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# Metroid Prime 2: Echoes

***Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*** is a first person action-adventure video game developed by Retro Studios and published by Nintendo for the GameCube. A part of the *Metroid* series, a sequel to *Metroid Prime* and the first game in the series with a multiplayer feature. *Echoes* was released in North America, Europe, and Australia in 2004; and in Japan under the name *Metroid Prime 2: Dark Echoes*<sup>[a]</sup> in May 2005.

The story of *Echoes* follows bounty hunter Samus Aran after she is sent to rescue Galactic Federation Marines from a ship near Aether, a planet inhabited by a race known as the Luminoth. There, she discovers that the troops were slaughtered by the Ing, a race that came from an alternate dimension of Aether. Samus must travel to three temples to ensure the destruction of the Ing, while battling Space Pirates and her mysterious doppelgänger called Dark Samus.

Retro decided to make the game different from its predecessor by adding more focus on storyline and including new gameplay elements. Nintendo launched a viral marketing campaign to promote the game that included several websites written as if taking place in the *Metroid* universe. The game's single player mode and graphics were praised by critics, while its steep difficulty level and multiplayer components were met less positively. Since its release, *Echoes* has received several video game industry awards, as well as spots on "top games" lists by *Nintendo Power* and IGN. Over 800,000 copies of the game were sold worldwide. In 2009, an enhanced version was released for Wii as a standalone game in Japan and as part of *Metroid Prime: Trilogy* internationally.

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North American and PAL region box art

<b>Developer(s)</b>	Retro Studios Nintendo
<b>Publisher(s)</b>	Nintendo
<b>Director(s)</b>	Mark Pacini
<b>Producer(s)</b>	Bryan Walker Kenji Miki Kensuke Tanabe
<b>Programmer(s)</b>	Frank Lafuente
<b>Artist(s)</b>	Todd Keller
<b>Composer(s)</b>	Kenji Yamamoto
<b>Series</b>	<i>Metroid</i>
<b>Platform(s)</b>	GameCube Wii
<b>Release</b>	November 15, 2004 <b>GameCube</b>

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	NA: November 15, 2004
	EU: November 26, 2004
	AU: December 2, 2004
	JP: May 26, 2005
	<b>Wii</b>
	JP: June 11, 2009
<b>Genre(s)</b>	First-person action-adventure
<b>Mode(s)</b>	Single-player, multiplayer

## Gameplay



The player, controlling as Samus Aran, battles against the Pirate Commandos. The head-up display shows a radar, map and remaining ammunition.

*Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* is an action-adventure game in which the player controls the protagonist Samus Aran from a first-person perspective, and it takes place in an open-ended world with interconnected regions. Gameplay revolves around solving puzzles to uncover secrets, platform jumping, and shooting enemies. Progress through the game requires both dimensions to be explored, using power-ups that Samus acquires over time. Equipment players collect include the Screw Attack, which allows Samus to somersault in midair and off certain surfaces, and new beam weapons that have limited ammunition.<sup>[1]</sup>

The game's head-up display simulates the inside of Samus's helmet and features a radar, map, missile ammunition meter and health meter.<sup>[2]</sup> Several visors are available, and each performs a different function. One, also seen in the previous game, is a scanner that

searches for enemy weaknesses, interfaces with mechanisms such as force fields and elevators and retrieves text entries from certain sources. The others reveal and highlight interdimensional objects or cloaked enemies, and create a visual representation of sound.<sup>[3]</sup>

*Echoes* feature two parallel dimensions, Light Aether and Dark Aether, where changes in either dimension often reflect changes in the other. Although the maps in both dimensions have the same general layout, rooms often vary in their designs, creatures, and objects. Dark Aether's atmosphere is caustic and damages Samus's Power Suit, requiring the player to move between designated "safe zones" that allow Samus's health to be regained slowly. Safe zones are either permanent, or need to be activated by firing certain beam weapons at

force field generators.<sup>[4]</sup> Power Suit upgrades can reduce or nullify damage caused by the atmosphere.<sup>[5]</sup>

