

= Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII =

Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII (Japanese : ????? ????? -????????????VII- , Hepburn : Bifoa Kuraishisu -Fainaru Fantaj? Sebun-) is an action role @-@ playing video game developed by Square Enix and originally released for the FOMA mobile service on September 24 , 2004 . It was later released for SoftBank Mobile and EZweb in 2007 . Before Crisis is a prequel to the 1997 video game Final Fantasy VII and forms part of the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII , a metaseries expanding on and continuing the story established in Final Fantasy VII . It takes place six years prior to the events of Final Fantasy VII and focuses on the adventures of the Turks , a group of covert operatives working for the Shinra Electric Power Company , and their fights against both rebel group AVALANCHE and their corrupt employers .

As the first major Final Fantasy game for mobile devices , Before Crisis was designed as a gameplay and multiplayer experience unique to the platform . It is the first major project directed by Hajime Tabata , who created the initial concept at the request of Tetsuya Nomura for a game that had the Turks as protagonists . The music was composed by Takeharu Ishimoto , originally a sound arranger at Square Enix . It was highly successful upon release , registering 200 @,@ 000 users and being accessed over one million times . Western critics have generally praised the title , but due to issues involving the capacity of mobile devices in the west , it has not been released outside Japan .

= = Gameplay = =

Before Crisis is a real @-@ time action role @-@ playing game featuring 2D graphics as the player moves along in a side @-@ scrolling manner . The player begins the game by selecting their character , which can be a man or a woman , along with their name . Gameplay is divided up between several modes of play . " Episode Mode " involves the player playing through the game 's main storyline , completing various objectives in order to continue on in the game . " Free Mode " allows players to roam towns and speak with the population . Players can also play extra missions to gain Experience points and items , some of which are exclusive to " Free Mode " . Characters have hit points and magic points , and can level up upon acquisition of experience , at which point they can equip new weapons and armor . Players can choose to manually attack an enemy during combat or press the action key to automatically attack the nearest enemy .

The " Materia Generation System " allows players to acquire Materia , objects tied to the game 's magic system , by taking a picture with their camera phone . The game synthesizes the picture down to its base color . Depending upon the dominant color , lighting , and other factors , the game produces a Materia of a certain type . For example , a dark green picture results in a Bio Materia , while a blue picture results in a Cure Materia . Once acquired , Materia can be leveled up as in Final Fantasy VII . Under certain circumstances , assistance in the form of summoned monsters , recurring figures in the Final Fantasy series , can be called in via the Materia system to deal damage to multiple enemies . Rank Points are awarded during the completion of objectives in all three modes of play . After a certain amount of Rank Points have been acquired , special bonuses are unlocked , such as stronger armor and weapons , and extra Materia slots . The player is also given a rank , based upon how long they have been playing the game . The higher their rank , the better the bonuses the player gets .

The game uses an ad @-@ hoc online multiplayer feature that enables various actions between players , including trading Materia via email . Players can summon a friend to cast magic by filling the " Materia aid " meter . Up to three players can team up at any one time . " Rescue Mode " is activated if the player is defeated during " Episode Mode " , at which point they have the option to restart and lose points , or allow themselves to be imprisoned and wait for other players to rescue them . The player can be rescued while their phone is powered down .

Additions were made after the initial release . In 2006 , a fighting arena dubbed " Battle Square " was added . In the " Battle Square " , players can either fight other players or AI @-@ controlled enemy units . Victory is determined by which side defeated the other and damage taken during

combat . In " Battle Tournament " mode , players can choose to use a handicap : the handicap is determined randomly by a materia slot . Two extra difficulty settings were also added , with players able to switch between these and the normal difficulty in the game menu . " Easy Mode " was released in 2006 and allows the player to auto @-@ evade incoming attacks and reduce damage taken , while " Hard Mode " , released in 2007 and meant for advanced users , increases the damage dealt by enemy attacks .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

