= Syndicate (2012 video game) =

Syndicate is a first @-@ person shooter video game developed by Starbreeze Studios and published by Electronic Arts for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 . It is a reboot of the Syndicate series of real @-@ time tactical shooter games developed by Bullfrog Productions . The game was released in February 2012 worldwide .

Set in the year 2069 , the narrative revolves around Miles Kilo , an agent of EuroCorp , one of the world 's largest corporations . As an agent , Miles must help EuroCorp to eliminate important personnel from rival corporations ; in the process , he discovers the evil , secret practice used by EuroCorp to recruit agents . The game features a large variety of weapons ; from standard pistols to the futuristic guns . Kilo is implanted with a computer chip that allows him to access the dataverse and can use hacking to defeat enemies and solve environmental puzzles .

Pre @-@ production of the game began in 2007 . Electronic Arts approached Starbreeze Studios to revive the franchise because Electronic Arts was impressed with the quality of Starbreeze Studios ' previous games and believed they could add " style " to the series . The game was returned to the drawing board after a year of development , and the co @-@ operative multiplayer mode was added to the main game . The development team hoped the game would appeal to both newcomers and players of the original game ; they maintained the theme of the original and drastically changed the gameplay . Richard K. Morgan was hired to write the story for the game .

The game received mixed critical reviews upon release . Critics praised the gameplay , style , graphics , art direction , artificial intelligence and the co @-@ operative mode , but the game 's story was criticized . The game 's budget was smaller than typical AAA video game , and was considered as a commercial failure for Electronic Arts . The game 's excessive violence led to the game being banned in Australia .

= = Gameplay = =

Unlike the original series of games , Syndicate is a first @-@ person shooter set in 2069 . Players assume control of Miles Kilo , an augmented agent working for EuroCorp in a corrupted , deceitful world in which corporations compete with each other for power . Players can run , jump , slide , hide behind covers , and carry two weapons and grenades to defeat enemies and bosses , who each have unique abilities . The game features 19 weapons , ranging from assault rifles , rocket launchers and machine pistols , to futuristic weapons such as laser rifles , Gauss Guns with bullets that can track enemies automatically , and Riotlance Dark Shooters that can paralyze enemies for a short time . Weapons can be customized and upgraded with 87 attachments and 25 upgrade options . These upgrades may alter the nature of these weapons , transforming standard ammunition to cover @-@ penetrating ammunition . The game also features an " execution " mechanic , allowing players to perform melee takedowns .

Miles has a " DART @-@ 6 " chip that grants him hacking and " breaching " abilities . Some enemies also have this type of chip , and Miles can interact with them . With the chips , objects , collectibles and enemies are automatically tagged and highlighted via augmented reality of the heads @-@ up display . Players can use the " breaching " abilities to hack into enemies ' minds and control their actions . They have access to three options ; " Backfire " that causes enemies ' weapons to malfunction and backfire , stunning them ; " Suicide " that causes enemies to kill themselves ; and " Persuade " that leads enemies to defect to the player 's side before committing suicide . The game also allows players to locate enemies behind cover with the use of " Dart Overlay " and slow down time temporarily , which increases the damages dealt by players and their health regeneration rate . Abilities and skills implanted in the chip can be enhanced by collecting and extracting the chips of fallen enemies . The upgrades can boost players ' damages and increases their recovery speed . Players are tasked with using the breaching abilities to interact with objects , solve environmental puzzles , strip the special armor of enemies and disarm explosives . The breaching mechanic has a time limit and must be recharged before another activation .

The game does not have a competitive multiplayer mode , but it has a cooperative multiplayer

mode that pits four players together to complete a nine @-@ mission campaign based on the campaign of the original Syndicate games . Players face enemies that become increasingly difficult to deal with as the game progresses . They can choose from four character classes : Medic , Spec Ops , Assault and Generic , each with different abilities . The breaching mechanic is also present in the mode for defensive and offensive purposes . For instance , they can hack into a turret to disable its armor or heal team @-@ mates using this mechanic . Players receive points as they progress through the game 's levels ; these points can be used to research new weapons .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

 In 2017 , the mega @-@ corporation Eurocorp is created by a merger between the world 's largest corporations . In 2025 , Eurocorp releases the DART chip , a neural implant that allows users to access the dataverse , making most electronic devices obsolete . As a result of the DART chip , the world is no longer ruled by governments but by mega @-@ corporations known as " Syndicates " . However , only half of the world 's population embrace the chip ; the " unchipped " are abandoned and denied the benefits afforded by their chipped counterparts . Corporate espionage and corporate warfare for dominance between syndicates becomes the norm , resulting in the creation of " agents " ? bio @-@ engineered enforcers augmented by a militarized version of the chip who protect the interests of their corporate masters .

