



# XBOX ONE

UI/UX Analysis

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## Executive Summary

Xbox Live on the Xbox One was analyzed for usability through the means of cognitive walkthrough, heuristic evaluation, and previous experience in the area of usability.

Following the success of the Xbox 360, the Xbox One was highly anticipated by many as the next generation of gaming was ushered in. A new Xbox Live was designed to accompany the new system and many of the changes to the interface are well regarded but at the same time suffering from some usability issues which weaken the user experience. Originally, the interface seemed to isolate players from each other contradicting the message Xbox and Microsoft have been promoting in regards to the experience. With recent updates Microsoft has address many primary issues surrounding the new Xbox Live including: Party chat off by default, no battery status indicator and lack of friend notifications. Microsoft has made a conscience effort to provide the best possible experience with consistent updates. Even prior to the new updates the Xbox Live on the Xbox One seems to be well ahead of where the Xbox 360 Xbox Live had started.

The analysis revealed 22 usability issues which are divided into 3 severity rating categories: high, moderate, and low. Majority of the issues (17) were rated as moderate or low with the remaining (5) as high: Live party notification stops game play, live party notification does not include a sender, unable to send multiple game invites, controller turns off when accepting game or party invites via Xbox button and stereo headset adapter audio mixer forces proportional volume change . The few high priority issues serves as a testament to the work which has already been performed on Xbox Live.

## Introduction

Xbox Live on Xbox One has created a solid foundation to change how people experience entertainment. No longer designed for just gaming, the new Xbox Live revolves around being the center of all the entertainment in the household. Xbox Live was tested individually for user interface and user experience issues, by a primary gamer and Netflix owner. Testing revealed 22 potential usability issues which were given a severity rating from: high, moderate and low as well as recommendations to resolve the issues in effort to improve effectiveness and efficiency for the user.

## Positive Findings

- The overall interface has a more modern look and feel similar to the Windows OS redesign and Windows phone.
- Second screen support through SmartGlass.
- Friends list has been expanded to exceed 100 people.
- Owned games and applications are now easier to locate and even are able to be found even quicker through "pinning."
- Many perceived functions and features (ex: friends and parties) from the Xbox 360 iteration work similarly lowering the learning curve.

# Usability Issues

Each issue is organized by location and rated on the following scale:

High Severity – Directly affect perceived core functions leading tasks to become more complicated, requiring more time to complete or even not allow the completion of a task.

Moderate Severity – Inhibits users while performing common tasks related to core functions, but do not prevent tasks from being completed. Issues may also cause use of secondary functions to be underutilized.

Low Severity – Issues serve at most a minor inconvenience to functions while completing tasks never preventing a task to be completed.

## Global (8)

### 1) **No full shut down option via voice commands**

*Severity: Low*

The ability for speech control with the Kinect offers a unique, immersive experience for gamers and casual users alike, but do not have voice access to a full system shutdown. Additionally, no full system shutdown offered when holding down the Xbox button on the controller. The current methods of holding down the power button for 8 seconds or SETTINGS >> SYSTEM may not be known to many users, especially when they are only given one option to “Turn Off” their console in more convenient ways.

RECOMMENDATION: Offer a “Shut Down System” option along with “Turn Off System” and “Turn Off Controller” (Appendix A.)

### 2) **Can't delete system cache unless full console shut down**

*Severity: Low*

System cache can only be removed through completing a full system shutdown.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow users to delete system cache manually without requiring a complete system shut down.

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### 3) **No sleep timer notification**

*Severity: Moderate*

Users are not prompted when or if Xbox One is going to turn off if idled for too long. The first indication of prolonged idleness is when the console has already begun the process of turning off.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide notification a few minutes prior to the console turning off if the idled for too long (Appendix B.)

### 4) **Battery life status**

*Severity: Moderate*

While the dashboard status icon was a step in the right direction, users are still not given immediate notification when a controller is in danger of dying. Unless users develop a habit of continually checking the dashboard, often controllers die mid-game unknowingly.

RECOMMENDATION: Provide visual notification similar to the standard Xbox notifications when batteries have reached certain thresholds like 15% and 5% (Appendix C.) Alternatively, the Xbox 360 method of turning controllers off before the batteries reached 0% would work, though the preceding suggestion would eliminate any immediate stop in gaming immersion unlike the latter.

