= Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back =

Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back is a platform video game developed by Naughty Dog and published by Sony Computer Entertainment for the PlayStation . It is the second game in the Crash Bandicoot series , and the sequel to the original game . Originally released in 1997 , it was re @-@ released for the Sony Greatest Hits and Best for Family line @-@ ups in 1998 , for the Platinum Range in 1999 and for the PSone Books line @-@ up in 2001 . The game was later made available to download from the PlayStation Network , and its remastered version is scheduled to be released for the PlayStation 4 in 2017 .

Taking place on a fictional group of islands near Australia , Crash Bandicoot 2 follows the adventures of the anthropomorphic bandicoot Crash . Crash is abducted by series villain Doctor Neo Cortex , who has seemingly turned over a new leaf and now wants to save the world . Crash is then thrust into several parts of N. Sanity Island in order to gather Crystals that will allow Cortex to contain the power of an upcoming planetary alignment and keep the planet from being destroyed . Crash is joined by his sister Coco , who is suspicious of Cortex 's true intentions , and by Doctor Nitrus Brio , who tries to persuade Crash to gather Gems instead of Crystals .

Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back received generally positive reviews from critics and was considered to be superior to its predecessor . Much of the praise went to the game 's graphics , control and music , with major criticisms varying between the trial @-@ and @-@ error gameplay , lack of level variety , easy boss levels and lack of innovation . The game went on to become one of the best @-@ selling PlayStation video games of all time and replaced its predecessor as the highest @-@ selling Western title in Japan , selling more than 800 @,@ 000 units in the country by April 1998 .

= = Gameplay = =

Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back is a platform game in which the player character is the titular Crash Bandicoot . The goal of the game is to gather 25 crystals for Crash 's nemesis Doctor Neo Cortex . The crystals are scattered between 25 different levels , accessible via " Warp Rooms " , which are hub areas of the game . A level is cleared by collecting its respective crystal and reaching the end of its path , which returns Crash to the Warp Room . Each Warp Room contains 5 levels . When all five levels are cleared , the player must defeat a boss character before gaining access to the next Warp Room . The player is given a certain amount of lives , which are lost when Crash is attacked by an enemy , or falls into water or a pit . If all lives are lost at any point in the game , the " Game Over " screen will appear , at which point the character may continue from the last level .

Crash has the ability to jump into the air and land on an enemy character , spin in a tornado @-@ like fashion to knock enemies off @-@ screen , slide across the ground , and perform a body slam to break certain objects . Crash can jump higher than he normally can if he jumps immediately following a slide . All of these techniques can be used as offensive measures against most enemies , whom serve to deter Crash 's progress . Enemies with deadly topsides cannot be jumped on , while enemies that attack from the front or have side spikes must be jumped on or undergo a body slam . Enemies with sharp necklines (such as frill @-@ necked lizards or long @-@ legged robots with heated circumferences) can only be defeated if Crash slides into them .

Boxes play a prominent role in Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back and can be broken with all of Crash 's techniques . Most boxes in the game contain " Wumpa Fruit " , which give the player an extra life if 100 of them are collected . Some boxes contain a Witch Doctor 's Mask , which shields Crash from one enemy 's attack while it is in his possession . If three of these masks are collected in a row , Crash is given temporary invulnerability from all minor dangers . If jumped upon , boxes with arrows pointing up propel Crash further into the air than he can ordinarily reach , and such boxes can be broken only with Crash 's spin attack . Boxes with an exclamation mark (!) on them cause previously intangible objects in the area to solidify . TNT Boxes explode after a three @-@ second fuse when jumped on , while Nitro Boxes explode upon any physical contact . All of the Nitro Boxes

in a level can be detonated at once if a green @-@ colored box with an exclamation mark (!) on it is touched . Check Point boxes allow Crash to return to the point where the first Check Point box has been opened upon losing a life . If more than one Check Point box has been opened in a stage , Crash returns to the last Check Point box that has been opened . The player will earn a gem if they manage to destroy all the boxes , including Nitro Boxes and boxes on alternate routes , in a level . Certain gems can be acquired by other means , like reaching the end of a level within a certain time parameter , or completing a level without breaking any boxes .