= = = Plot = = =

 In 2069 , Agent Miles Kilo , EuroCorp 's latest agent , is equipped with the new prototype DART 6 chip created by Eurocorp scientist Lily Drawl (voiced by Rosario Dawson) . After a successful test run of the chip 's abilities , EuroCorp CEO Jack Denham (voiced by Brian Cox) assigns him to kill Lily 's counterpart , Chang , at the rival syndicate Aspari . Accompanied by his mentor Agent Jules Merit (voiced by Michael Wincott) , Kilo attacks the Los Angeles branch of Aspari and corners Chang , who shoots himself . Kilo retrieves Chang 's chip and learns from an encrypted conversation that Lily has been sharing information about the DART 6 chip with him .
 Although shocked by Lily 's betrayal , Denham decides to have Kilo and Merit keep Lily under surveillance because she is too valuable to eliminate . As they observe her in her apartment , Lily has an argument with a person named Kris before she is suddenly kidnapped by the syndicate Cayman @-@ Global . Kilo fights off the Cayman @-@ Global forces and follows Lily 's abductors to their floating base in the Atlantic Ocean . Kilo kills a major Cayman @-@ Global agent and rescues Lily , and they learn the syndicate is preparing a war against Eurocorp .
 In New York , Kilo and Lily land in the Downzone where the unchipped , lower @-@ class population lives . After they split up and head towards Eurocorp HQ , Kilo is betrayed by Lily and is sent into a trap with EMP mines , injuring him and disabling his chips . After his chips regain function , Kilo is given orders to either capture or kill Lily . After fighting off subverters , Kilo learns their leader Kris ? Lily 's ex @-@ boyfriend and colleague ? is responsible for instigating a war between the syndicates . Kris reveals he started the war so he could hack into the dataverse and kill the syndicates and their chipped populations as punishment for abandoning the unchipped . Lily , who wants to find a peaceful solution and make the syndicates care about the unchipped , opposes the idea . Kilo fights Kris , who attempts to suicide bomb him but kills himself instead . Kilo apprehends Lily ; he can either kill her or release her . Lily is captured and a barely @-@ alive Kilo is retrieved .
 At Eurocorp New York HQ , Denham and Merit believe Kilo is brain @-@ dead and send him to be rebooted while they plan to retrieve Lily 's chip and recover useful information on DART 6 . Kilo begins to remember his secret past : he learns that Denham led a Eurocorp team to kill his parents and abduct him as a baby because he has genes ideal for becoming an agent . Kilo escapes from his restraints and rescues Lily , who tells Kilo that like him , all of Eurocorp 's agents were abducted

as children and their memories were modified so they would remain loyal to Eurocorp . Lily created the DART 6 chip , hoping to use it to make the syndicates retain their humanity and care about both chipped and un @-@ chipped civilians , but she realizes she was naïve to think that way .

As Cayman @-@ Global attacks Eurocorp 's New York HQ , Kilo and Lily head towards Denham 's office to prevent him from activating the kill switch on their DART chips . Kilo has to fight off both Eurocorp and Cayman @-@ Global forces , as well as several EuroCorp agents . At the top of the tower , he is forced to fight Merit and two other agents , who are under Denham 's orders to kill him . Kilo defeats the agents , and overpowers and kills Merit . Kilo then heads towards Denham 's office but finds Denham has activated his kill switch , which starts to affect Kilo 's movements . Weakened , Kilo confronts Denham , who justifies abducting him as a child . Kilo manages to fight against the kill @-@ switch order and corners Denham , who lets himself fall over a ledge to his death . As the game ends , Eurocorp lies in ruins and Lily gives Kilo a pistol , telling him that he is free from anyone 's control .

= = Development = =

The original version of Syndicate is a tactical shooter developed by Bullfrog Productions and produced by Peter Molyneux in 1993 . Electronic Arts had wanted to make a new Syndicate game for several years but had not found an opportunity to do so . They hoped to bring new elements and drastically altered gameplay concepts that would suit the franchise 's universe . They eventually partnered with Starbreeze , which they recognized as an excellent studio for making first @-@ person video games with distinctive styling . Pre @-@ production of the game began in 2007 ; it was carried out by a small team of staff members after the studio completed work on The Chronicles of Riddick : Assault on Dark Athena . However , mid way through the game 's development , there were also many creative differences between the developer and the publisher , and the two companies suffered from an inharmonious relationship .

