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Human Needs & Motivations



PlayStation Remote Play

3.6★
92.2K reviews

10M+
Downloads

E
Everyone

This application created by Sony allows PS4 and PS5 owners stream their favorite game to any phone, tablet, laptop or desktop.

You can pause the game you're playing, walk away and pick up any of your other devices, connect to your PlayStation and continue playing (provided the WIFI or data support)! The users will be able to either use the on screen controls (which follow PS's iconic button layout as much as possible) or connect their PS4 or PS5 controller to their device and access their game library for countless hours of entertainment.

"STAY IN THE GAME AWAY FROM HOME"

playstation.com



PS4 home screen of PS Remote Play





User Persona



MEET OUR USER

-  Jason (he/ Him)
-  Security worker
-  In a relationship
-  North America
-  Late 20's
-  No children

PERSONA STORY

Because of his job which only requires his physical presence for long hours over night or living with his partner most of the time, he doesn't get to play any of his favorite games for weeks or months sometimes, and when he does he is swamped by the amount of downloads and updates which need to be completed before he can start.

He even contemplated getting a handheld portable device such as a classic PSP or Nintendo Switch; but that would require purchasing a whole new system and building its game library...something which he doesn't want to do since he spent a lot of a different gaming console recently.

Jason was actively looking for a way to be able to play his favorite games on the go and away from the home without having to spend anymore money on new games, platforms or gadgets.

While researching option such as Stadia (Googles cloud gaming service) he stumbled upon PlayStation Remote Play Application which would solve his problem! He could connect his PS controller to his mobile device and stream any games from his console to his smart phone.

Long gone are the hours of browsing social media at his job, trying to stay awake or flipping through channels and streaming series out of boredom while waiting for his partner to get ready. PlayStation Remote Play Application is exactly what Jason was looking for!





Points of Friction

1. THE CONTROLS

As we mentioned before, the on-screen controls design for Remote Play tries to follow the iconic PlayStation layout and the same as a Dual Sense or Dual Shock 4 controls. The point of frictions presents it itself with the **trigger\ shoulder buttons**. Generally in games the triggers (special-ly the lower ones: L2 and R2) are used with a combination of other buttons to perform a function.

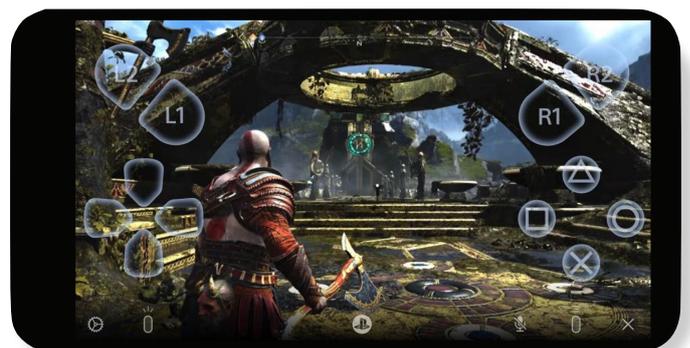
Most common one being first or the third person or a shooting game: players use the analog joysticks to control the movement and camera, while taking aim and shooing at the same time with the two trigger button.

In another completely different genre of games; sports it gets even more complicated. While again two analogs are for movement of the player, the trigger button is sprint which is usually held down by a combination of other buttons for other actions.

I think Sony might be missing a very simple point when it comes to comparing touch screen interface design for gaming against their classic controller scheme:

Gaming Controllers are designed to be controlled by **3 fingers of each hand: thumb, index, and middle finger**. Two of those on each exclusively control the trigger buttons. While today's smart phones interactions are designed for one **1 thumb or 2 if held side-ways**. There is less to hold on to with the general shape of a smart phone, and less room for button on the screen so they must be smart with designing a balanced and functionable experience for their users.

The current design which requires each thumb to be responsible for about 8 buttons on each side a small screen doesn't work. I'd classify this as a **usability issue** in hierarchy of design. Being able to control the device and your game properly is one of the essential parts of any gaming experience.