*Echoes* also features a multiplayer mode that allows up to four players to engage in combat using a split screen. It has six arenas and two modes: Deathmatch, in which players attempt to kill their opponents as many times as possible within a set amount of time; and Bounty, which focuses on collecting coins that injured characters drop.<sup>[6]</sup> Multiplayer in *Echoes* features the same control scheme as the single-player mode, including the lock-on system for circle strafing while targeting.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Synopsis

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### Setting

*Echoes* takes place on a rogue planet in the Dasha region, Aether, inhabited by a race known as the Luminoth. The Luminoth lived peacefully, protecting the planet's pure natural energy, which they call the "Light of Aether". Five decades before the game's events, a Phazon meteor collides into the planet and leaves a scar causing environmental damage and splitting the planetary energy. The split creates another planet in an alternate dimension, Dark Aether, a mirror version of Aether that is dark, arid, and has a poisonous atmosphere.<sup>[8]</sup> Dark Aether becomes home to the Ing, cruel shapeshifting creatures who intend to destroy the Luminoth, and are able to possess bodies of the living, the dead, and the artificially intelligent. Eventually, the Ing and the Luminoth engage in a war over the planet's energy—whichever race controls it is capable of destroying the other.<sup>[9]</sup>

Around this time, Space Pirates set up a base on Aether after detecting the mutagenic substance Phazon on the planet. A Galactic Federation Marine Corps patrol ship encounters one of the Pirates' supply ships leaving the planet and an altercation follows. Both ships suffer heavy damage, and after the Federation loses contact with the Marines, they call the bounty hunter Samus Aran to investigate.<sup>[9]</sup>

### Plot

While looking for the Marines near Aether, Samus's ship is damaged by severe lightning storms from the planet. Said storms have caused electromagnetic interference that prevented the Marines from communicating with the Federation. Samus finds the troops dead and surrounded by hive creatures called Splinters. The deceased Marines suddenly rise and attack her, apparently possessed, and she fights them off. Samus then encounters her evil doppelgänger, Dark Samus, for the first time, and after a small skirmish Dark Samus jumps through a portal. Samus decides to follow her through it and ends up on Dark Aether, a vile trans-dimensional duplicate of Aether, where she is attacked by a group of dark creatures called Ing, who capture Samus and after stealing the weapons from her suit throw her back through the portal.<sup>[9]</sup>

Upon returning to Aether, Samus learns that the Marines were attacked and killed by Ing-possessed Splinters, and decides to enter a nearby alien temple structure to look for clues.<sup>[9]</sup> When she reaches the structure, she meets U-Mos, the last remaining sentinel of the Luminoth,<sup>[10]</sup> an alien race that have fought against the Ing for decades. They are now on the verge of defeat.<sup>[11]</sup> He tells Samus that after a meteor struck Aether, the impact

was so devastating, it created "Dark Aether", from which the Ing spawned.<sup>[12]</sup> He also tells Samus that the Ing have taken virtually all of the 'Light of Aether', the entire collective planetary energy for Aether that keeps the planet stable, and begs her to retrieve it,<sup>[13]</sup> for if either world gains all this energy, the other will perish.<sup>[14]</sup>

Samus goes to three regions—the Agon Wastes, a parched, rocky, desert wasteland region; Torvus Bog, a drowned swamp area that houses a partially submerged hydrosubstation; and the Sanctuary Fortress, a highly advanced cliffside fortress built by the Luminoth filled with corrupted robots that serves as the Ing hive in Dark Aether—to retrieve the Light of Aether and return it to the Luminoth temples. Samus fights Space Pirates, Dark Samus, and monstrous Ing guardians on her mission. After Samus retrieves three pieces of the Light of Aether, she enters the Ing's Sky Temple and faces the Emperor Ing, the strongest Ing who guards the remaining Light of Aether. Samus defeats the creature and retrieves the last remaining energy, causing Dark Aether to become critically unstable and collapse; however, her path out of the temple is blocked by a horribly altered and unstable Dark Samus. After defeating her foe, Samus escapes as the dark world disappears around her.<sup>[9]</sup>