Before Crisis is set six years prior to the events of Final Fantasy VII . The world on which Before Crisis is set , called " the Planet " in @-@ game and " Gaia " by game staff , is divided into multiple regions run by a megacorporation called the Shinra Electric Power Company . Shinra uses the energy of the Planet , known as the Lifestream , to power the world , and as such is endangering the Planet and its people . The events of Before Crisis frequently overlap with those of Crisis Core : Final Fantasy VII . The exact setting is shortly after the end of a war between Shinra and the people of Wutai . With Wutai defeated , and the people of the world now dependent on Shinra 's energy , the company becomes the dominant economic , military and political power in the world . Rising against them is AVALANCHE , a rebel group who rightly believe that Shinra 's energy extraction is slowly killing the planet .

The playable characters and main protagonists are the Turks , a group of covert operatives working for Shinra . The playable characters in @-@ game are eleven new Turks : ten of them are designated by their weapon or fighting style and their gender , while the eleventh is known as Legend (Male) . Their true name can be selected by the player . One of the characters , Shuriken (Female) , later turns up in Crisis Core under the name " Cissnei " . The Turks are led by Veld , a veteran of the group , and later Tseng , a character who plays an important role in other VII stories . Their primary antagonists all belong to AVALANCHE . The three important AVALANCHE characters are Elfé , the leader of AVALANCHE and Veld 's daughter ; Fuhito , a scientist who acts as the planner for the group ; and Shears , AVALANCHE 's second @-@ in @-@ command . Multiple characters from VII make appearances either as cameos or supporting characters , such as protagonists Cloud Strife , Tifa Lockhart , Aerith Gainsborough , and Zack Fair ; and originals antagonists Rufus Shinra , son of the company president ; and Sephiroth , a SOLDIER who would go rogue .

= = = Plot = = =

Before Crisis opens with the trainee Turks on a mission in the city of Midgar to investigate AVALANCHE activities . With help from Reno , AVALANCHE retreat . However , the attack proves to be a diversion for a greater strike at the town of Junon , where President Shinra is set to give a speech . President Shinra is shot , but survives , and calls in Sephiroth . However , it transpires that even the attack on the President was a diversion , and AVALANCHE 's real target was a weapon called the Mako Cannon , which they planned to fire at Midgar , destroying the city . Elfé and Sephiroth do battle at the cannon , but the fight ends inconclusively , and AVALANCHE withdraw . AVALANCHE next target Rayleigh a professor carrying data on the SOLDIER members and their creation . The Turks are sent to protect Rayleigh , accompanied by several Shinra guards , including Cloud . Fuhito , a scientist working for AVALANCHE , is able to corrupt Rayleigh 's data when the Turks disobey orders and save Rayleigh instead of protecting the information . Using the SOLDIER data , Fuhito develops an elite unit known as the Ravens , using them to capture two SOLDIERs , Essai and Sebastian . The Turks succeed in rescuing the pair , and are then sent to destroy AVALANCHE , accompanied by Zack . Essai and Sebastian , however , are captured once again , and turned into Ravens . Even though Zack is able to bring them back to their senses , he is unable

to save them .

Meanwhile , President Shinra becomes suspicious of the Turks activities , believing that someone within the organization is leaking sensitive information . He concludes that it must be Veld , and removes him from command , instead placing the company 's security leader Heidegger in charge . In his first operation however , Heidegger nearly destroys Junon , and the President reinstates Veld . In his first mission back in command , Veld plans to defeat AVALANCHE . An assault is launched at a Mako Reactor , during which Rufus Shinra is revealed to be the traitor supporting AVALANCHE . He is captured by the Turks and placed under house arrest . At the same time , Shears defects to the Turks in an effort to save the gravely ill Elfé . Veld discovers that Elfé is his daughter Felicia , whom he thought dead in a botched Shinra operation , and resigns from the Turks . With Elfé continuing to weaken , Fuhito takes over the command of AVALANCHE . It is revealed that a Materia owned by Elfé is Zirconiade , an ancient and powerful summoned monster that Fuhito intends to use to destroy humanity and stop them harming the planet . However , the Materia is broken , and is slowly draining Elfé 's life energy . To save her , the four Support Materia must be found . Fuhito holds one , and the Turks and Shears hold another .