### 5) **No voice messages**

*Severity: Low*

When sending messages on the Xbox One, users are only able to send text messages and are unable to record voice messages. This is an inconvenient way to send longer messages especially without access to a keyboard. Voice messages allows users to convey longer messages in a quicker fashion even it if is only the annoying "Message to friends and all recent players."

RECOMMENDATION: Allow users to record and send voice messages in addition to text messages.

## 6) **No default profile**

*Severity: Low*

Xbox One defaults to no account when turning on. While the Kinect facial recognition is functional, users who choose not to utilize the Kinect, cannot utilize the Kinect or only have one account are required to always sign into their account.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow users to assign a default profile which logs in automatically when starting the console

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## 7) **No About Me Section**

*Severity: Low*

With the Xbox One pushing for a more complete online gaming community with the "Follow" feature leaving out the "About Me" section of the user profiles seems misguided. The "Follow" feature seems great for those trying to gain new followers on YouTube or Twitch but with no About Me section they are not able to share this information with people they meet on Xbox Live.

RECOMMENDATION: Bring back the About Me section with additional functionality and purpose. Perhaps provide direct links to Twitch or YouTube accounts since the apps are readily available on Xbox Live, possibly even showing if a gamer is currently broadcasting on Twitch (Appendix D.) Social media information like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram could also be shared.

## 8) **Sleep timer stops when display turns off**

*Severity: Low*

If the display turns off before the Xbox One, the sleep timer stops and leaving the console on until the console is turned off manually. Particularly an issue if left on at night prior to sleeping, users may wake up with the console still on but display turned off.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow sleep timer to persist through turned off displays.

## **Notifications (7)**

### **9) No notifications when friends are playing the same game**

*Severity: Low*

Xbox Live no longer shows notifications when friends begin playing the same game. These notifications are beneficial since they give real time information when friends start playing the same game or who is currently playing the same game. You are not required you to consistently check your friends list to see which friends are playing the same game and can immediately respond to the notification.

RECOMMENDATION: Add notifications when players begin playing or who are currently playing the same game.

### **10) Unable to turn off notification audio**

*Severity: Low*

With the addition of friend notifications, notifications appear more frequently and as a result as does the audio cue. Users are given the option of turning off notifications, but are unable to turn off the notification sounds. The visual notification is beneficial, but the audio notification can and does become annoying especially when watching a television show or movie.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow users to turn off notification sounds.

### **11) Users can't delete notifications**

*Severity: Low*

The addition of the notification center is very informative, but presents a problem when users are unable to delete previous notifications. As more notifications are added, consistently shifting through notifications may become an inconvenience.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow users to delete notifications with options for one at a time, multiple at once or all at once (Appendix E.)

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**12) Live party notification stops game play**

*Severity: High*

The Live Party notification (Appendix F) --the notification sent to people in your party but not playing in the same game-- takes priority over anything else the user is doing including playing a game. Users should not have their experience interrupted to respond to a notification.

RECOMMENDATION: Live Party notifications should be treated like others which are to be responded to at the earliest opportunity, not be forced to make a choice at the immediate moment. May already be fixed as the Live Party notification has not appeared in recent iterations.

**13) Live party notification does not include a sender**

*Severity: High*

The Live Party notification (Appendix F) --the notification sent to people in your party but not playing in the same game-- does not include who sent the invitation. Even though these invites only occur from people in your current party knowing who is sending the invite is common practice.

RECOMMENDATION: Include who is sending the invite as part of the notification. Ultimately, changing the Live Party notification to a standard notification would be the most beneficial. May already be fixed as the Live Party notification has not appeared in recent iterations.

**14) Notification gamer image as main method to identify friends**

*Severity: Moderate*

The gamer image is not a very informative way to inform the user who is sending a party invite, a message or signing on. Unlike gamertags which may not change often gamer pictures may be changed on a more regular basis. Additionally, users are more likely to know their friends by their gamertag not their gamer image. Finally, multiple users may have the same pictures where gamertags are unique. In order to know who sent the invite the user must wait for the notification to cycle to the gamertag. The current animation can take at least 3 seconds (log on notification) to 5 seconds (message/party invite notification) before the user is informed who sent the notification, which conflicts with common practice of being told instantly who is initiating the notification. The log on notification provides the gamertag second but for all other

notifications users are given the least informative information (Notification type, text and gamer image) before given the most useful information (gamertag.)

RECOMMENDATION: Include the gamertag in the initial notification instead of the cycle. Alternatively, remove the animation all together and present all the information together as a single pop up.