Complicated and non-user-friendly controls



2. BLUETOOTH CONTROLLER ISSUES

On Sony's homepage of Remote Play its suggested to users to connect their PS remotes Via Bluetooth to their device for gaming and controlling their PlayStation via Remote Play.

Issue with is feature comes in a massive **input delay** which causes players action and controllers to be performed with a significant delay. This throws off players timing while playing and could ruin games without a save and reload features.

Needless to say these controllers just like any other Bluetooth device are a drain on any mobile device's **battery** as well has having to be **carried around** and kept charge all the times.

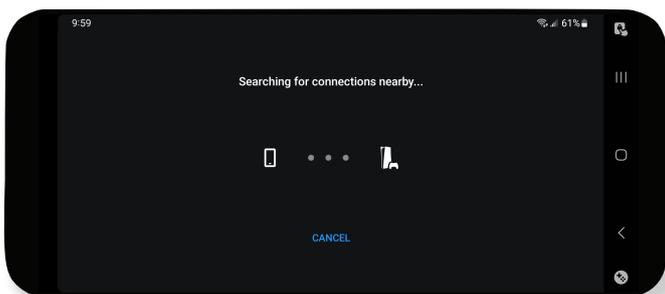
I'd classify this as a **reliability issue** in the design hierarchy, as the user cannot be certain how long it takes for pressing a button and completing an action would take or the fact that they won't be able to play they forgot their controller or it doesn't have enough battery or t their phone is almost dead.



3. CONNECTION ISSUES

If the user is not connected to the same network as their gaming console, it might take a **very long time to connect** to it. In some cases, after a very long time period of waiting and loading the connection just doesn't happen, forcing the users to try and wait again to see if it works. Even after the connection has been established the users are not safe from issues such as **quality and framerate drops, input delays and getting disconnected**.

Another massive issue is that the consoles **can't be turned on** via remote play. It could be woken up from rest mode or start stream from an already turned on console by Remote Play which makes the feature not really reliable if users turned their devices off. On top of that, just an actived device isn't enough, as this is a paid feature included with the PS Plus membership, meaning the users will have to be **signed in as well** for this feature to work.



Long loads for connection with no to very inaccurate indicator

While it is clear that a strong internet connection is required for both devises for this feature to work, I have to note this as a **functional issue** of friction as it stops the application from performing the main task its deigned, this friction is enough to turn users away from this app by not being able to connect their gaming device.



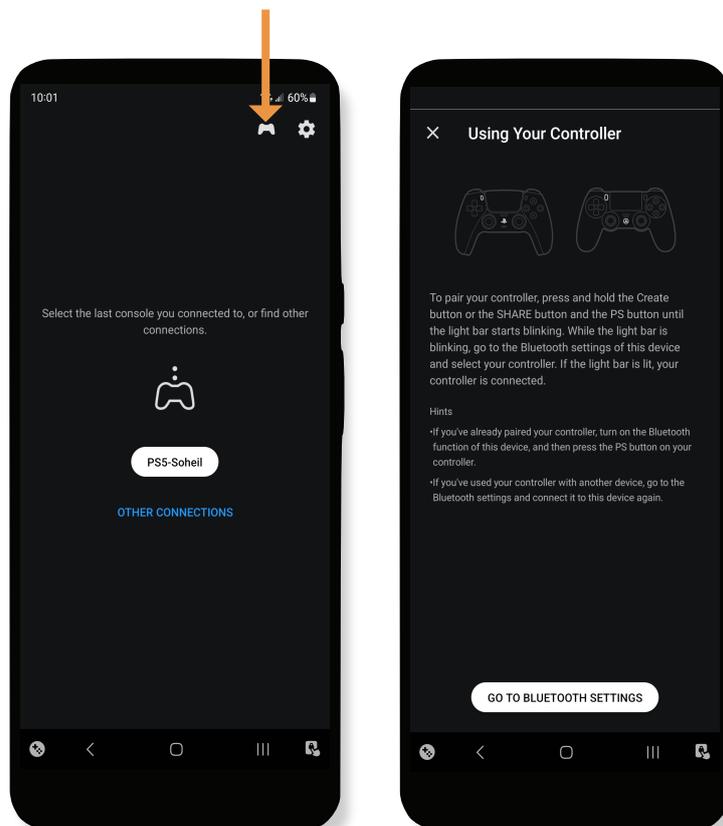


Prompts

1. CONNECTING A CONTROLLER

PlayStation remote play app address the previously stated control issue by making connecting a Bluetooth controller as **easy and clear as possible**. The application's home screen is designed in a simple and minimalistic way which draws the user's attention to only 3 options: Connect a controller, settings and connect to a device.

