

= Sonic Unleashed =

Sonic Unleashed , released as Sonic World Adventure (Japanese : ?????????????? , Hepburn : Sonikku W?rudo Adobench?) in Japan , is a 2008 video game in the Sonic the Hedgehog series developed by Sonic Team and published by Sega for multiple platforms in 2008 . The game follows Sonic the Hedgehog as he attempts to restore the world to normal after his nemesis , Doctor Eggman . The game also focuses on Sonic 's ' werehog ' form , which he gains during the beginning after coming into contact with the energy of Dark Gaia . Gameplay features two distinct styles , with each being played either during daytime or night @-@ time . Daytime stages incorporate Sonic 's traditional platforming and trademark speed , with a combination of behind @-@ the @-@ back third @-@ person viewpoints and 2D side @-@ scroller platforming ; gameplay seamlessly transitions between these two views . Night @-@ time levels see Sonic transform into the Werehog ; gameplay slows down to accommodate greater platform play , and involves combat against waves of enemies using the Werehog 's brute strength .

The game 's existence was first brought to light when Sega trademarked the Unleashed name , and shortly after , images and a gameplay video were leaked to the public in March 2008 . Public anticipation for the game was high , owing to the video 's demonstration of some two @-@ dimensional gameplay , seen as a possible return to Sonic 's platforming roots . However , critical reception for the game was mixed , with reviewers praising certain elements , such as the sense of speed in daylight stages and the graphics and audio that make up the environments , and criticizing others , such as the new Werehog game mechanic , as well as several gameplay and design concepts . Many reviewers felt that Unleashed was ultimately not the title that would be able to reinvigorate the series . Sonic Unleashed was de @-@ listed in 2010 , following Sega 's decision to remove all Sonic titles with average Metacritic scores from sale in stores . Despite this , the game was made available to purchase on PlayStation Network on April 8 , 2014 .

= = Gameplay = =

Sonic Unleashed is a platform game in which the player controls the titular Sonic the Hedgehog in two modes : fast @-@ paced levels that take place during daytime , showcasing Sonic 's trademark speed as seen in previous games in the series , and slower , night @-@ time levels , during which Sonic transforms into the Werehog , and gameplay switches to an action @-@ based , brawler style of play , in which Sonic battles Gaia enemies (those created by the main enemy in the game , Dark Gaia) . Each level takes place on a particular continent , each of which is based on a real @-@ world location (i.e. , Greece @-@ based Apotos , Italy @-@ based Spagonia , Africa @-@ based Mazuri , New York @-@ based Empire City , China @-@ based Chun @-@ nan , Antarctica @-@ based Holoska , Middle East @-@ based Shamar , and Southeast Asia @-@ based Adabat . In sections of the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions of the game , the player may choose to advance the time of day in order to play as either Sonic or the Werehog ; in the PlayStation 2 and Wii versions , time is advanced automatically .

Daytime levels focus on Sonic 's speed , and to this extent , sees the player control Sonic through fast @-@ moving stages containing both 2D and 3D styles of gameplay . 2D sections are reminiscent of the Mega Drive / Genesis @-@ era Sonic games , where the player controls Sonic in a side @-@ scrolling fashion , while 3D sections see the camera placed behind Sonic , so the player may move in all directions . In addition to moves available in past games , such as the homing attack , new moves are also introduced . For instance , a new sidestep feature known as the Quick Step is available , allowing Sonic to dodge left and right , and a Drift feature , which allows Sonic to make tighter turns without slowing down . The game also features a gameplay mechanic previously used in the Sonic Rush series called the Sonic Boost , which greatly increases Sonic 's speed , allowing him to smash through objects , destroy enemies instantly , or even access different level paths . In the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions , an on @-@ screen " Ring Energy " meter displays how much boost is available . The amount of boost remaining may be increased by collecting more rings , and is decreased by using the Boost . In contrast , the PlayStation 2 and Wii

versions of the game represent available Boost using bars , which may be added by performing " Action Chains " , destroying multiple enemies in quick succession through the use of homing attacks , or by collecting rings . Japanese game company Dimps helped design some of the stages .

