

= Sunset Overdrive =

Sunset Overdrive is an open world third @-@ person shooter video game developed by Insomniac Games and published by Microsoft Studios for the Xbox One . It was announced at Electronic Entertainment Expo 2013 , and released worldwide in October 2014 . The game is set in 2027 , in a fictional metropolis called Sunset City . The player controls an employee of FizzCo , who has to fight off the OD , short for Overcharge Drinkers : humans who have turned into mutants after drinking FizzCo 's energy drink beverage . In the dystopian Sunset City the player character can wall @-@ run , use zip @-@ lines , and grind rails to swiftly navigate through it , with a large arsenal of weapons to use . The game also has a cooperative multiplayer mode called Chaos Squad , which tasks players to complete a series of missions with seven players . As the game put emphasis on momentum , the game does not feature any cover system .

The development of the game began in 2010 when Insomniac completed Resistance 3 . After the project was green @-@ lit internally , the studio partnered with Microsoft Studios , which helped fund the game and allowed Insomniac to keep the rights to the franchise . Insomniac described the game as a " celebration of games " , as the team took inspiration from different sources , including Prince of Persia , Jet Set Radio and Tony Hawk 's Pro Skater , though at its early stage of development the team took inspirations from DayZ instead . The game is set in a post @-@ apocalyptic future , but the team depicted it as an " awesomepocalypse " that turns the game 's initial world depiction into a " playground " for players . Sunset Overdrive is powered by Insomniac 's internal engine , previously used in Fuse , one of their previous games .

The game received generally positive reviews , with praise for the its visuals , traversal system , combat system , and humor . However , the game was criticized for the lack of a compelling story or innovative quest design . It was awarded multiple year @-@ end accolades , including Game of the Year and Best Xbox Game of the Year awards from several gaming publications . The game was supported with multiple downloadable content , including the story @-@ based The Mystery of the Mooil Rig and Dawn of the Rise of the Fallen Machine , after the game 's release .

= = Gameplay = =

Sunset Overdrive is an action @-@ adventure game set in a third @-@ person perspective . Players navigate a metropolis called Sunset City in the year 2027 . This dystopian world has been overrun by mutants called the OD , short for Overcharge Drinkers . The player character is a former FizzCo employee , tasked with cleaning up the mess left behind from a party FizzCo had thrown to celebrate the launch of its new energy drink , Overcharge Delirium XT .

At the start of the game , Players can customize the protagonist 's gender , body type , hairstyle , and outfit using the character creator . Players may also alter the look of their customized character at any point during the game by approaching a vendor named Callista . After creating their characters , players proceed to the game 's open world , which is free for players to explore at any time . A fast travel system is provided allowing players to reach different locations and to navigate the world quickly . The game features a main campaign with story elements and side @-@ missions , which are triggered automatically when players enter certain locations in the city . These quests mainly involve players delivering objects to other non @-@ playable characters and collecting items from the world . Some of these quests have time limits .

Throughout the game , players encounter both human enemies , such as gang members , OD 'd humans who have mutated from drinking too much of the energy drink , and several bosses who are more difficult to defeat compared with other ordinary enemies . The game features a variety of weapons for players to use to combat enemies . These include the standard assault rifle AK @-@ FU and the TNTeddy grenade launcher , which fires teddy bears strapped to sticks of dynamite , fireworks and toy helicopters . All weapons eventually run out of ammunition but do not need to be reloaded while being used . Players unlock more weapons by progressing through the story or purchasing them from shops . Weapons can be upgraded and modified by applying " Amps " , which increases weapons ' lethality , efficiency , and strength . The weapons can be leveled up when

players earn enough experience points or defeat enough enemies with them .