### **15) Unable to send multiple game invites**

*Severity: High*

Game invites seem to be attached to current “game sessions” which allow only one invite sent by a player. Any additional invites are lost as the invitee never receives the invites. In order to resend an invite, the game session must be closed, restarted and have everyone re-invited.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow for additional invites to be sent in a game session.

## **Party (2)**

### **16) Can't turn down party volume when using the Kinetic**

*Severity: Low*

Unlike the headset microphone, the Kinect does not allow volume control for party chat. Party volume may too loud or too soft for users to hear their party.

RECOMMENDATION: Add volume control for party chat in the party chat window (Appendix G.)

### **17) Party page doesn't auto-update**

*Severity: Low*

In order to update the party page, not the party chat window, a user must close the page then reload the page in order to have the most up-to-date party. A user should not have to consistently reload the page when new members are joining the party.

RECOMMENDATION: The party page should refresh when a new member joins the party.

## **Friends (2)**

### **18) Friends list doesn't auto-update**

*Severity: Low*

In order to update the friends list a user must close the list then reload the page in order to have the most up-to-date list. A user should not have to back in and out of the friends page to check when a friend logs on.

RECOMMENDATION: The friends page should refresh when a new friend signs on.

### **19) Lack of quick menu options on friends page**

*Severity: Moderate*

The quick menu provides a great shortcut to some friend options but includes options which may not be frequently used. To be the most effective, the quick menu should include the most frequently used functions.

RECOMMENDATION: Add more frequently used options to the quick menu like: Join Party, Join Game, and Join Party/Game.

## **Accessories (3)**

### **20) Vocal fast forward and rewind commands require multiple vocal inputs for max speed**

*Severity: Moderate*

In order to arrive at the desired speed for fast forwarding or rewinding video users may be required to say "faster" multiple times. In order to arrive at the fastest speed (x128) users must say "faster" 7 times.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow users to specify how fast they would like to rewind or fast forward ex: "Xbox Fast Forward 32" or even for the fastest speed "Xbox Max Fast Forward"

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**21) Stereo headset adapter audio mixer forces proportional volume change**

*Severity: High*

The audio mixer used by the stereo headset adapter causes difficulty in finding the correct mix of game audio and party audio. Users are unable to have game audio as 70% of the total volume and party audio as 50% of the total volume instead are regulated splitting the 100% proportionally. This proportional change creates situations where users can hear the game volume but not the party volume and vice versa. Users may continually have to adjust their volume to hear friends but then have to readjust the game volume to a more suitable level afterwards. Additionally, changing volumes via buttons does not allow for any granularity forcing users to a 6.25% proportional volume change. Volume buttons would make more sense if each audio is changed independently, like the overall volume, but in this case a slider or roller would be more fitting.

RECOMMENDATION: Allow users to change game volume and party volume independently opposed to proportionally.