Nighttime levels feature slower @-@ paced , action @-@ oriented levels , in which Sonic transforms into the Werehog , a beast form that has great strength and stretchable arms . Gameplay here sees the player use a variety of melee and combo attacks to defeat large numbers of enemies , collect items , and move items around to advance through the level , and use his stretchable arms to cling to distant objects ; simple puzzle elements are also featured . Collecting rings in these levels replenishes the Werehog 's health , while a special move , Unleashed Mode , allows the Werehog to channel his energy into increasing the power of his attacks for a short time . Nighttime levels are adjusted in the Wii version to allow greater use of the Wii Remote , such that players may control the arms of the Werehog by using the Wii Remote and Nunchuk in order to grab onto objects and proceed in the levels . The Wii version of the game also expands upon the ratio of nighttime levels to daytime , with more than three times as many nighttime levels (twenty @-@ five in all) . After nighttime levels are completed , Dark Gaia Points are gained , allowing access to bonus moves .

In addition to these two gameplay types , Sonic Unleashed also features hubworlds , in which the player may reveal , as well as advance , the story of the game . Hubworlds operate differently depending on the version of the game being played ; the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions feature fully interactive , explorable 3D hubworlds , similar to those in Sonic 2006 and Sonic Adventure , in which townspeople may be interacted with and side quests may be undertaken , in order to gain experience or unlock items , such as artwork , videos and music tracks . In contrast , the PlayStation 2 and Wii versions feature menu @-@ based map systems , in which players simply click on areas to talk to townspeople and find information . Within both day and nighttime levels are medals that Sonic may collect , two types of which exist : Sun and Moon . In the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions , collecting these medals allows the player to level up Sonic 's Sun and Moon stats , and these must be increased to reach new stages in the game , with a certain number of Sun medals for Hedgehog levels , and a certain number of Moon medals for Werehog levels . Because only the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions feature playable hubworlds , these are also the only versions in which Sun and Moon medals may be found by exploring the towns , talking to the citizens , and completing side quests . In the PlayStation 2 and Wii versions , Sun and Moon medals are earned after completing stages and clearing their objectives . The medals are used to open up doors in Gaia gates , which can earn bonus content .

== Plot ==

In a cold open , Sonic is pursuing his nemesis , Doctor Eggman , bounding around a fleet of spaceships . After the defeat of several of his robots , Sonic transforms into Super Sonic . After a brief chase through the airships , Sonic corners Eggman . However , Eggman manages to trap him using a powerful new ray weapon which drains the power of the Chaos Emeralds , causing them to turn grey and useless . He then uses the Emeralds ' energy to fire an enormous laser and unleash a powerful beast , Dark Gaia , from the center of the planet , which has devastating consequences , shattering the planet into seven pieces . In addition , the ray and drained Chaos Emeralds have the unforeseen side @-@ effect of transforming Sonic into a " Werehog " ? a beast form with greater strength and abilities ? at night . Eggman then ejects Sonic into space , who then lands safely onto the planet below .

After landing along with the Emeralds , Sonic encounters a friendly creature who appears to suffer amnesia . Assuming he has caused it with his fall , Sonic decides to assist him in his quest to find out who he is , and the monster becomes a guide for the player ; Sonic soon gives him the nickname Chip . Sonic 's quest begins , and with the help of some old friends , such as Amy and Tails , he attempts to solve the crisis by traveling the world 's continents , finding shrines that will fix the Emeralds , in order to return the world , and himself , to normal .

