

IS 2025 THE BREAK-THROUGH YEAR FOR CLOUD GAMING?

By Will Guyatt

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Earlier this week I saw the headline “Your Car is now an Xbox” - which has real 1980s BBC Tomorrow’s World energy - a crazy future concept sandwiched between Eastenders and Top of the Pops that stuck with me for decades.

But it’s true - your car can actually be an Xbox in 2025 - and I’m really pleased we’re seeing more and more of our devices becoming legit games platforms. I first experienced the dream of cloud gaming 14 years ago this month as Onlive launched across the UK - many were excited by the potential of console-less gaming and the chance to access an archive of titles, but like so many of those tech demos I saw on the TV decades earlier - the reality was never remotely close to what was teased.



In the intervening years we’ve had glimpses of services and a handful of streaming patents changing hands, but it was arguably the arrival of Xbox Cloud Gaming that finally made gamers realise what was possible in the cloud. I’ve tinkered around with it since launch, but it recently proved its worth to me.

Having been unexpectedly parachuted in to care for a poorly relative - I found myself with hours to fill while they rested - and thanks to the controller I’ve always carried with my laptop, I was soon able to turn their three-year-old Samsung TV into an Xbox - and was pretty quickly sinking hours into the very enjoyable Indiana Jones and the Great Circle (I’ve been busy!)

Perhaps the greatest thing I can say about Xbox Cloud Gaming is that it does exactly what you would expect it to do - and it does it very well. Sure - I'd love it to be matching the Ultra HD HDR enhanced visuals of the Xbox under my TV, but my experience wasn't really harmed even on lacklustre village broadband - it didn't jump, skip, crash or do anything at all unusual.

With services like Antstream Arcade focusing on retro games in the cloud, and Amazon's Luna quietly building up a decent PC games library at the cheaper end of the market - there's now even premium options like Nvidia's GeForce Now which essentially allows you to 'rent' RTX5080 horsepower on your banded-out old work laptop, allowing you to play supported games in the cloud for around £200 a year.

With a growth in services and users - it seems that gamers themselves are now ready for cloud gaming. And with this in mind - I wonder where it's going to take us?

With faster satellite internet, it won't be long until you'll be able to properly game from the seat of a transatlantic flight, without lugging all your kit around. When it comes to Xbox in the car - LG has been at pains this week to make journalists know they won't be able to have a joypad in one hand and the steering wheel in the other.

That said - I quite like the idea of "I'm just off to charge the car" becoming a euphemism in my house, for 45 minutes on the latest Call of Duty. As my daughter is inside winning badges at Brownies - I'm going to turn that wait into my own pursuit for achievements.



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