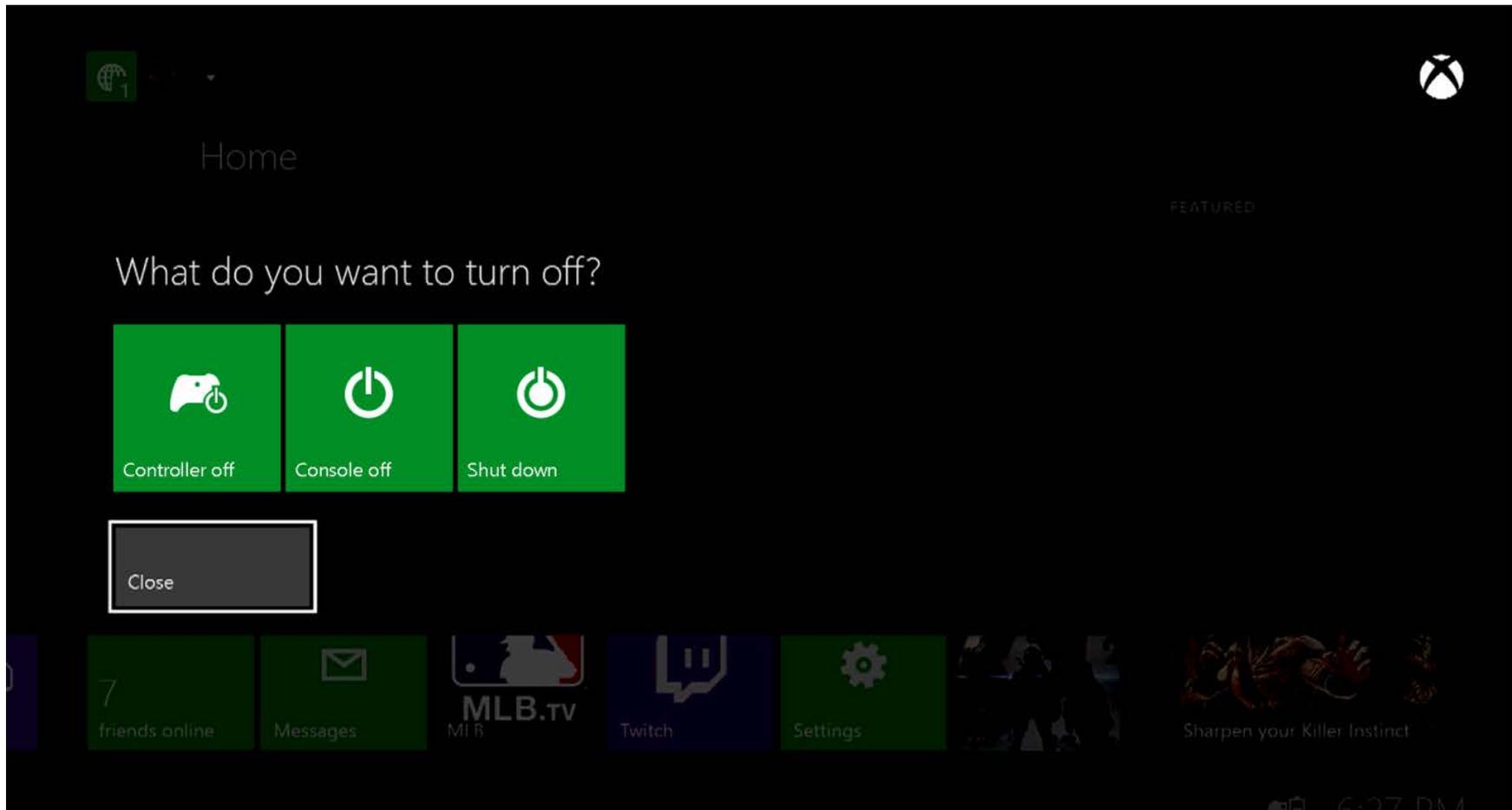
**22) Controller turns off when accepting game or party invite via Xbox button**