The game 's combat focuses on velocity , and encourages players to defeat enemies in a fast @-@ paced way . As a result , players can employ different moves including : wall running , air @-@ dashing , zip lining , performing parkour , acrobatics , and water traversal . Players use grind rails to deftly navigate city streets , and are able to switch direction instantly at will . The city is also filled with items for players to bounce up into the air . Players may utilize their weapons while performing these movements and slow down time for players to take aim . On @-@ foot , players cannot walk , take cover , or take out enemies silently , but instead must rely on agility to survive as they will be overwhelmed quickly by enemies if they choose to walk on the ground . The game also features a Style Meter . Shown in the head @-@ up display (HUD) of the game , the Meter increases as players perform stylish moves like killing enemies and grinding on @-@ rails without touching the ground . When players are killed , they do not have to wait for the game to load . Players can respawn and return to the world by different methods , such as descending with a rocket or exiting a golden sarcophagus . Insomniac named this system " Next @-@ Gen Respawning " .

The game features an eight @-@ player co @-@ operative multiplayer mode called the Chaos Squad , which tasks players to complete a series of missions , as decided by the players themselves . Players defend vats of Overcharge Delirium XT from waves of OD 'd at night and stop their progression by setting up fortifications and barriers , in a manner similar to tower defense games . It is inter @-@ connected with the single @-@ player mode allowing players to transfer their story character , with all the weapons and gadgets they have already accumulated , to the mode . Although players work together , players also try to earn more Style points during play than their co @-@ op partners .

= = Plot = =

On July 13 , 2027 , FizzCo releases its new energy drink , OverCharge Delirium XT (also known as OCD) , exclusively in Sunset City . In an attempt to sell OCD faster , FizzCo skipped health regulation protocols , in turn causing anyone who drinks it to turn into a violent boil @-@ bodied mutant known as an Overcharge Drinker (OD) . In order to cover up the deception , FizzCo claims that a virus has broken out and quarantines the whole city , preventing anyone from entering or exiting . The player , a FizzCo employee who works in the sanitation division , is saved from an attacking OD by Walter , a fellow survivor .

Upon learning that Walter is creating a plane to escape the quarantine , the player obtains the aid of Sam and the Oxfords , a group of rich but lazy geniuses . After multiple errands , the Oxfords build a propeller to complete the plane . The player joins Walter in his plane to escape the city and reveal the truth about the outbreak . At the last second , Walter notices an invisible wall preventing their escape and pushes the player out of the plane before dying in the subsequent crash .

Still planning to escape , the player aids Troop Bushido , scouts living in a samurai museum , and Fargarths , a group of larpers . In thanks , the two groups design and build a ship out of garbage which tricks the FizzCo sensors and allow them past . As the player is about to escape , they learn that FizzCo robots are attacking the Oxfords and Troop Bushido in order to kill all witnesses . The player returns to Sunset City and forms a band led by King Buzzo (voiced and mocapped by the real Melvins singer) in order to save the survivors . Following the battle , Sam learns that FizzCo is planning something else at its headquarters . To break in , the player obtains the help of Las Catrinas , a trio of cheerleaders caring for the Children 's ' Ward of the hospital . It is discovered that the FizzCo main office is a robot that is going to destroy Sunset City . The player defeats the robot and has milk and crackers with the other survivors . After the credits , Protocol X26 is activated and FizzCo helicopters are seen being sent around the world to deliver OCD .

= = Development = =

= = = Origin = = =

Sunset Overdrive was developed by Insomniac Games , which had mainly developed games for PlayStation consoles . Drew Murray and Marcus Smith , the game 's creative directors , began brainstorming Sunset Overdrive after the completion of Resistance 3 in 2011 . They presented their ideas to Insomniac 's owners and CEO Ted Price , outlining a project that would borrow influences from the documentary Hyena Men of Kenya , Tank Girl comics , the novel I Am Legend , the British television series The Young Ones , Halloween masks from the 1960s , and Lego . The initial presentation failed to generate interest , but Murray and Smith were asked to come back a week later to explain how the game would actually be played . In their second presentation , they explained their vision of a game featuring fast @-@ paced action that would be " the rock and roll end times " . According to Smith this confused some team members who thought that they were making Brütal Legend .

