

Sony warns PS3 console users of 'bug'

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Sony on Monday warned millions of PlayStation 3 owners not to use their consoles as it struggled to fix a major software bug.

The electronics group said owners of the latest "slim" versions of the PS3 did not appear to be affected by the problem, which has crashed and frozen older consoles.

It remained unclear how many consoles were affected but Sony, which has sold more than 25m units of the older consoles, said it hoped to resolve the problem within 24 hours.

"If you have a model other than the new slim PS3, we advise that you do not use your PS3 system, as doing so may result in errors in some functionality, such as recording obtained trophies, and not being able to restore certain data," it said in a blog note.

The bug is the most serious reported for the PS3, which has had a good reliability record compared to the rival Xbox 360 made by Microsoft.

The PlayStation 3 is at the forefront of Sony's online consumer electronics strategy, helping to drive sales of films and games from its PlayStation Store. The console is also central to promoting its Blu-ray standard, the successor to the DVD.

The problem is an embarrassment and another setback for Sony which had seen a resurgence of its third-generation console since the release of the slim version last August and a drop in its price to \$299.

Sony said it sold 3.8m PS3 consoles during the 2009 holiday sales season, a 76 per cent increase on the previous year. But last month it announced a new motion-sensing controller to compete with similar devices from its rivals was being delayed from the spring to the autumn.

Sony said it believed it had identified the problem that hit the PS3 as a bug in the system clock, which was causing a number of possible errors.

These included the date being reset to January 1, 2000 and users being unable to reset it. Players are being immediately logged out of the online PlayStation Network when they start the system and are also unable to play games offline.

Sony said some users were also unable to play back certain rental videos downloaded from the PlayStation store.

PlayStation users voiced their frustration on online forums.

"I'm worried about all my trophies 1600+," said one user on Sony's PlayStation blog.

Sony has sold more than 33.5m PS3s worldwide, trailing Microsoft, which has sold almost 40m Xbox 360s and Nintendo, which has sold 67m Wiis.

Microsoft took a \$1bn charge for the cost of repairs to its Xbox 360 console for a fault known as the "Red Ring of Death".

Fonte: Financial Times, London, Mar. 2nd 2010, Companies, online.