*Severity: High*

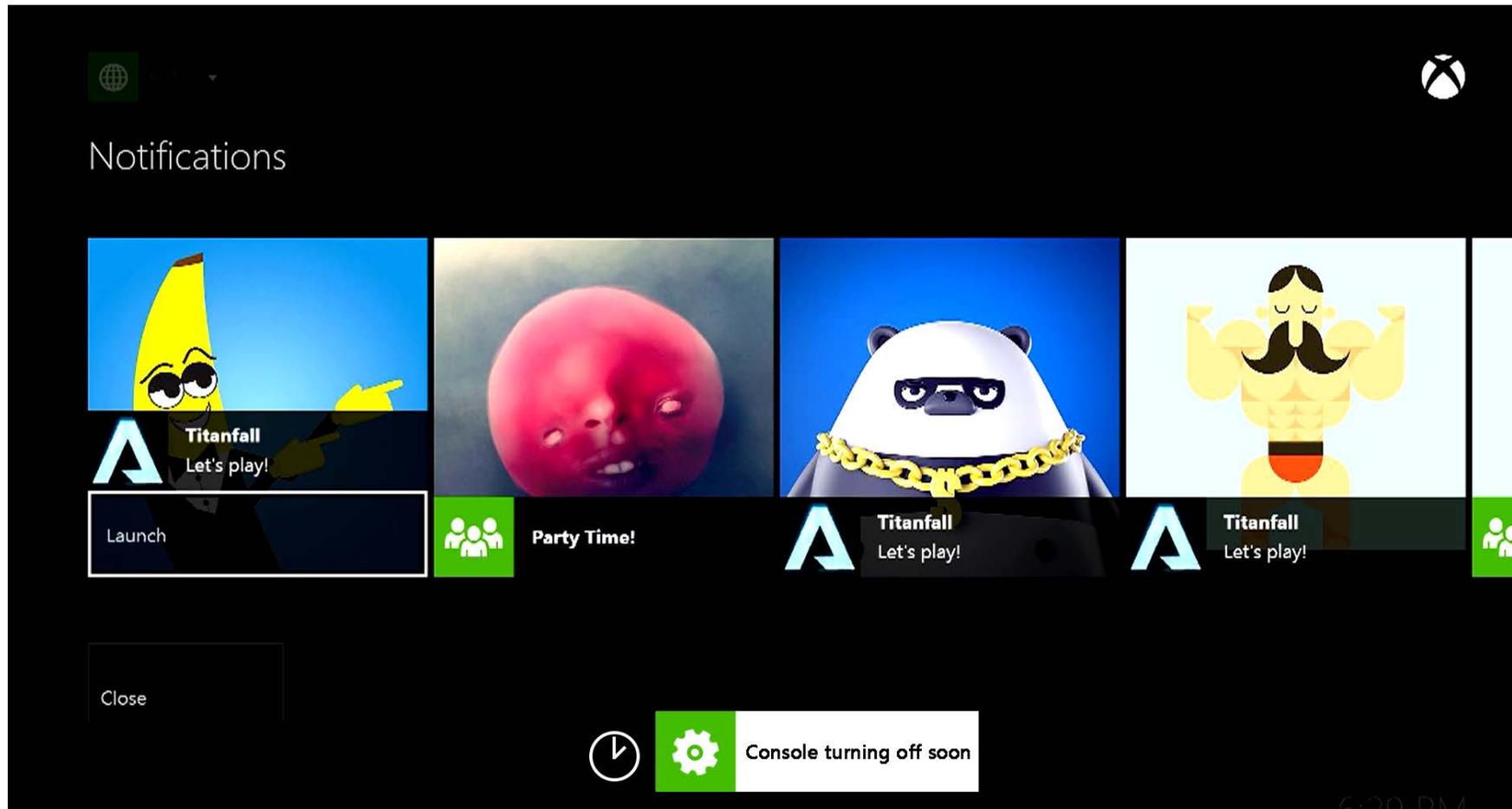
The time required holding the Xbox button to accept an invite then join is different often leading to users to hold the Xbox button longer than intended thus turning off the controller. Similarly, when using this feature as intended, the "Log Off" screen appears causing the user to turn the controller back on to close the screen.

RECOMMENDATION: The time required to hold the Xbox button should be the same as the time required to join the party. The "Log Off" screen should immediately close when controller turns off.