The team received approval after their second presentation . After Sunset Overdrive was green @-@ lit internally , Insomniac had to pitch it to a number of publishers . Insomniac wanted to retain brand ownership , causing some firms to opt out of publishing it . Murray and Smith traveled to Microsoft Studios a number of times to pitch the game to them . The main pitch began with the playing of " Kick Out the Jams " by MC5 , and ended with Murray : " ... on top of a chair , mimicking how the game was going to play , and the last minute heroics . " Microsoft was eager to work with Insomniac and agreed to fund and publish the game . The team originally did not want to make it a console exclusive , but they were impressed by Microsoft 's philosophy toward the development of Xbox One , and the capabilities of Xbox Live features , which allow the initiation of a " two @-@ way dialogue " with players .

= = = Design = = =

Choosing a name for the game was the first thing the team did before starting development . They decided on the name Sunset Overdrive because they felt it was unique , and captured the feeling of the " grindhouse " from the 1970s . The project was originally conceived as an open world survival game similar to DayZ . The initial version of the game did not feature the traversal system , nor the unusual weapons included in the final version , and was described as " grounded " by Murray . In this version , players were tasked with scavenging resources during daytime , and defending their base at night . This later evolved to become the game 's cooperative multiplayer mode . It employed the animation model from Insomniac 's previous game , Fuse . The direction of the game changed after the team watched a video based on Gorillaz , and Murray gave up the idea of a realistic survival game . He then asked the team to start prototyping ideas for a game that they thought would work . Some team members came up with the idea of having skateboarding elements in the game , which led the development team to start working and experimenting with a new traversal system . In hindsight , Murray described the shift in focus as an " organic , evolutionary process " . As the game 's development progressed , the team began to draw on elements from other video game franchises such as Prince of Persia , Jet Set Radio , and Tony Hawk 's Pro Skater , and put the emphasis on momentum .

In 2013 , the team had released Fuse , which was a critical and commercial failure . The team now reflected on the reasons for its poor reception , and felt that they should go back to Insomniac 's roots ? developing unusual titles with vibrant visuals ? instead of another dark shooter like Fuse . They also thought that Sunset Overdrive 's stylization should reflect the personality of the company , and that building a world that has a sense of humor and irreverence was something the team was eager to do . Ted Price , CEO of Insomniac Games , described it as a game Insomniac had wanted to develop for a long time . The game 's producer , Bryan Intihar , called it : " ... the game [they 've] been meaning to make for 20 years . " Microsoft supported it and shared the same vision and the idea of creating something new .

According to Price , Insomniac wanted to " break the rules of shooters " . He felt that the last generation of shooters had established a formula of staying behind cover for defense , and leaning out from it to attack . He wanted to change that pattern with Sunset Overdrive by encouraging

players to attack in an aggressive manner and to focus on momentum . To accomplish this , the team developed a city that supported parkour and fast movements . They also hoped that with the introduction of a new generation of video game consoles , they could establish a new standard for the genre which would " retrain " shooter fans playing the game .

Smith compared Sunset Overdrive 's gameplay to pinball games , where a player 's every movement has consequences , and the on @-@ screen chaos created by players is based on their actions . The game 's combat and traversal elements were originally separate from each other , but were later connected as the team began to think that : " shooting while grinding was fun " . The combination of these aspects led the studio to adjust the game 's world design . The team calculated how the city should be designed so that it could support both combat and traversal . As a result , they ensured that the world was built in modular 4x4 blocks , and that no surface featured an angle that was between 26 and 45 degrees . Furthermore , the team considered how long grinds should be , and decided that they should be at least 8 meters in length . The grinds were designed to be longer than usual in enemy @-@ concentrated areas so as to allow additional time for players to consider both combat and traversal options . In order to encourage experimentation , the game features a vertical map @-@ design , in which the difficulty the enemies ' players face increases as they move towards higher ground .

Insomniac described the game as " a celebration of games " , in which the team pushed existing concepts in a new direction . Besides drawing influences from Prince of Persia , Tony Hawk 's Pro Skater and Jet Set Radio series of games for the game 's traversal system , they drew influences from Bill & Ted 's Excellent Adventure for their " Next @-@ Gen Respawn " system , Scott Pilgrim and The Omega Man for the game 's setting , and Peggle when they were creating the game 's weaponry . The game 's humor was inspired by Insomniac 's own game series Ratchet & Clank and Spyro the Dragon . There are also references to other pop culture icons such as Breaking Bad and Portal . Despite that , Smith said that the game would be completely different from The Last of Us , in which the unnamed protagonist sometimes broke the fourth wall and communicated with players .