" Bonus Paths " , signified by platforms with a question mark (?) on them , lead Crash to a secret region of the level . In these areas , numerous Wumpa Fruit and extra lives can be earned if the player successfully navigates to the end of the path . If Crash falls off @-@ screen or is otherwise killed off , the player is unable to keep whatever was collected in the Bonus Path and is returned to the level from which the Bonus Path was accessed , keeping all lives the Player had previously collected .

= = Plot = =

After Crash Bandicoot defeats Doctor Neo Cortex and rescues his girlfriend Tawna , Cortex falls from his lair down towards the Earth , his maniacal bid for world domination thwarted . After crashing , Cortex awakens in a dark cavern filled with glowing crystals . Convinced that they hold tremendous power , Cortex takes one and returns to his laboratory to examine it . He discovers that the planets will soon align , creating a catastrophic solar flux that threatens to destroy Earth itself . Learning that the crystals are the only means of containing this force , Cortex enlists the aid of his old colleague Doctor N. Gin and they design a new , upgraded , crystal @-@ powered " Cortex Vortex " to capture the stellar energy . Realizing they need 25 more crystals to power the device , Cortex devises a plot to manipulate Crash into retrieving the crystals for him .

One year later , Crash is living with his younger sister Coco on N. Sanity Island , one of the islands owned by Cortex in the previous game . After Coco 's laptop battery dies , she forces a sleeping Crash to get her a new one . While doing so , Crash is abducted by a bright light and finds himself in an old Warp Room hidden in Cortex 's castle , where a holographic projection of Cortex instructs him to bring him the crystals by traveling through the Warp Room 's doors . After Crash collects a crystal , Cortex informs Crash of the upcoming destructive force and assigns him the task of bringing all of the crystals to him so that he may contain it . After retrieving a gem , Crash is greeted by a hologram from Doctor Nitrus Brio , Cortex 's former assistant from the previous game , who is now out to stop Cortex 's plans for world domination . Brio explains that the Earth contains gems in addition to crystals , and that collecting 42 gems will allow Brio to fire a laser beam that can destroy the Cortex Vortex .

As Crash gathers the remaining crystals , he is attacked by several mutated animals dispatched by Brio , including the demented kangaroo Ripper Roo , the scimitar @-@ wielding Komodo Brothers Moe and Joe , and the musclebound Tiny Tiger . During Crash 's progression , Coco occasionally hacks into his holograph projector and warns Crash of her uncertainty of Cortex 's true intentions . It is not until Crash has gathered the crystals that Coco is able to reveal Cortex 's ultimate plan : with the energy harnessed from the planetary alignment , Cortex will power the gigantic Cortex Vortex built onto his space station and brainwash everyone on Earth into serving his army . Crash manages to defeat Cortex before the crystals can be used , but leaves the Cortex Vortex drifting aimlessly into space . Crash redeems himself by collecting the world 's gems for Brio , who reveals that the gems can harness planetary energy as well and invites him to the completion of his laser device ; Crash activates the laser and destroy the Cortex Vortex , breaking the space station apart .

= = Development = =

Production of Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back began in October 1996 . Development took place over the course of 13 months on a budget of $ 2 million . The concept art for the game 's environments was mainly created by Naughty Dog employees Bob Rafei , Eric Iwasaki , Erick

Pangilinan , Charlotte Francis and Jason Rubin . The jungle levels were originally to have featured ground fog , but this was abandoned when magazines and the public began to criticize other developers for using fog to hide polygon count . Sunlight and depth accentuation was experimented with for these levels . Naughty Dog created the sewer levels as a way to work some " dirty " locations in the game . Color contrast was added to the levels to show depth and break up the monotony of sewer pipes . The character of Coco Bandicoot was created by Naughty Dog as a counterbalance to Tawna (Crash 's girlfriend in the first game) that would appease Sony Computer Entertainment Japan , who weren 't comfortable with a " super sexy " character being alongside Crash . Character designer Charles Zembillas drew the first sketches of Coco on March 18 , 1997 .

For the game , Crash Bandicoot co @-@ creator Andy Gavin programmed a new engine named " Game @-@ Oriented Object LISP 2 " (GOOL 2) ; being three times faster than the previous game 's engine , it could handle ten times the animation frames and twice the polygon count . A flat plane z @-@ buffer was created for the game ; because the water surfaces and mud in the jungle had to be a flat plane and be exactly flat on the Y @-@ axis , there could be no waves and the subdividing plane could not be at an odd angle . The effect only worked on objects in the foreground and was only used on Crash , some enemies and a few boxes at the same time .