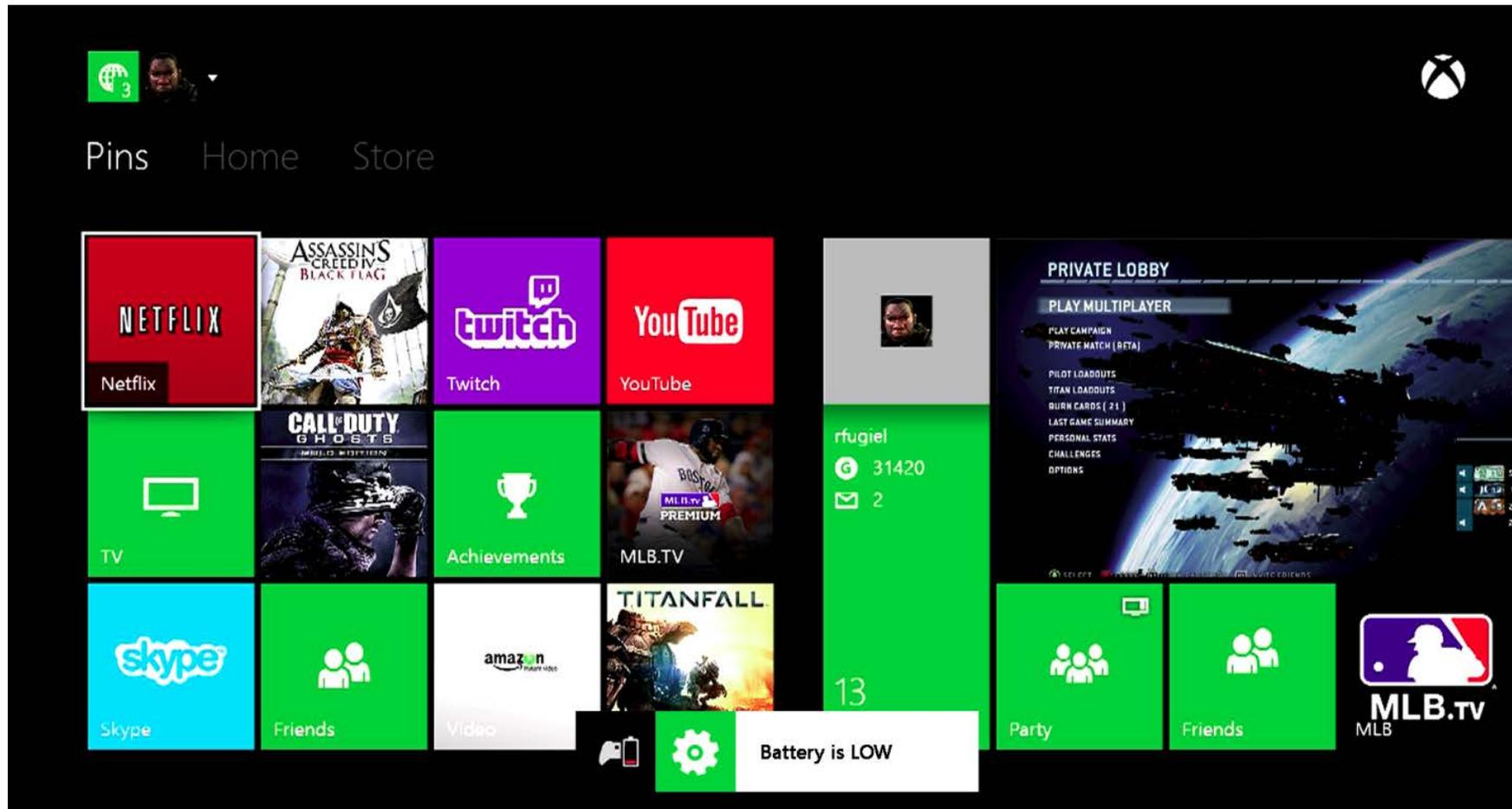
## Appendix A: Full Shut Down Option



## Appendix B: Sleep Timer Notification



## Appendix C: Battery Status Notification



## Appendix D: About Me Section

• **rfugiel**  
 NBA 2K14 NO 14 13 PHX Q1  
**Name:** Uncle John **Location:** Denver, CO  
**Bio:** Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Etiam pulvinar erat sit amet purus posuere consectetur id quis lacus. Mauris at nunc sit amet lacus porttitor ultrices. Nulla tincidunt fringilla magna, et tempus ligula hendrerit vitae. In faucibus justo tortor, ut aliquam est convallis acet malesuada Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Etiam pulvinar erat sit amet purus posuere