The game 's character creator function allowed players to create different kinds of combinations in an avatar . The team ensured that there were many customization options , including allowing players to " dress like a crazy person " . The developers felt that this feature would suit the story , because the game 's city enters a state of anarchy , where social norms no longer exist . The team wanted the character creator to feature diversity , so that players could build an avatar based on their own choices . They found the process of introducing diversity challenging . As a result , a system was developed that broke the character creator down into three different categories : mainstream , street (emo and goth) , and costume . The team originally added role @-@ playing games @-@ styled stats to the game 's costumes , but later decided to scrap that so that players " would just choose what they thought looked cool . "

= = = Art and setting = = =

The game is set in a near @-@ future , post @-@ apocalyptic world . The team wanted to try something different , unwilling to return to a setting that was similar to Resistance 3 . Instead of depicting a world with a dark atmosphere and gritty environments , the catastrophe that occurs in the game 's story line is referred to as an " awesomepocalypse ? that transforms the user 's initial view of the game 's world as a " playground " for players to explore and do whatever they want ? " emphasizing the fun of free reign [sic] during end times . " The goal was to make players feel that the post @-@ apocalyptic world in Sunset Overdrive is fun and limitless , delighting and lively , instead of a place that is dreadful and worrying . To achieve this , vibrant and vivid colors were used to create the game 's world and the team hoped that by tweaking the nature of the setting , the game would be " self @-@ aware , humorous , and fun " . The team also intentionally avoided creating a very serious tone because the final product needed to be entertaining and comparable to games like Crazy Taxi and Jet Grind Radio , instead of something too serious that looked like an interactive movie . The team emphasized " fun trumps realism " and reflected that through the " Next

@-@ gen Respawn " system , unrealistic weaponry , and the game 's visual style .

While the game features colorful graphics that appeal to a broad audience , it was intended for a mature audience which is reflected in the game 's story , dialogue , and characters ' portrayals . The story was designed to be casual , but compelling . The game 's setting is inspired by both I Am Legend and imagining Iggy Pop as the last person surviving in a post @-@ apocalyptic world . The team also wanted to create a satirical story , and explore the theme of anti @-@ corporatism . The punk rock style was implemented in the game because the game 's directors thought that it reflected a sense of " aggression " , which suited the gameplay .

When designing the cover art , the team collaborated with the English studio llovedust . They wanted it to be easily recognized and stand out from the cover art of other video games in stores . They also wanted it to represent the game 's characteristics : " intensity " , " fun in the end times " in a " dynamic and vibrant world " . There were three different iterations of the cover art , with major changes made to the game 's protagonist throughout its development , as the studio struggled with the protagonist 's portrayal . Insomniac was ultimately satisfied with llovedust 's finished art design .

= = = Technology = = =

Price called Sunset Overdrive the biggest game the studio had worked on . As it was the first open world game developed by Insomniac they had to deploy new design and development skills to produce it . The time and resources needed to develop the game also expanded significantly . While developing the game 's world , the team broke it down into 10 to 11 hexes and zones . They are classified into three different types : low resolution zones , shadow zones , and mission zones , and they overlap each other so that they can keep all zones loaded at the same time . Sunset City had three different iterations . In the early stages , it was called Greenlight City , based on Burbank , California . This version of the city featured interior structures that could be explored by players , and existed when the game 's core concept revolved around " scavenge , craft , defend " . This city was replaced with " Razor City " when skateboarding , which later became oil slicks and trampolines , was introduced to the game . Razor City was " Neo @-@ Tokyo " -styled , but was later replaced by Sunset City which was more organized . While designing the game 's artificial intelligence , the team thought that the game 's enemies must force players to use the traversal system while simultaneously engaging in combat with them . Because of the game 's vertical design , the enemies were designed to adopt the game 's vertical map @-@ design . The team also developed a ? nav position tracker ? , which programmed these enemies to detect the location of players and find an ambush point .