Returning to U-Mos, Samus finds that the Luminoth were in a state of hibernation but have now awakened. After a brief celebration, Samus leaves Aether in her repaired gunship.<sup>[9]</sup> If the player completes the game with all of the items obtained, Dark Samus is shown reforming herself above Aether.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Development

After the critical and commercial success of *Metroid Prime*, Nintendo asked Retro Studios to produce a sequel. The developers decided against recycling the features of the first game, and instead used new sound models, weapon effects, and art designs.<sup>[16]</sup> They also implemented the Screw Attack and wall jumping features seen in previous *Metroid* games, which were not incorporated in the first *Prime* due to time constraints.<sup>[17]</sup> Another element considered for the previous game was the multiplayer component.<sup>[18]</sup> Since the game was a first-person adventure and its deathmatch mode could not easily replicate other shooters in the market, Retro just tried to "make a multiplayer experience that fans of Metroid games would instantly know and recognise".<sup>[17]</sup>

The staff opted for a more immersive storyline, with increased use of cut scenes and a plot that focused less on the Space Pirates and Metroids that permeate the rest of the series.<sup>[16]</sup> Retro decided that the game would follow a theme of light and dark, which originated from "something that everyone understands: the conflict between good and evil".<sup>[19]</sup> Mike Wikan, the game's senior designer, elaborated on the theme: "We wanted a push and pull, the whole game is pushing and pulling you back and forth between the dark and the light. It ended up being that we wanted something that would feed into that dichotomy, that conflict between the two, and how the player's basic abilities reflect that."<sup>[19]</sup> The developers asked the producers of *The Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past*, another Nintendo game, for advice



Retro Studios, based in Austin, Texas, developed *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*, as well as *Metroid Prime* and *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption*.

because the game also used the theme of parallel worlds.<sup>[18]</sup>

In developing Dark Samus, Retro wanted to create a character that was similar to Samus and be the same size, as opposed to the enormous monsters of *Metroid Prime*. One of the inspirations for the character was a boss battle in *Metroid: Zero Mission*, where Samus fights a mirror image of herself. The developers considered Dark Samus a "natural choice" for the game because it fit in well with the "dramatic feel of dark and light".<sup>[20]</sup>

Retro decided to make the game more challenging than *Metroid Prime*—which was supposed to familiarize players with the control scheme—and felt that "with the second *Prime*, we had the ability or the freedom" to do so.<sup>[20]</sup> They wanted *Echoes* to be focused towards a hardcore audience by making the player "always worried about his health",<sup>[18]</sup> so more mini-bosses were added to provide unique boss fights.<sup>[20]</sup> After the game's release, the developers admitted that it was more difficult to develop than they first imagined, and Michael Kelbaugh, Retro Studios' president, commented: "We wanted to expand and add to the title, and not just slam out a sequel. Nintendo doesn't do things that way."<sup>[18]</sup> Retro tried to include some extras, such as a hidden version of *Super Metroid*, but were halted by the short development time.<sup>[17]</sup> Producer Kensuke Tanabe later revealed that the game was just about thirty percent complete three months before the strict deadline Nintendo had set for a release in the 2004 holiday season.<sup>[21]</sup>

The music for *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* was composed by Kenji Yamamoto. The themes used for areas on Dark Aether are dark variations of the themes used for the same areas on Light Aether. Some remixes of music from the previous *Metroid* games were also used, with the escape theme being a remix of *Metroid*'s "Escape" theme, the "Hunters" multiplayer theme taking on *Super Metroid*'s "Upper Brinstar" theme, and the theme for the underwater Torvus region, the "Lower Brinstar" theme from the same game.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Release