5210  
username Broadcasting  
username  
username  
@handle

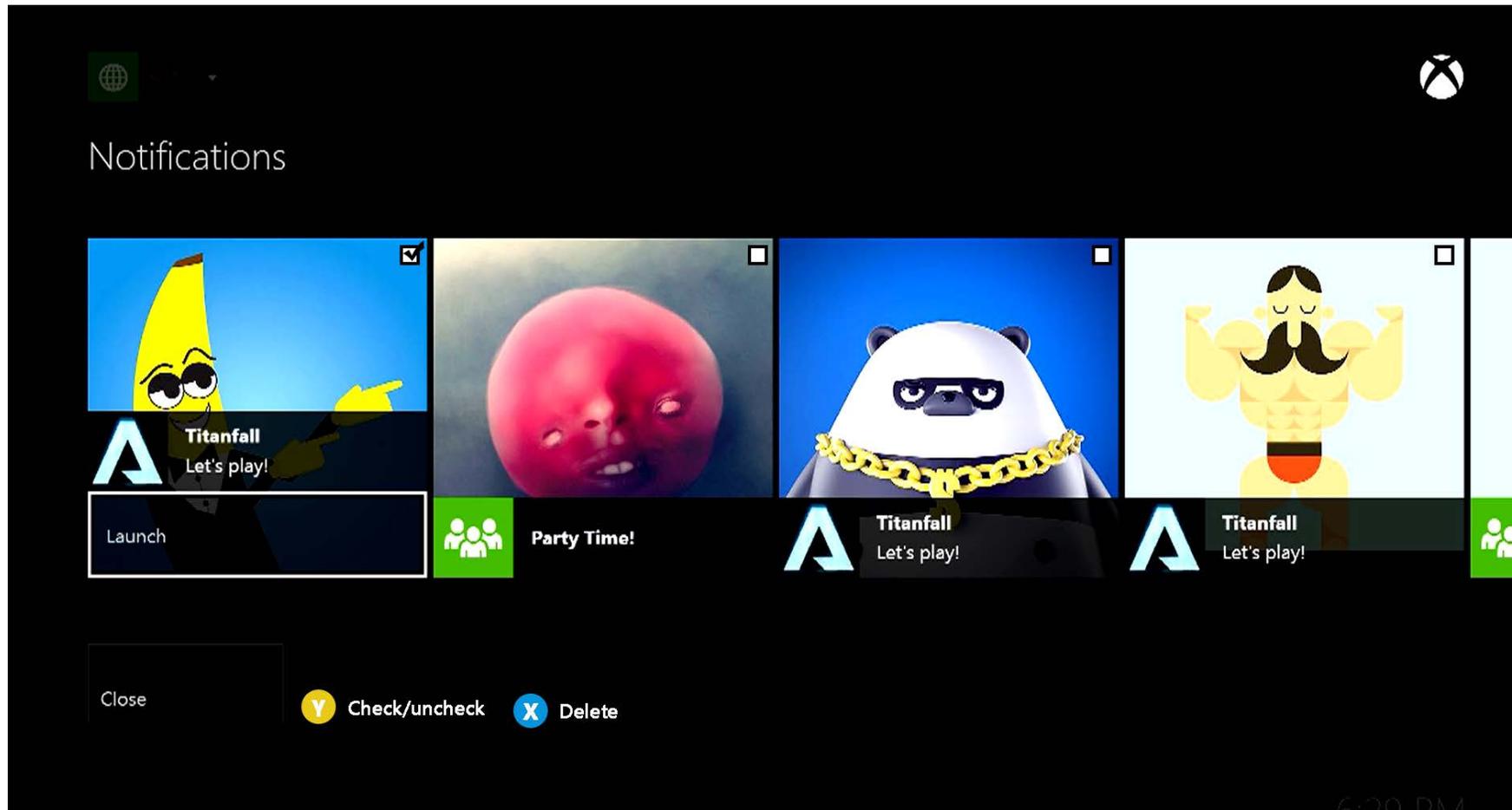
**Friends**      **Followers**      **Reputation**  
 You + 43      44

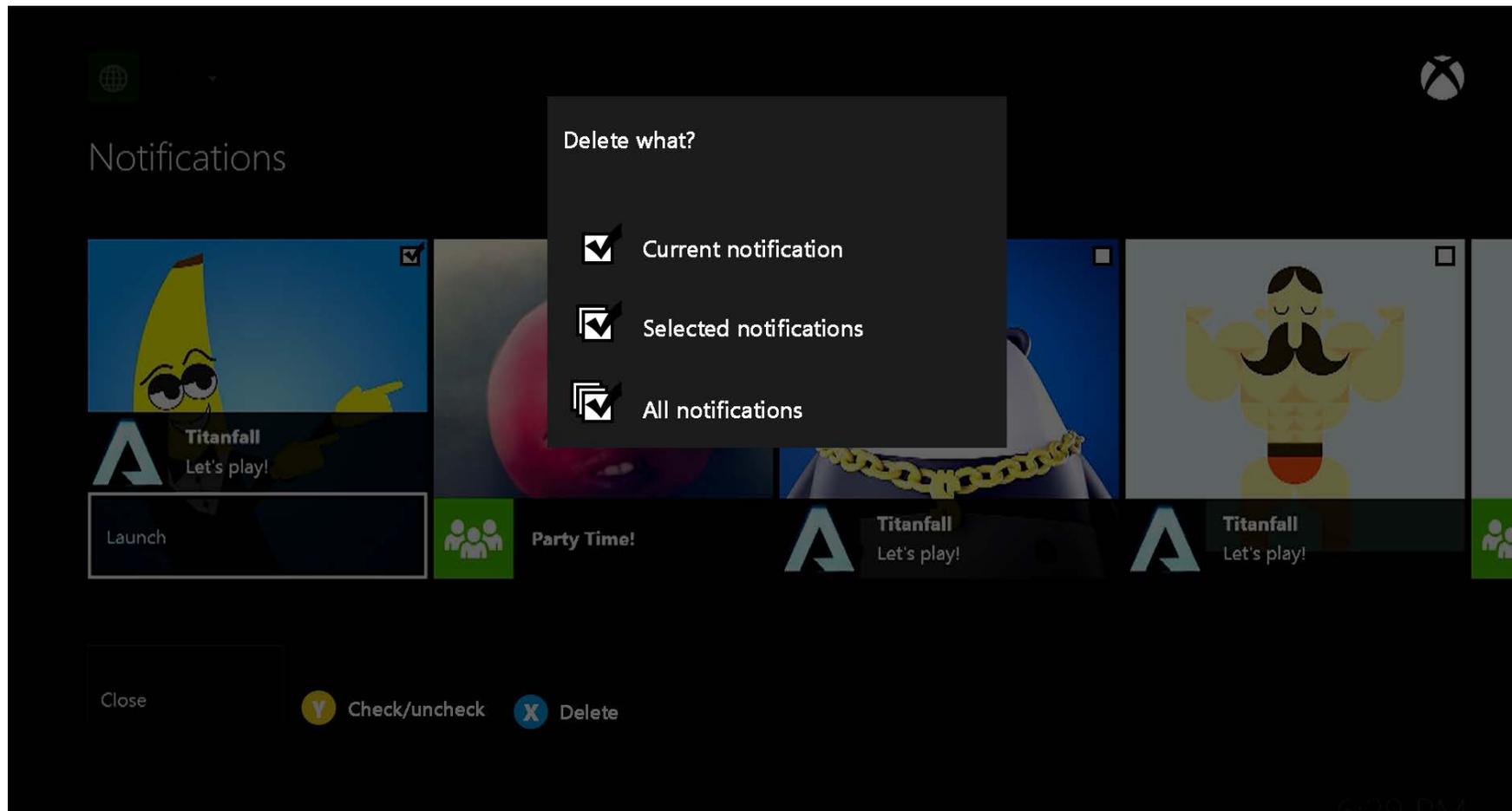
- Send ▼
- Mute in chat
- Join ▼
- Compare games
- Favorite ▼
- Report or block ▼