The game is powered by an internal engine developed previously by Insomniac Games for its game Fuse . The engine of the game was reworked and optimized for the Xbox One . The game runs on 900p at 30 frame rate per second . The game originally ran at a higher definition of 1080p , but it was decided to fix it at 900p so that more actions and enemies can appear on @-@ screen .

= = = Audio = = =

Development of the game 's music was led by Boris Salchow , who had composed scores for Insomniac 's previous games Ratchet & Clank : A Crack In Time , Resistance 2 and Resistance 3 . He collaborated with composers from Microsoft Studios , and Pyramind music studio . The design team wanted the composers to implement eight different styles of music for eight different sections featured in the game . However , this idea was dropped as being confusing and overly @-@ chaotic . The team wanted to achieve a " high energy vibe " for this title and the resulting soundtrack features a lot of punk rock and electronic dance music . Fourteen different bands and artists were hired to perform the music often avoiding using musical instruments and writing lyrics for the game instead . The game 's soundtrack was also inspired by works from FIDLAR , DZ Deathrays and Ty Segall .

Composers tried to match beats @-@ per @-@ minute to the gameplay and traversal system . The game features a dynamic music system , in which in @-@ game actions are reflected by the music .

When there is more on @-@ screen action , or when players perform kills , the music becomes more frantic and exciting to help players further immerse themselves in the game .

= = = Release = = =

Sunset Overdrive was among one of the first Xbox One exclusives revealed at Microsoft 's press conference at E3 2013 . The first gameplay details were revealed by gaming magazine Edge in May 2014 . A gameplay demo and a release date announcement happened at E3 2014 . Insomniac had worked solely for the PlayStation family for about twenty years , and the announcement of Sunset Overdrive being an Xbox exclusive led to speculation that the relationship between Sony and Insomniac had ended . Insomniac denied such rumors , saying the company would still be working with other publishers to produce titles and that petitions would not change Sunset Overdrive 's status as an Xbox exclusive . It was released on October 28 , 2014 .

In addition to the game 's standard edition , players can purchase the game 's Season Pass , which adds new in @-@ game items , locations , quests , and bosses . There is also a Day One Edition , which includes three different downloadable content items : " Nothin ' but the Hits " gun , the Hardcore Hammer , and a Fizzie costume . Players who pre @-@ ordered the game from Xbox Live Marketplace also got two additional weapons : the Accordes de la Muerte and the Hangover . A white Xbox One bundle was also released for the game . To promote the game , Insomniac organized a series of shows called the Sunset TV . They provided new information to players regarding the game prior to its release . Microsoft also launched a website called Sunset Overdrive : Walter 's Workshop , which is a browser game that allows players to use some of the weapons featured in the game with footage captured in real @-@ life .

A three @-@ hour free trial of the game was available for players to download for a limited time . Once it was launched the game was supported with downloadable content (DLC) . Insomniac released multiple packs which add new weapons to the game . A story @-@ based DLC , titled The Mystery of the Mooil Rig , was released on December 23 , 2014 . Another story DLC , Dawn of the Rise of the Fallen Machine , was released on April 1 , 2015 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

Sunset Overdrive received positive reviews . It received aggregated scores of 83 % from GameRankings based on 63 reviews and 81 / 100 from Metacritic based on 89 reviews .

The game 's tone was praised by reviewers . Daniel Bischoff from Game Revolution praised the game 's comedic elements describing them as " contemporary " . He added that the game is one of the rare few that made him laugh while playing . Sam Prell from Joystiq appreciated the humor , and thought that its quality was boosted by the performance of the voice @-@ actors . His opinion was echoed by Peter Brown from GameSpot , who found the voice acting in the game entertaining and believable . However , Prell considered some humorous moments " hit @-@ or @-@ miss " . Andrew Reiner from Game Informer described the game as a " full circle " , in which Insomniac has incorporated all the elements from their previous game into this one . As a result , he thought that while the story emphasized comedy , it successfully reflected some pressing issues existing in society . Mollie L Patterson from Electronic Gaming Monthly appreciated the game 's humor , but noted that it would not be able to satisfy every type of player . Arthur Gies from Polygon described the story as " gleefully stupid " , and commended the self @-@ aware narrative . Chris Carter from Destructoid praised the jokes featured in the game . However , he disliked the story , which he thought failed to offer motivation for players to complete the game .