During the first stage of development , the game had no co @-@ operative multiplayer mode ; it focused on the story instead of the cyberpunk element . A year after development began , the game was sent for reworking because the studio thought they had not captured the essence of the Syndicate series . The team had little experience in making a co @-@ operative games due to technological restraints , but decided to experiment with it . The internal reception of the co @-@ op prototype was positive ; testers said it fit with the canonical fiction of the franchise . The team had once worked on a competitive multiplayer mode for the game , but thought it was not original enough for inclusion . As the game lacked a cooperative multiplayer element , the developers abandoned the use of an online pass , unlike most EA games at that time .

The development team hoped the new title would appeal to both newcomers and fans of the series , be accessible and introduce the franchise to a broader audience . They assumed most players would not have played the original Syndicate games . The team also considered that because of the change in audience tastes and the introduction of new video game platforms , altering the game 's perspective to first @-@ person was a correct decision . Turning it into a first @-@ person game was the first design choice made by the team , who hoped allowing players to view from the agent 's perspective directly would make the game more immersive for players .

The team aimed to replicate the playing experience and difficulty of the extant Syndicate . Starbreeze considered the difficulty of the first game to be part of the franchise 's legacy and was worth preserving ; they hoped the new game would be challenging enough for players without being frustrating . They introduced a rarely scripted artificial intelligence (AI) into the game . The AI reacts to players ' actions and was programmed to relocate itself after being attacked . The new game has less gore than the older one ; players still can kill innocent civilians but the team minimized these scenarios , which they thought were part of the game 's environment rather than gameplay elements .

The game was designed to have a sense of unpredictability so it can be played without confining the player to rules . To achieve this , the company added the breaching system , which adds more varieties of combat and gives players more choices when dealing with the artificial intelligence . The

breaching system , which originated as a mini @-@ game , was designed to be simple so it would not interrupt the flow of gameplay . Instead of being purely a first @-@ person shooter , the game features action @-@ adventure elements that allow players to choose their progression and tasks them with solving environmental puzzles .

Because the new game is set within a well @-@ established franchise , Starbreeze tried to retain the essence of the world and rebuild these elements . The game 's story was written by British science @-@ fiction writer Richard K Morgan , whom the team approached after they read his book Altered Carbon . Syndicate was Morgan 's second video @-@ game script after 2011 's Crysis 2 ; he used the original game for reference and included elements that those who had played it would immediately recognize . He preserved the original 's dystopian setting and theme , and hoped to use these elements to build a powerful story . Morgan traveled to Sweden to meet Starbreeze 's game designers to ensure the game 's story would not contradict its overall design .

The team 's goal was to make the game different from contemporaneous first @-@ person shooters . The team ensured the game had its own style that would differentiate itself from other games . This was achieved by using a " split @-@ world aspect " , which divided the game 's into two areas , each with a different artstyle . The team added details and aesthetics to the game 's three syndicates in the upper zone so they would easily be recognized and be different from each another . " The Downzone " , where non @-@ implanted poor people live , has a different design from the three syndicates . The team took ideas for this area from Mirror 's Edge . Both sides were inspired by futuristic films such as Blade Runner , Minority Report and Gattaca . In addition , the split @-@ world concept applies to the gameplay . The Downzone enemies tend to be more aggressive and anti @-@ agents , and some gameplay segments such as the breaching system are inapplicable in such areas .

Syndicate uses Starbreeze 's in @-@ house game engine , which had been modified for the creation of the game . The team used Beast to achieve global illumination and a realistic lighting system , and a new physics solver to deliver more physical interactions . The team aimed to maintain a consistent visual quality on all the platforms on which the game was released , even though the PC version had the advantage of higher resolution and frame rate . The engine allowed the inclusion of post @-@ process @-@ effects previously used in Assault on Dark Athena , such as motion blur and depth of field . Their artstyle was changed to suit the game 's overall style .

= = = Marketing = = =

In 2008 , Electronic Arts announced that Starbreeze Studios was working with EA on two projects ; one was a new project set in one of EA 's older franchises under the name Project Redlime . The name " Syndicate " was trademarked multiple times by Starbreeze and EA , and a small portion of the game 's script was accidentally leaked before the game 's official revelation . EA officially revealed the game on 12 September 2011 , and announced that it is a reboot for the franchise . A demo of the game , which only included the co @-@ op mode and the " Western Europe " map , was released for the Xbox Live Marketplace and PlayStation Network on 31 January 2012 . The game was announced and shipped in under six months ; it was released worldwide on 21 February 2012 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

Syndicate received generally positive reviews from critics . The game 's story received mixed responses . The reviewer from GameTrailers called the plot predictable and considered several of the game 's plot points boring . He praised the game 's dialogue for its flow and the backstory presented . The reviewer said the campaign lacked scale but was nevertheless enjoyable and worthwhile playing . He also said the celebrity @-@ led voice cast had successfully brought "

believability " to the game . This was echoed by Jeff Gerstmann from Giant Bomb . In contrast , Martin Gaston from VideoGamer.com said he was disappointed with the campaign and considered it one of the game 's biggest flaws . He said the world deserves more exploration than it had in Syndicate , and that the development team did not seem to understand the creative vision of the first version of the game . He also said the emphasis on morals did not excel because it does not fit the game 's overall style . He disliked the game 's protagonist , whom he thought was bland , making him difficult for players to relate to . Xav De Matos from Joystiq said the story is filled with promises but the overall product failed to differentiate itself from other shooters with similar themes . Dan Whitehead from Eurogamer compared it unfavourably to its predecessors and called it unambitious and uninspiring .