RECENT ACTIVITY

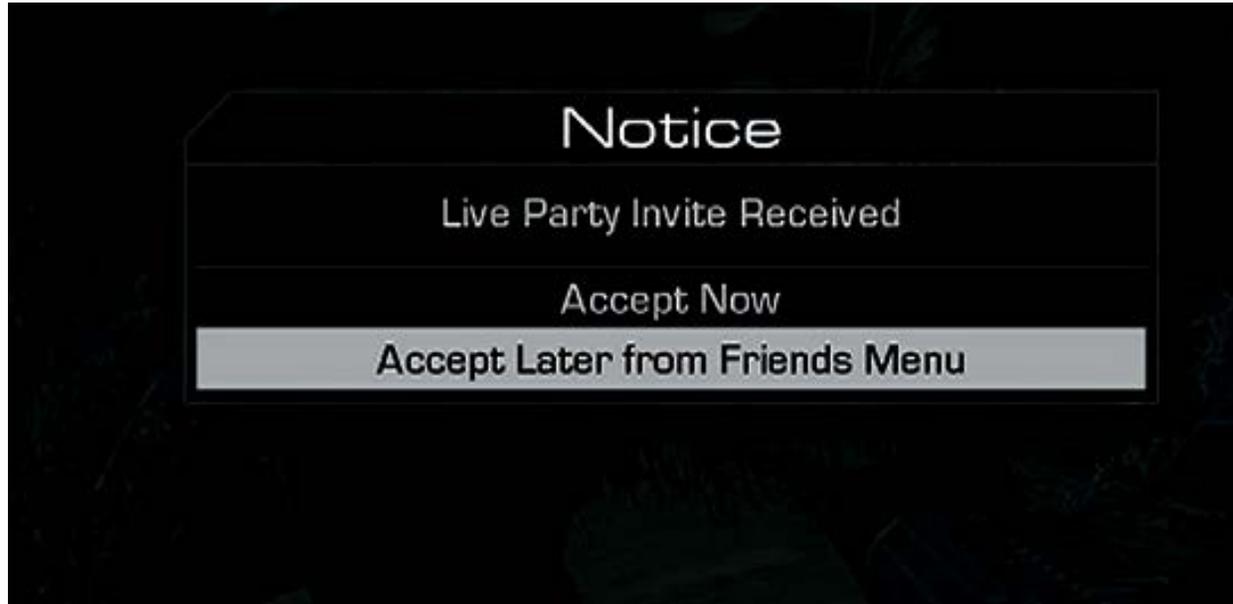
**NBA 2K14**  
 9m ago  
325/1000  
17

## Appendix E: Notification Center





## Appendix F: Live Party Invite



# Appendix G: Party Volume

