= Solar 2 =

Solar 2 is an open world sandbox video game developed by Jay Watts ' video game studio , Murudai . It was released on 17 June 2011 on Steam for Microsoft Windows and on 19 June 2011 on Xbox Live Indie Games for the Xbox 360 . The game was developed with Microsoft 's XNA tools , and its development was inspired by indie games such as flOw . The game follows the player in their mission to accumulate enough mass to become several astronomical objects , eventually becoming a big crunch , which then produces a Big Bang .

The game is a sequel to Solar (2009) , and features most of the same key gameplay elements of its predecessor , expanded and polished considerably . It was developed over ten months and includes a score composed by sound designer and musician JP Neufeld . Solar 2 received mainly positive reviews from video game journalists , scoring 72 out of 100 on aggregate website Metacritic . It was awarded the first prize at the 2011 Microsoft Dream Build Play competition , and was among the video games showcased at the 10th Penny Arcade Expo .

= = Gameplay = =

Solar 2 is an open world sandbox video game played from a two @-@ dimensional perspective . The player is given an asteroid , and their main mission is to accumulate enough mass to become several astronomical objects . The game ends when and if the player manages to accummulate enough mass to become a big crunch , which then produces a Big Bang . However , the player is free to not finish the game , and is able to stay at the form of the object of their preference . Six different object are available in the game : small planet , life planet , small star , medium star , large star and black hole .

The game takes place in a borderless and randomly generated universe , filled with asteroids , planets , stars and solar systems . Life forms are also present in the game . They appear on planets sufficiently big to store life , and are represented by a variety of ships of different size and attack power . Spaceships are coloured green if they belong to the player 's planet , or to a planet that belongs to the player 's solar system ; red if they belong to an enemy planet or solar system ; and white if they don 't belong to any planet or system . All the spaceships in the map are controlled by the game 's artificial intelligence (AI) , and they will constantly engage in combat against enemy ships , asteroids or planets to destroy them .

At the beginning of the game , the player accumulates mass by colliding their asteroid against other asteroids until enough mass has been gathered to become a small planet . From there , the player has to absorb other asteroids to make their planet grow enough to become a life planet ; crashing against other objects will decrease the player 's mass . At this point , life forms will evolve in the planet , creating spaceships , planetary shields and cannons . If the player wishes , they can accumulate more mass until their planet becomes a star . Life forms will disappear , but the player will be able to attract planets to form a solar system , further grow the star by absorbing other planets , or a combination of both . The player can also create multi @-@ star systems by selecting planets from their system and make them absorb asteroids until they become another star .

Growing the star will increase its gravitational force , which increases the number of planets the solar system can have . They will also be able to attract solar systems composed of stars with lower mass than that of the player , or being attracted to stars with bigger mass . If both stars collide , they will be reduced to a lesser size within the same type of object . For example , if the player controls a small star and collides against a medium star , the player will be disintegrated while the AI @-@ controlled star will be reduced to a small star . Being reduced from small star to life planet is not possible , as well as being reduced from small planet to asteroid . In these cases , the player is respawned , with random mass , close to the place where they collided .

Solar 2 also includes a variety of achievements and object @-@ oriented missions that can be played at any time . Missions can be found following the directional arrows in the interface , and the AI keeps track of which missions the player has finished . The game also keeps record of several accomplishments the player has reached , such as the distance travelled , the amount of objects

and enemies destroyed by the player or the spaceships belonging to the player . Solar 2 allows the player to save progress at any point . A " save system " feature is also present ; it allows the player to save specific configurations of stars and planets that the player has created . The player can respawn from them at any time .

= = Development = =

Solar 2 was developed by Jay Watts under his video game studio Murudai . Watts , who received a degree in biotechnology from an Australian college , had no previous knowledge of video game development prior to coding Solar 2 's predecessor , Solar , for the Xbox 360 . Development of Solar started in July 2008 as a Flash game . Many of the key gameplay elements featured in the sequel , such as the infinite sandbox , were envisioned during this timespan . In an interview with FleshEatingZipper , Watts revealed that Thatgamecompany 's indie game flOw was an inspiration for him : " I loved the simplicity of the game and the ambiance . " Solar , released in 2009 , became a commercial success ; it sold 30 @,@ 000 copies and allowed Watts to work full @-@ time on its sequel .

Development of Solar 2 lasted for at least ten months . The game was developed using Microsoft XNA , a set of tools focused on video game development created by Microsoft . According to Watts , Solar 2 was " mainly expanding on [Solar 's] original idea and polishing it to perfection . " However , he commented that the concept of both games took several design iterations to reach its final version : " I played with many , many ideas before finally settling on what I have now . " Sound designer and musician JP Neufeld composed the game 's score . According to Watts , this was done because there was " no way I could do music as good as he can . " Both the Windows and Xbox 360 version of the game were developed simultaneously . About the Xbox 360 version , Watts commented that " the lack of keyboards and the aging Xbox 360 hardware were a bit tricky , and updating the Xbox version is a huge pain to do . "

= = Release = =

Solar 2 was released on 17 June 2011 on Steam for Microsoft Windows and on 19 June 2011 on Xbox Live Indie Games for the Xbox 360 . On July 2012 , Watts announced that he was working on Mac OS X and Linux versions of the game . However , given that the original game was developed using the Windows @-@ only XNA platform , he expected the ports to be ready sometime before the end of the year . In October 2012 , the Mac port was announced and released on Steam . The iPad version of the game was released in March 2013 . An Android version was also made available on March 2013 .

= = Reception = =

Solar 2 received a positive response from video game journalists upon release . At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the game received an average score of 72 based on 8 reviews . Most critics praised the physics @-@ based gameplay and soundtrack , but criticized the exceedingly difficult missions and somewhat repetitive gameplay . However , the game won the US $ 20 @,@ 000 first prize at the 2011 Microsoft Dream Build Play competition , and became a finalist at the 2011 IndieCade festival . Solar 2 was also among the ten indie video games showcased at the 10th Penny Arcade Expo , held in August 2011 .

IGN 's Gord Goble criticized the difficulty of the missions but praised the game 's soundtrack , which he called a combination of " new age @-@ meets @-@ Alan Parsons Project @-@ meets @-@ Pink Floyd @-@ meets @-@ 2001 : A Space Odyssey audioscape . " He also highlighted several features he would have liked to see in the game , such as a more complex universe to explore and the ability to control the life forms in the planets controlled by the player . Graham Smith from PC Gamer was also critical of the missions ' difficulty , although concluded that it was " a good price for a universe . " GamePro 's Nate Ralph mentioned the life forms as the only negative aspect of the

game .
 The iPad and Android versions of Solar 2 were also well received . App Spy 's Andrew Nesvadba , on his review of the iPad version of the game , highlighted the overall sense that " nothing about the game feels like a waste of time or effort , " but criticized the lack of control over the life forms . Meanwhile , Andrew Martonik from Android Central acknowledged that Solar 2 had all the elements necessary for a great game .