After selecting the controller option, users are put through a step-by-step walkthrough that helps them connect a controller.



*Simple and minimalist App design,
highlighting only essential features*



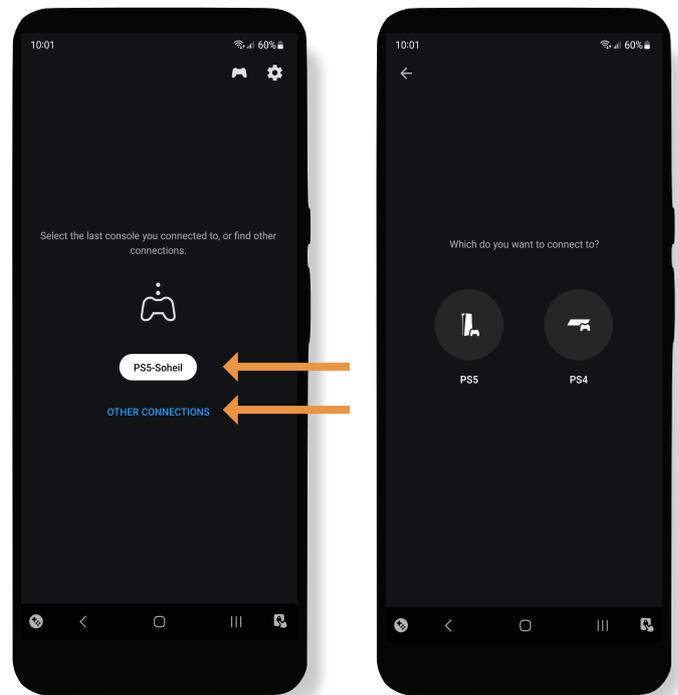
2. SETTING UP CONNECTION TO A DEVICE

Connecting to a **new device** has an **easy and straightforward** process. After selecting connecting to a new device “aka OTHER CONNECTIONS”, the users are first presented with a general option of selecting a console type: PS4 or PS5. After that the app will start searching for and give you the ability to connect to nearby devices.

Not nearby your device? User is also presented with an option of acquiring a code provided on the console’s own remote play setting which makes it able for players not nearby to connect to their device after entering that code on their mobile device (given they have someone or some way to get the code from the console).

Connect to a **previously connected device** is also very easy and achievable with **one single tap**, right from the home page.

Easy and clear way to connect to a new or previously connected to consoles



3. USES BESIDES GAMING

The use of remote play for PlayStation isn’t limited to games only! The users would be able to access their **downloads, setting, PS store and storage** and everything thing else that they could do by having direct access to the console.

Imagine our persona Jason: he would finally get home after long hours of work and decide to unwind by playing for a while; but a hefty 30 gig update download and install could take a long time. Or waiting for a new game to download or update could take up to hours at the time.

Using this feature would permit our user to just connected to his device via remote play while at work and start his download. Or connect to their PlayStation, visit the PS store, purchase a new game and begin to download it while not having direct access to their console. It will all be ready for them when they get home, or just choose to play using remote play on the go!



Managing downloads from PS Remote Play





CONCLUSION

At the end of the day, PlayStation's remote play isn't a unique feature only offered by Sony. Neither is the concept of mobile gaming; however, considering this is a paid feature the experience is less than acceptable.

Considering how the controlling issue could be fixed by a bit of field research in the blooming world of mobile gaming, or the connection issues which could be solved by fixing their servers, PS remote app just has too many points of friction which stop the user from achieving their main goals and ultimately could turn them away. As a matter of fact, the application's minimalistic design makes it feel almost abandoned by the developers.