Sunset Overdrive 's gameplay was also commended by many reviewers . Prell compared the game favorably to Jet Grind Radio , Saints Row The Third , Infamous , and Ratchet & Clank . He singled out the traversal system , which he thought was fluid and well @-@ executed . He added that the

fast travel system was not useful in this game , since players can find a lot of fun by simply traveling between different locations in the game 's world . He thought that all of the game 's systems intertwined with each other , and ultimately made the game a complete and worthwhile experience . Reiner echoed similar thoughts , and considered getting around Sunset City fun for players . He added that the traversal system increased the game 's replay value . However , he was disappointed by the game 's occasionally repetitive mission design . Sliva and Brown shared similar thoughts , with the latter saying that the game featured too many fetch quests . Patterson disliked the game 's traversal ; he found that the system was frustrating at times . However , he thought that this problem lessened as players unlocked new moves and skills . Gies felt overwhelmed by the traversal options . He added that Insomniac had successfully created a system that was accessible for ordinary players , while creating challenges for those who want to master the system . However , he noted the camera system may not be able to track the movement of the character accurately . He further commended the game 's world design , and described it as one of the most " navigationally sophisticated " worlds he had ever experienced in a game . Bischoff considered the shooting mechanic " loose " , but thought that the problem was overshadowed by the game 's forgiving aiming and steady difficulty curve . Lucas Sullivan also criticized the mechanic , calling it " inconsistent " .

The customization options received acclaim . Bischoff praised the arsenal of weapons featured in the game , which he thought was deep , interesting , and creative , benefited by the Amps system , which added additional complexity to them . Prell described it as the " king " of the game . He praised the game 's ability to allow players to customize their characters , and considered the weapons featured " varied " , and thought they enhanced the game with personality . Reiner thought that all of the weapons featured in the game were fun to use , and that the amps system made experimenting with different weapons rewarding . Patterson also commended the game 's weapons though he was initially skeptical about them . Gies thought that the customization options allowed players to play the game as they preferred , and described the character creator as " flexible " . Marty Sliva from IGN praised the Amp upgrade system , which he felt encouraged players to try out unusual ways to experiment with it .

The game 's art style was applauded . Bischoff praised the colorful graphics and the different graphical effects featured in the game . He further praised the game 's presentation , which he thought would lead " the Xbox One console 's personality this generation . " Reiner compared the colorful graphics of the game to Sesame Street , and thought the bright colors " [electrified] the screen " . Reiner also praised the " Next @-@ Gen Respawn " system , and the protagonist 's animation . Sliva praised the design of the city , as he thought it featured a unique artistic style , and aided the traversal system . He added that the game 's visuals " pop " , and compared them to the " Easter Bunny on an acid trip " . Carter praised the variety existed within the game 's world , which he considered has prevented the game 's world from being repetitive , and made landmarks easily recognizable . Brown thought that the game did not look realistic , but felt this did not stop the game from being one of the best @-@ looking games available for the console . Sullivan also praised the use of colors , which he found was organic and vibrant . However , Steven Burns from VideoGamer.com was critical of the game 's world , finding it empty .

The game 's multiplayer received mixed reviews . Prell thought that the mission @-@ design was varied , and the voting system kept the mode from being repetitive . He also praised the interconnected structure between the single @-@ player and multiplayer , noting that the items that could be carried over from multiplayer to campaign made the mode feel rewarding for players . Reiner thought that the action featured in this mode is satisfying , but thought that the system lacked enough depth and complexity to engage players . Patterson echoed similar thoughts , and felt that the ability of players to switch between the campaign and the Chaos Squad mode made the multiplayer mode a rewarding experience . Brown criticized the mode , saying that its difficulty was not properly scaled .

The game was the second best @-@ selling game in the UK on its release , and was outsold by FIFA 15 . In its second week of release , it was the eighth best @-@ selling game .

== = Accolades == =