The overall gameplay received praise . Gaston described the shooting as " clever " and said the DART @-@ 6 breaching abilities have encouraged players to experiment . He said the combination of the breaching system and gunfights made Syndicate better than some other contemporaneous first @-@ person shooters . GameTrailers ' reviewer said the DART @-@ 6 system provides players with choice and the recharge time of the breaching abilities tasks players with managing a " micro @-@ economy " that encourages and rewards skills . Both Gaston and GameTrailers said the game missed out opportunities for limiting the use of some of Kilo 's powers , which are only shown in cutscenes . Gerstmann liked the game 's gameplay and said the control was fun , and that he appreciated the ability to shoot while running . He also admired the breaching abilities and found them satisfying to use . Whitehead shared similar thoughts , saying the breaching abilities tasks players with deploying strategy and make the game deeper than typical run @-@ and @-@ gun video games .

The game 's AI received praise . GameTrailers ' reviewer said enemies " know how to die in style " and that the boss fights are memorable , even though they can be repetitive . Gaston considered it " missed opportunities " . De Matos appreciated the boss fights and said it was fun and interesting , and tasks players with learning the pattern of these boss fights and using the correct skill to defeat them .

Reviewers praised the game 's graphical quality . Gerstmann said the use of lighting added a unique style to the game . He also liked the depiction of the two major areas of the game , and the game 's sounds , which he said suited the tone of the game . Alexandra Hall from GamesRadar said " Starbreeze really coaxed some beautiful sights out of aging hardware " . She added that some players may not be pleased with the game 's bloom effects . David Houghton of the same publication said the game is " a decent shooter " but that its lightbloom effects were " nonsensically over @-@ the @-@ top " . Peter Eykemans from IGN echoed similar thoughts , declaring that the motion bloom and blinding light a problem . However , he admitted that the game " constantly looks great " , and that its simple design has made the game to look very polished .

The four @-@ player , co @-@ operative , multiplayer mode received acclaim . Gaston said it was a " watered down version of Left 4 Dead " , but it was nonetheless a fun and pleasant experience for most players . De Matos said the game had encouraged players to work together to defeat enemies and to plan before attacking , which he said had turned the mode to a " gratifying " experience . He criticized the game 's difficulty , which he said does not scale well , and the scripted enemies , which made the game less dynamic . Whitehead highly recommended the co @-@ operative mode , which he thought should have been the game 's main focus . He added that it provided more freedom to the players than the campaign .

Critics had mixed feelings about the game . Gerstmann said he had an " outstanding time " with it , and that it had offered an excellent twist to the genre . De Matos said it had successfully branched out the franchise to a new direction , even though it may not be what players of the original Syndicate would expect . However , he said the spirit of the franchise is still maintained and preserved . Gaston said Starbreeze was not able to capture the franchise 's vision and that the game was not well @-@ executed overall . Whitehead described the game as " fun " , even though he thought Syndicate was a forgettable experience that will live under the shadow of rival shooters .

= = = Sales = = =

In an interview with Computer and Video Games , Frank Gibeau of EA said the Syndicate revival had not been as successful as had been hoped , saying , " Syndicate was something that we took a risk on . It didn 't pay off ? it didn 't work . " In a 2012 interview with Edge , Mikael Nermark , CEO of Starbreeze Studios , said the game sold around 150 @,@ 000 copies worldwide . According to Nermark , the budget for creating this game was less than those of other triple @-@ A video games ; he also said that despite the poor commercial performance , the team was still proud of the final product .

= = = Australian censorship = = =

On 20 December 2011 , it was reported that Syndicate has been refused classification by the Australian Classification Board . The board was especially critical of what it considered to be the game 's excessive violence : explicit depictions of dismemberment , decapitation , exposed flesh and bone from injuries ; and copious blood spray . EA Australia said they would not appeal the decision or change the game to address the Board 's concerns . EA also complained about Australia 's " arcane censorship on games " and said Syndicate would be released on schedule and uncut with an adults @-@ only rating in New Zealand .