The soundtrack of Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back was written by Josh Mancell from Mutato Muzika , while the sound effects were created by Universal Sound Studios (consisting of Mike Gollom , Ron Horwitz and Kevin Spears) . The characters were designed by Charles Zembillas of American Exitus , Incorporated . Clancy Brown provided the voice of Doctor Neo Cortex , while Brendan O 'Brien voiced the dual role of Crash Bandicoot , Doctor N. Gin and Doctor Nitrus Brio and Vicki Winters voiced Coco Bandicoot . The game was unveiled at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Atlanta , Georgia on June 1997 to a positive response from the game industry . The game went into the alpha stage on August 1997 . Around that time , Dan Arey , the lead designer of Gex : Enter the Gecko , joined Naughty Dog and streamlined the level design . A death animation in which Crash is squashed into a stunned head and feet was altered for the Japanese version of the game due to its resemblance to the severed head and shoes left by a serial killer loose in Japan at the time .

= = Reception = =

Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back received generally positive reviews from critics . John Broady of GameSpot considered the game to be superior to its predecessor , commenting positively on the Warp Room concept , improved game @-@ saving system and variety of the levels . The staff of IGN praised the " spot on " control and noted the decreased linearity of the game and increased intuition of the bonus levels compared to the first game . Mark Cooke of Game Revolution described the game as " undeniably fun " .

The game 's graphics were positively received . GameSpot 's Broady described them as " in a league of their own among PlayStation games " , while the IGN staff praised the high @-@ resolution graphics as " beautiful " . Game Revolution 's Mark Cooke noted the absence of cutscenes brought about by the entirety of the game being " rendered on the fly beautifully " and that the game could " really set some new standards in Playstation graphic quality . " He went on to describe the animation as " flawless " and of " cartoon quality " and added that the game 's " creatures , environments , and story building scenes are absolutely perfect . " The game 's audio was also well @-@ received ; Broady simply stated that the music " couldn 't be better " , while Cooke said that Clancy Brown 's " hilarious satirical " performance as Doctor Neo Cortex added to the game 's cartoonish quality .

Minor criticisms varied amongst critics . Broady noted that the semi @-@ 3D setup is " sometimes hard to navigate " and elaborated that " you 'll find yourself missing jumps because you 're unable to judge distances properly . " Additionally , he criticized the trial @-@ and @-@ error aspect of the gameplay as " just plain cheap " and stated that " in some areas you must sacrifice many lives until you memorize a level 's layout . " The IGN staff said that the level design " isn 't as varied as it could be " and added that the " jungle , snow and water " environments are recycled from the previous

game and reused multiple times in Cortex Strikes Back . They also described the boss levels as " insultingly easy " . Cooke observed that , like its predecessor , the game did not add anything to the genre and summarized that " the first Crash was dauntingly similar to the 16 @-@ bit platform games of yester @-@ yore , only with better graphics , and Crash 2 doesn 't deviate much from this formula . " He also described the " bizarre " lenticular 3D cover art of the game as " unnecessary and evil " and " a device of unprecedented agony " , claiming to have contracted a massive headache after " looking at it in [his] car for about 15 seconds " .

 Since its release , Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back has sold over 5 @.@ 17 million units worldwide , selling about 3 @.@ 78 million units in the United States and 1 @.@ 3 million units in Japan . This makes it one of the best @-@ selling PlayStation video games of all time . The game 's success resulted in its re @-@ release for the Sony Greatest Hits line @-@ up on August 30 , 1998 and for the Platinum Range in 1999 . The game replaced Crash Bandicoot as the highest @-@ selling non @-@ Japanese title in Japan , selling over 800 @,@ 000 units by April 1998 . Crash Bandicoot 2 : Cortex Strikes Back was initially released on the European PlayStation Network on July 26 , 2007 but was withdrawn on August 7 , 2007 , along with Spyro 2 : Ripto 's Rage ! and MediEvil , as a precautionary measure when the latter two games experienced technical problems . The game was released on the North American PlayStation Network on January 10 , 2008 and re @-@ released on the European PlayStation Network on February 2 , 2011 .