After six of the seven continents are returned to normal , Chip is able to regain his memory ; he is in fact Dark Gaia 's opposite , Light Gaia . Since the beginning of time , the two of them had been in a

cycle where Dark Gaia would break the planet apart , and Light Gaia would put it back together . Chip was released along with Dark Gaia , but because both of them were released prematurely , he lost his memory , and Dark Gaia was broken apart . They are able to place the last Chaos Emerald in the shrine on the final continent at Eggman 's new empire , " Eggmanland " , but are interrupted by him ; Sonic then defeats Eggman who is using a robot that utilizes Dark Gaia 's power . During the battle , the three sink into the core of the Earth and encounter Dark Gaia . Eggman orders Dark Gaia to destroy Sonic , but it turns on him , knocking him away with one of its tentacles , and absorbs the power that turned Sonic into a Werehog , curing Sonic of lycanthropy , and uses that power to become Semi @-@ Perfect Dark Gaia .

Dark Gaia then attacks Sonic and Chip , but Chip protects Sonic and calls all of the Gaia temples together to form the Gaia Colossus and fight Dark Gaia . The Gaia Colussus seemingly destroys Dark Gaia , but Dark Gaia is not finished with them or the Earth yet , and consumes the entire world in darkness , becoming Perfect Dark Gaia in the process . Chip then gives the restored Chaos Emeralds to Sonic , allowing him to turn into Super Sonic and destroy it ; Dark Gaia then sinks back into the planet , but the battle takes its toll on Super Sonic . Chip saves Sonic by throwing him to the surface , before returning himself to the inside of the planet ; he leaves behind his necklace and some parting words . Sonic places the necklace on his hand as a bracelet to remind him of their adventure together before speeding off with Tails , flying alongside him on the coastline in the Tornado plane .

= = Development = =

Sonic Team began development of the game in 2006 , after having begun work on the core technology , the Hedgehog Engine , in 2005 . The title was first brought to public attention when the Sonic Unleashed name was trademarked by Sega on March 12 , 2008 . Screenshots of cut scenes , artwork , and a video were leaked ten days later , with the title then officially confirmed by Sega on April 3 , 2008 with a small selection of screenshots and an updated video . The game was developed internally by Sonic Team in Japan . It was originally intended to be the third installment of the Sonic Adventure series and subsequently , at an early development stage , had the working title Sonic World Adventure , complete with work @-@ in @-@ progress logo . However , the development team began to introduce enough new innovations to separate it from the Sonic Adventure titles , and so a new title , Sonic Unleashed , was decided upon . It was then later revealed that the game 's name in Japan would in fact remain Sonic World Adventure for its release there .

Sonic Team decided early on in the development process to reduce the number of characters present in the game , as well as to make Sonic the only playable character ; this decision was taken to get more quality out of fewer characters . While it felt that these ideas combined with traditional Sonic gameplay was a good beginning , it also had to consider how to introduce newer gamers unfamiliar with the Sonic franchise to the series , and so the concept of the Werehog was born , in addition to exploring its own mythology and ideas for the story . Director Yoshihisa Hashimoto felt from the outset that there would be both praise and criticism , but hoped that long @-@ term Sonic fans would understand and empathise with the ideas and direction the team had taken .

In terms of technology , Hashimoto remarked that the visual style was born out of desire to see a global illumination solution used for the game 's lighting ? that is , light reflecting from one object in the scene onto others . To this extent , development on the renderer for this process began , and the final solution allowed the developers to use distributed rendering over hundreds of computers to calculate lighting for each ten- to twenty @-@ kilometer action stage in around two or three days . Characters , enemies and objects are then lit at run @-@ time with Sonic Team 's " Light Field " technology to blend them in with the surrounding pre @-@ calculated lighting . Because the game was being developed for two levels of hardware capability depending on the target platform , two development " silos " were set up to work on two separate builds of the game : one for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 version utilizing the Hedgehog Engine , and one for the PlayStation 2 and Wii version , which instead utilizes a modified version of an existing , internal Sega engine . Hashimoto ,

who had never directed a Sonic game before , incorporated new features such as a " Quick Step " mechanic allowing players to dodge obstacles with the L and R triggers . Hashimoto sought to combine the best qualities of 2D and 3D Sonic gameplay and address the criticisms directed at previous 3D entries in the franchise . Additional code to dynamically adjust the speed of the game for different situations was used to properly balance its fast pace with traditional platforming elements .