Meanwhile , not wanting Rufus ' betrayal become known , the President orders the Turks ' destruction . Despite this imminent threat , the Turks manage to find two more Support Materia . Under Fuhito 's control , the remainder of AVALANCHE is turned into a vicious army of uncontrollable Ravens , and he manages to steal all the materia needed . In the final battle , Fuhito summons Zirconiade , fusing the summon with his own body , and Shears sacrifices himself to save Elfé . Fuhito transforms into a monster , but he is defeated by the Turks . After the battle , Tseng falsely claims that both Veld and Elfé are dead , so as to protect them from being hunted by Shinra . The Turks are then reorganized , with Tseng reinstated as their immediate leader , but they are now sworn to loyalty to Shinra as part of the bargain for their survival . The original Turks find new lives for themselves in hiding , and are later seen helping in the evacuation of Midgar during the events of VII .

= = Development = =

Before Crisis was created as part of the Compilation of Final Fantasy VII , a multimedia series based in and on the world and characters of VII . While the film Final Fantasy VII : Advent Children was originally to be the only product of the Compilation , the production team agreed that one title was not enough to explore the world of Final Fantasy VII in full , so more titles were decided upon , including Dirge of Cerberus : Final Fantasy VII and Crisis Core . Before Crisis was originally conceived by Tetsuya Nomura , one of the creative minds behind Final Fantasy VII and the Compilation . His initial idea was simply for a mobile action role @-@ playing game using the mobile network . During pre @-@ production , it was decided to set it within the world of Final Fantasy VII . Hajime Tabata joined at this point . He approached Tabata , who had only recently joined the company 's mobile games division , and asked if the division could create a mobile game focused on the Turks . Nomura would end of designing the game 's characters . Production began in 2002 . It was worked on by a core team of 18 people . Staff from the original game took supervisory roles . The game 's title was thought up by Tabata , and would go on to establish a system of letter @-@ based abbreviations used by staff for titles in the Compilation . To help solidify their goal , the staff created a timeline for the world of Final Fantasy VII . Since there was little definite information concerning events prior to Final Fantasy VII , they had a relative amount of creative freedom , including creating an early , more violent incarnation of rebel group AVALANCHE . Although Before Crisis is the second title created for the series , it was the first to be released because Advent Children was delayed during post @-@ production .

Before Crisis was the first original video game developed by Square Enix exclusively for mobile phones , originally released on NTT DoCoMo 's FOMA mobile devices , and the first action role @-@ playing game exclusive to the platform . The company 's first major mobile title , also in collaboration with NTT DoCoMo , was a remake of the original Final Fantasy . Using lessons learned from the development of the Final Fantasy port , the team worked hard to make Before

Crisis a uniquely mobile experience , with gameplay features built to exploit mobile functions such as the camera and network capacity . The camera function used to generate Materia was based on a simple image recognition that specifies the Materia generated based on the picture 's general color . One of the challenges during development was to keep the framerate smooth during moments of high action , especially as no two mobiles would have identical components . In addition to these problems were issues with integrating the multiplayer functions , balancing the gameplay for different playstyles , creating a comfortable button layout , and adjusting the amount of content they could include for mobiles while maintaining the desired product quality .

To promote the game , Madhouse created a promotional animation featuring some of the main characters . The original version 's beta test started in August 2004 . It was released on September 24 . Following an announcement at the Tokyo Game Show in 2006 , the game was released for two additional Japanese mobile carriers . It was respectively released for SoftBank Mobile and EZweb on January 30 and April 5 , 2007 . New logos were created for each release . In 2010 , Tabata voiced an interest in fully remaking Before Crisis for the Nintendo 3DS , revamping the narrative delivery and incorporating the ability for a substantial number of players to enter missions . This suggestion was positively received by Nomura and Yoshinori Kitase , but at the time Tabata was busy developing Final Fantasy Type @-@ 0 (then Agito XIII) and The 3rd Birthday . Deployment for the SoftBank version ended in June 2015 .

