#)

Reddit says it won't overrule mods and force subreddits back open