As well as the unique motion @-@ based gameplay mechanics , the Wii version of the game also supports the GameCube controller , and also the option of using the Classic Controller . The daytime levels for the Wii were altered to accommodate the motion control @-@ based drift mechanic , while night @-@ time levels include a mostly behind @-@ the @-@ back view and different platforming styles and combat mechanics . Developer Dimps , who had past involvement in the Sonic franchise , was involved in the design of the daytime areas for these versions . In addition , overall , the PlayStation 2 and Wii versions have fewer daytime levels than the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 counterparts .

Initially , it was stated that Unleashed was to be intended solely as a single @-@ player experience , and would not offer any multiplayer or online modes . This was cast into doubt when references to online modes were alluded to around E3 2008 , but later interviews re @-@ iterated that Unleashed would have no online modes at all . However , downloadable content , including additional levels , would remain a possibility after the game 's release . A demo version was released on the Xbox Live Marketplace on December 8 , 2008 and on the US and EU PlayStation Stores on December 18 and 24 , 2008 , respectively . The demo does not contain any of the Werehog stages . On March 12 , 2009 Sega released Sonic Unleashed 's first downloadable content for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 , consisting of four Chun @-@ nan daytime stages and two night stages in addition to two new missions . Since then , more downloadable levels have been added : Spagonia , Holoska , Mazuri , Apotos , Shamar , Empire city and Adabat .

Speaking after the game 's release , Sonic Team member and Sonic and the Black Knight director Tetsu Katano remarked that although he did not feel the Werehog concept was a mistake , time and resources were a limiting factor in the game 's production . He also remarked that the Werehog may reappear in future games , or possibly in a sequel to Sonic Unleashed , should one be made .

Game developer Gameloft announced in May 2009 that it had secured a licensing agreement with Sega Europe Ltd. to produce mobile phone versions of Sega properties , and that its first title would be a version of Sonic Unleashed for mobile phone platforms . It was released in June 2009 in Europe , Middle East , Australia and New Zealand .

= = Reception = =

Initial anticipation when the first media for Unleashed was revealed was high , as the demonstration videos hinted at a possible return of Sonic to his traditional platforming roots , especially because of the series ' declining quality in recent years , and a number of poorly received titles in the franchise that preceded it , such as the 2006 game , Sonic the Hedgehog .

Critical reception to Unleashed was mixed , with Metacritic aggregate scores of 60 and 54 out of 100 for the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions respectively , and 66 out of 100 for the PlayStation 2 and Wii versions . The added element of motion controls for the Werehog sections , as well as text @-@ based hub worlds and better Werehog level design and camera system , were reasons cited for the higher review scores for the Wii version of the game , though a few review websites , such as 1UP , gave the Wii version a lower score than its Xbox 360 and PS3 counterparts . Nevertheless , the game was a commercial success and sold 2 @.@ 45 million units combined making it Sega 's third best selling game during their last fiscal year period of 2008 .

Positive elements of Sonic Unleashed remarked upon by reviews include the environments , such as the " postcard @-@ perfect architecture " , and the graphics , with stages looking " absolutely gorgeous " and being " very pretty and lovingly animated " , with one reviewer comparing them to a playable Pixar film . Praise was given to the technical competence of Sega 's new Hedgehog Engine as a whole on the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 versions , with " bright cartoonish graphics that fly by

without a stutter " ; however , some complaints were raised about frame rate reduction when large numbers of enemies appeared during the Werehog sections . Although the Wii and PlayStation 2 versions do not use the Hedgehog Engine , graphics for these platforms were still praised for their high quality , with the title being nominated for Best Graphics Technology for the Wii by IGN in its 2008 video game awards . The soundtrack to the game was also praised as being an improvement on more recent installments in the series ; use of an orchestral score , rather than rock as in more recent games , was appreciated .

