

## = 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 video game console . It is the seventh published game in the Metroid series , a direct 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 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 . Echoes ' 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 .

## = = Gameplay = =

Metroid Prime 2 : Echoes is a first @-@ person action @-@ adventure game that takes place in an open @-@ ended world with interconnected regions . Gameplay revolves around solving puzzles to uncover secrets , platform jumping , and shooting enemies . Echoes features 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 . 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 .

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 . Power Suit upgrades can reduce or nullify damage caused by the atmosphere .

The game 's head @-@ up display simulates the inside of Samus 's helmet and features a radar , map , missile ammunition meter , health meter , and statistics on bosses . 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 .

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 . Multiplayer in Echoes features the same control scheme as the single @-@ player mode , including the lock @-@ on system for circle strafing while targeting .

## = = Synopsis = =

## == 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 . 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 .

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 , it calls the bounty hunter Samus Aran to investigate .

## == 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 . 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 Dark Samus jumps through a portal . Samus decides to follow her through it and into Dark Aether , where Samus is attacked by a group of dark creatures called Ing , who steal the weapons from Samus 's suit before pushing her back through the portal .

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 . When she reaches the structure , she meets U @-@ Mos , the last remaining sentinel of the Luminoth , an alien race that have fought against the Ing for decades . They are now on the verge of defeat . He tells Samus that after a meteor struck Aether , the impact was so devastating , it created a vile trans @-@ dimensional duplicate Aether , called " Dark Aether " . The toxic world hosts a deadly and aggressive species called Ing . 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 . As if any world gains all this energy , the other will perish .

Samus goes to three regions ? the Agon Wastes , a parched , rocky , desert wasteland region ; Torvus Bog , a drenched swamp area that houses a partially submerged hydrosustation ; 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 has retrieved 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 in the Dark Aether . Samus defeats the creature and retrieves the last remaining energy as Dark Aether , becomes critically unstable and collapses ; 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 . Returning to U @-@ Mos , she 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 . If the player has collected 100 percent of the power @-@ ups , a post @-@ credits scene shows Dark Samus has survived the implosion , and now reforming herself above Aether .

= = 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 . 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 . Another element considered for the previous game was the multiplayer component . 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 " .

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 . 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 " . 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 . " The developers asked the producers of The Legend of Zelda : A Link to the Past , another Nintendo game , for advice because the game also used the theme of parallel worlds .

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 " .

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 . They wanted Echoes to be focused towards a hardcore audience by making the player " always worried about his health " , so more mini @-@ bosses were added to provide unique boss fights . 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 . " Retro tried to include some extras , such as a hidden version of Super Metroid , but were halted by the short development time . 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 .

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 .

= = Release = =

= = = Versions = = =

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 . The PAL version of Echoes have lacked the standard 50 Hz mode , and offered 60 Hz mode only . In Japan , it was later released on May 26 , 2005 , titled Metroid Prime 2 : Dark Echoes .

Echoes was re @-@ released in Japan in 2009 for the Wii 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 . The credit system from Corruption is also included to unlock the original bonus content , as well as the ability to take snapshots of gameplay . The difficulty of the boss battles in Echoes was also lowered . Metroid Prime , Echoes , and Corruption were bundled together on a single disc as Metroid Prime : Trilogy , released in North America on August 24 , 2009 . Both Prime and Echoes contain all of the enhancements found in their Japanese New Play Control ! counterparts . On January 29 , 2015 , the compilation became available for download from the Wii U 's Nintendo eShop .

= = = Marketing = = =

Nintendo launched several websites to initiate a viral marketing campaign for Echoes , with inspiration drawn from Halo 2 's alternate reality game I Love Bees . 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 ; Orbis Labs , which sold a " self @-@ contained armored machine " called " Battle Sphere " , similar to the Morph Ball ; and Athena Astronautics , which advertised sending women into space , featured a blog , 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 .

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 . "

= = Reception = =

Metroid Prime 2 : Echoes was critically acclaimed upon release . 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 . IGN 's Matt Casamassina called the gameplay " superb " and " nearly flawless " , and Vicious Sid of GamePro praised Echoes as " an extraordinary return to form " . 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 " . GameSpot and IGN praised the campaign as a lengthy and rewarding adventure and appreciated the minimum 20 hours required to complete the game . The game was considered suitable for players of any age by Computer and Video Games , which called Echoes essential for anyone who owned a GameCube . The theme 's dynamics between dark and light was lauded by GamePro , along with the " simple , quirky , and ridiculously addictive " multiplayer mode .

Echoes 's graphics and design received significant praise ; GameSpot considered it some of the best on the GameCube , and IGN called it " gorgeous " and " one of the prettiest GameCube titles " . 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 . Bryn Williams from GameSpy complimented the game 's controls and level design , commenting that the game was challenging but fair .

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 " . 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 " , and 1UP.com said that the only purpose it served was to artificially extend the game 's length . The game 's multiplayer mode was also considered unsatisfying . GameSpy called it a " secondary feature " , The Age 's Jason Hill called it " bland and dull " and Eurogamer said that the single @-@ player features did not translate well to that mode . Game Informer criticized the multiplayer mode

because of its inclusion of the lock @-@ on mechanism , considering it a feature that made multiplayer too simple .

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 , while GamePro was unhappy that the game did not have a customizable control scheme . Computer and Video Games and The Age were disappointed that Echoes was not as innovative in terms of gameplay as Metroid Prime . The Age 's review also found the control scheme " unwieldy " and the difficulty " unforgiving " . Serge Pennings of The Observer noted there were too few opportunities to save the game while playing , 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 " .

Echoes sold 470 @, @ 000 copies in North America in December 2004 . 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 . By August 2009 , 800 @, @ 000 copies had sold worldwide . Echoes won an award in almost every category it was nominated for at the 2004 Nintendo Power Awards , and won awards for Best GameCube Game of 2004 from IGN , Electronic Gaming Monthly , and GameSpy . It was rated the 174th best game made on a Nintendo system in Nintendo Power 's Top 200 Games list , the 74th best game by GameFAQs users , the 15th best GameCube game by IGN , and the 13th best by GameSpy .