== Music ==

The composer for Before Crisis was Takeharu Ishimoto , who would go on to compose music for Crisis Core . Originally joining the company as a music arranger , he was one of many staff who participated in a competition set up by the game developers to find a composer for Before Crisis . His task was to create a piece of music that was related to the world of Final Fantasy VII , but still distinctive . It was one of Ishimoto 's first jobs as the main composer for a title . The music of Before Crisis was commercially released along with the music from the original video animation Last Order : Final Fantasy VII in an album titled Before Crisis : Final Fantasy VII & Last Order : Final Fantasy VII Original Soundtrack . The majority of the tracks of the album were composed by Ishimoto , apart from a few reorchestrated themes from VII , the music of which was written by regular Final Fantasy composer Nobuo Uematsu .

== Localization ==

The game 's release in the west was announced at the 2006 Electronic Entertainment Expo , two years after its release in Japan . At the announcement , the localization was said to be " coming along nicely . " The stated reason for the delay between the original and projected western release was that mobile phones in the west were not yet advanced enough for the game . One of the things planned for the western release was to bring the entire experience over as quickly as possible , with plans for one to three chapters released each month , and fine @-@ tuning to be done using the planned two @-@ year gap between the original and western releases . It formed part of a push by the company into the western mobile game market . Despite these announcements , no further progress has been made and Before Crisis was never released in the west . The official reason for this , as stated by head of mobile operations Keiji Fujita , was that mobile phones in the west were too low @-@ spec for Before Crisis , which could only run on high @-@ end phones in Japan , making a port impossible . Another possible reason suggested by Fujita was Ito 's move from Square Enix to Capcom in 2008 , leaving no @-@ one to manage any future localization and porting efforts .

== Reception ==

Japanese website ITmedia reviewed the beta version in September 2004 . The reviewer enjoyed the experience overall and found communication with other players easy , but found a few faults

with the game that they hoped would be resolved later , and generally found the female characters less effective in battle . During its first day of operation , the game registered 200 @, @ 000 users , making it the best @-@ selling mobile game up until that time , and was accessed 1 @.@ 6 million times . According to Ito , by 2006 , the game was still highly popular in Japan .

Previews and features concerning the game have generally been positive . AnimeFringe commented that the visuals seemed " remarkable good " and praised the game for choosing to " reverse the good and bad guy roles , " by making the Turks protagonists , and AVALANCHE antagonists . Cara Lee Haslam of RPGamer previewed the game at E3 2006 and stated that the " graphics are really great , especially for a cell phone game , " although she also noted that the animation " isn 't the best . " GameSpot 's Bethany Massimilla also previewed the game at E3 , calling it " perfectly digestible in delivery , " with its use of episodic storytelling that comes in " small bursts in between action periods . " She also stated that the game had " well @-@ defined and detailed character portraits and lean , lanky character models running around the city and mako reactor , which had a simple layout but still looked nice . " Massimilla praised the smooth animations , and felt that " the controls were easy to learn and were responsive . " Additionally , she thought the demo phone 's vibrating function , set off when the player receives a call from Tseng , was a subtle detail . Levi Buchanan of IGN was generally positive , praising the dark art style , and finding the short mission @-@ based structure ideal for mobile gameplay . 1UP.com listed the game as one of five classic Japanese mobile games unlikely to come to North America .

Outside its immediate reception , Before Crisis had an effect on other projects within the Final Fantasy series . After the positive reception of Madhouse 's animated commercial , they were chosen by Square Enix to animate Last Order . The high popularity of Before Crisis in Japan led indirectly to the creation of Type @-@ 0 , part of the Fabula Nova Crystallis Final Fantasy subseries and then a title for mobiles .