An overwhelmingly negative reaction was given by critics to the Werehog concept and corresponding night @-@ time sections , which contributed greatly to the lower than expected review scores . Some reviewers compared the Werehog sections to God of War . Complaints stemmed from the game 's change of speed , from high @-@ speed daytime sections to the slower , night @-@ time sections ; the " pace @-@ breaking combat levels " were described as " plodding " , as well as " lethargic " and " combat @-@ heavy " . Further to the change of pace , the new style of gameplay that accompanies the night @-@ time levels was widely criticized , involving " frustrating " platform elements and combat described as not " terribly interesting " and " boring " , with " awkward " action sequences overall . Some reviewers felt that the Werehog as a concept did not mix well with the daylight areas and traditional Sonic gameplay ; GamePro 's review described them as " dreadfully out @-@ of @-@ place " , while IGN stated that they have " nothing to do with Sonic whatsoever " , feeling that the Werehog was " being slapped on " to the Sonic experience .

In stark contrast to the Werehog sections , many reviewers found the daytime levels to be enjoyable , especially the " exhilarating " sense of speed they provide ; with " the most satisfying gameplay of any Sonic title in years " , the game " perfectly [captures] the feel of classic Sonic " . Many also enjoyed the mixture of , and transition between , 2D and 3D sections . Indeed , many reviewers remarked that they would have appreciated the game more had it consisted solely of , and expanded upon , the daytime levels . GameSpot 's review for the Xbox 360 version , however , argued that the controls were " unresponsive " in the daytime levels , and that most of them were " horribly designed " , instead describing the Wii version as a " vastly superior experience " , with its daytime levels praised for better control and design .

Aside from the criticism of Werehog levels , further aspects of the game were criticised , contributing to the mixed review scores . The quests that players must undertake in hub @-@ towns were described as " inane " and " tedious " , where " figuring out what happens next involves aimlessly wandering through towns and speaking to citizens , only to discover that most of them don 't know what we 're looking for " . The story and overall tone of the game , including the new character Chip , were criticised , some remarking that it was too juvenile , or comparable to that of a Saturday morning cartoon .

= = Legacy = =

The game 's original soundtrack , entitled Planetary Pieces : Sonic World Adventure Original Soundtrack , was released as a three @-@ disc set in Japan on January 28 , 2009 . The main theme music for the game is entitled " Endless Possibility " , and features Jaret Reddick of the American rock band Bowling for Soup . The ending theme music for the game is a slow tempo ballad entitled " Dear My Friend " , and features singer Brent Cash .

Downloadable packs containing extra levels for this game are available on the PlayStation Network and the Xbox Live Arcade .

Archie Comics has made an adaptation of Sonic Unleashed featuring the opening cutscene and Sonic 's transformation into the Werehog . A short 3D animated film was released on November 21 , 2008 , entitled Sonic : Night of the Werehog , which tells the story of two male ghosts who live in a haunted house taking pictures of scared children in order to woo a female ghost , and their frustration with an unafraid Sonic who enters the house with a very afraid Chip . But soon , it 's the ghosts who are afraid when Sonic looks at the full moon and transforms . The film was produced by Sega VE Animation Studio .

On March 25 , 2010 , a pack of Sonic costumes was released to the PlayStation Store for the

PlayStation 3 game LittleBigPlanet . The pack includes Sonic , Tails , Knuckles , Dr. Eggman and Sonic the Werehog .

For Sonic 's 20th anniversary , Sonic Generations includes major gaming aspects from past titles . A remake of the Rooftop Run stage appears in the console and PC versions , along with a modified Egg Dragoon serving as the second @-@ to @-@ last boss of those versions . However , Sonic does not retain the Werehog form and instead must fight the machine in his normal form .

On May 14 , 2014 , Archie Comics ' Sonic the Hedgehog comics branched out to follow some of the main events in Sonic Unleashed , such as the planet breaking apart , and the addition of Sonic the Werehog starting in issue 264 .