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*Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* was originally released for the GameCube in North America on November 15, 2004, Europe on November 26, and in Australia on December 2.<sup>[23]</sup> The PAL version of *Echoes* have lacked the standard 50 Hz mode, and offered 60 Hz mode only.<sup>[24][25]</sup> In Japan, it was later released on May 26, 2005, titled *Metroid Prime 2: Dark Echoes*.<sup>[26][27]</sup>

## Marketing

Nintendo launched several websites to initiate a viral marketing campaign for *Echoes*,<sup>[28]</sup> with inspiration drawn from *Halo 2*'s alternate reality game *I Love Bees*.<sup>[29]</sup> The websites included Luminoth Temple, an Internet forum; Channel 51, a conspiracy theory website that featured grainy QuickTime videos of *Metroid Prime 2* as if it were footage of extraterrestrials;<sup>[28]</sup> Orbis Labs, which sold a "self-contained armored machine" called "Battle Sphere", similar to the Morph Ball;<sup>[28]</sup> and Athena Astronautics, which advertised sending women into space, featured a blog,<sup>[30]</sup> and offered job positions for bounty hunters on Monster.com. Athena Astronautics gave a random selection of 25 people who replied to the offer an "interactive training manual", which was in fact a free copy of *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*.<sup>[29]</sup>

A *Metroid*-related spoof of "I Love Bees" appeared online in October 2004, to which Nintendo reacted by

stating that it was not involved with it. The campaign featured similarly named domain names such as ilovebeams.com, which each had an image of Samus with the caption: "All your bees are belong to us. Never send a man to do a woman's job."<sup>[30]</sup>

### Re-releases

*Echoes* was released in Japan in 2009 for the Wii console, as part of the *New Play Control!* series. It has revamped controls that use the Wii Remote's pointing functionality, similar to those of *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption*.<sup>[31]</sup> The credit system from *Corruption* is also included to unlock the original bonus content, as well as the ability to take snapshots of gameplay.<sup>[32]</sup> The difficulty of the boss battles in *Echoes* was also lowered.<sup>[33]</sup> The Wii version of *Echoes* was later released in North America on August 24, 2009, as part of *Metroid Prime: Trilogy*, a single-disc compilation that also includes *Metroid Prime* and *Metroid Prime 3: Corruption*. Both *Prime* and *Echoes* contain all of the enhancements found in their Japanese *New Play Control!* counterparts.<sup>[34]</sup> The compilation was re-released on the Wii U's Nintendo eShop on January 29, 2015.<sup>[35][36]</sup>

## Reception

### Critics

*Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* was critically acclaimed upon release.<sup>[37]</sup> When comparing it to its predecessor, *Metroid Prime*, *GameSpot*'s Brad Shoemaker said that *Echoes* was as good as its predecessor, and delivered everything he expected.<sup>[43]</sup> *IGN*'s Matt Casamassina called the gameplay "superb" and "nearly flawless",<sup>[45]</sup> and Vicious Sid of *GamePro* praised *Echoes* as "an extraordinary return to form".<sup>[42]</sup> *Echoes* was considered one of the best single-player experiences on the GameCube by Kristan Reed of *Eurogamer*, who also considered the story to be "intricately designed and elaborately constructed into a coherent environment".<sup>[40]</sup> *GameSpot* and *IGN* praised the campaign as a lengthy and rewarding adventure and appreciated the minimum 20 hours required to complete the game.<sup>[43][45]</sup> The game was considered

Reception	
Aggregate scores	
Aggregator	Score
GameRankings	91.87% (69 reviews) <sup>[37]</sup>
Metacritic	92/100 (60 reviews) <sup>[38]</sup>
Review scores	
Publication	Score
1UP.com	A <sup>[39]</sup>
Eurogamer	9/10 <sup>[40]</sup>
Game Informer	9.5/10 <sup>[41]</sup>
GamePro	★★★★★ <sup>[42]</sup>
GameSpot	9.1/10 <sup>[43]</sup>
GameSpy	★★★★★ <sup>[44]</sup>
IGN	9.5/10 <sup>[45]</sup>
X-Play	★★★★★ <sup>[46]</sup>

suitable for players of any age by *Computer and Video Games*, which called *Echoes* essential for anyone who owned a GameCube.<sup>[47]</sup> The theme's dynamics between dark and light was lauded by *GamePro*, along with the "simple, quirky, and ridiculously addictive" multiplayer mode.<sup>[42]</sup>

*Echoes'* graphics and design received significant praise; *GameSpot* considered it some of the best on the GameCube,<sup>[43]</sup> and *IGN* called it "gorgeous" and "one of the prettiest GameCube titles".<sup>[45]</sup> *The Guardian's* Nick Gillett found the game entertaining and stated that its maps, terrain, and bestiary made the game an amazing epic space adventure.<sup>[48]</sup> Bryn Williams from *GameSpy* complimented the game's controls and level design, commenting that the game was challenging but fair.<sup>[44]</sup>

A major criticism of *Echoes* focused on the game's high difficulty, with *Game Informer* declaring that "not only are the boss fights unforgiving, the environment is sometimes difficult to follow".<sup>[41]</sup> Some reviewers found it difficult to search for the Sky Temple keys. *GameSpot* criticized this mechanism and called it "a scavenger hunt much tougher than the rest of the game",<sup>[43]</sup> and 1UP.com said that the only purpose it served was to artificially extend the game's length.<sup>[39]</sup> The game's multiplayer mode was also considered by some to be unsatisfying. *GameSpy* called it a "secondary feature",<sup>[44]</sup> *The Age's* Jason Hill called it "bland and dull"<sup>[49]</sup> and *Eurogamer* said that the single-player features did not translate well to that mode.<sup>[40]</sup> *Game Informer* criticized the multiplayer mode because of its inclusion of the lock-on mechanism, considering it a feature that made multiplayer too simple.<sup>[41]</sup>

*IGN* was critical of *Echoes'* graphics and noted that the textures sometimes blurred when viewed up close, and the frame rate occasionally decreased. Publications including *IGN* and *The Independent* considered the gameplay too similar to *Metroid Prime*,<sup>[45][50][51]</sup> while *GamePro* was unhappy that the game did not have a customizable control scheme.<sup>[42]</sup> *Computer and Video Games* and *The Age* were disappointed that *Echoes* was not as innovative in terms of gameplay as *Metroid Prime*.<sup>[47][49]</sup> *The Age's* review also found the control scheme "unwieldy" and the difficulty "unforgiving".<sup>[49]</sup> Serge Pennings of *The Observer* noted there were too few opportunities to save the game while playing,<sup>[52]</sup> an aspect *X-Play* also criticized by saying that most of the game's difficulty was "because the save system is poorly implemented and downright cheap".<sup>[46]</sup>

## Awards

*Echoes* won an award in almost every category it was nominated for at the 2004 *Nintendo Power* Awards,<sup>[53]</sup> and won awards for Best GameCube Game of 2004 from *IGN*,<sup>[54]</sup> *Electronic Gaming Monthly*,<sup>[55]</sup> and *GameSpy*.<sup>[56]</sup> It was rated the 174th best game made on a Nintendo system in *Nintendo Power's* Top 200 Games list,<sup>[57]</sup> the 74th best game by GameFAQs users,<sup>[58]</sup> the 15th best GameCube game by *IGN*,<sup>[59]</sup> and the 13th best by *GameSpy*.<sup>[60]</sup>

## Sales

*Echoes* sold 470,000 copies in North America in December 2004.<sup>[61]</sup> It was the ninth best-selling game in its debut month in Japan with 16,105 copies sold, ranking it behind *Yu Yu Hakusho Forever* and *Hanjuku Hero 4: 7-Jin no Hanjuku Hero*.<sup>[62]</sup> By August 2009, 800,000 copies had sold worldwide.<sup>[63]</sup>



## Notes

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- *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes* (<http://www.metroid-database.com?g=mp2/>) at the Metroid Database

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