

= Perfect Dark (2010 video game) =

Perfect Dark is a remastered release of the first @-@ person shooter video game by the same name . Developed by 4J Studios and published by Microsoft Game Studios a decade after the original 's 2000 release , the remaster features several technical improvements , including higher resolution textures and models , a higher frame rate , and a multiplayer mode that supports the Xbox Live online service . It was released for the Xbox 360 video game console in March 2010 , through the Xbox Live Arcade download service . The story of the game follows Joanna Dark , an agent of the Carrington Institute organization , as she attempts to stop a conspiracy by rival corporation dataDyne .

Perfect Dark was under development for nearly a year and its game engine was completely re @-@ written from scratch to support several Xbox 360 features . Therefore , although the game plays exactly the same as the original , the code and renderer is different . The game received generally favorable reviews . Some critics considered the relatively unchanged game to be outdated , but most agreed that the title was a solid revival of a classic . As of the end of 2011 , the game had sold nearly 410 @,@ 000 units .

= = Gameplay = =

Perfect Dark is a first @-@ person shooter with elements of stealth games . In the game 's campaign mode , the player controls Joanna Dark through a series of nonlinear levels collected together into missions . Each level requires the player to complete a certain number of objectives , ranging from disguising oneself to hacking computers , collecting objects , and defeating enemies , among others . Players can carry an unlimited number of weapons and almost all of the weapons have two firing modes . The levels in Perfect Dark have no checkpoints , meaning that if Joanna is killed or fails an objective , the player has to start the level from the beginning . Every level can be played on three difficulty settings and several aspects , such as the enemies aggressiveness and the number of objectives that must be completed , among others , can vary in function of the chosen difficulty . Two players can also play the campaign co @-@ operatively or through a " counter @-@ operative " mode , in which one player controls the protagonist , while the other controls enemies throughout the level , attempting to stop the first player from completing objectives .

The game also features a multiplayer mode , called Combat Simulator , where various players can compete against each other in different types of deathmatch and objective @-@ based games . Aspects of each game can be highly customized . Features such as the weapons available , the winning condition , and team management can be changed to match player preference . Computer controlled bots , called Simulants , can also be added to the game and each of them can be individually customized , including their appearance , difficulty , and behavior . Players can also issue orders to the Simulants on their respective team ; for example , Guard tells a Simulant to stay in its current location and guard that area . The player can explore the Carrington Institute , which serves as the game 's training ground , and take part in different training activities . The most substantial of these activities is the shooting range , which allows the player to test all the weapons of the game against moving targets .

= = = Enhancements = = =

The remaster offers several improvements over the original Perfect Dark that was released for the Nintendo 64 in 2000 . The most remarkable change is that any of the multiplayer modes , including co @-@ operative and counter @-@ operative , can now be played in either splitscreen or through the Xbox Live online service . Combat Simulator matches are still capped at 12 entities , but the game can now comprise eight players online simultaneously , an improvement to the original 's cap of four players and eight Simulants . Players can also play against more than eight Simulants as long as there are enough slots available in a match ; for example , a single player can play against 11 Simulants ; such a feature was not possible in the original game . Unlike the original game , all

the multiplayer content is unlocked from the beginning , and weapons from the game 's predecessor , which were originally only available in the missions , are now available to use in multiplayer . The game features an online leaderboard system and players can earn achievements and in @-@ game crowns by accomplishing certain tasks . The game also includes two new control set @-@ ups , entitled " Spartan " and " Duty Calls " , which are based on the popular first @-@ person shooter franchises Halo and Call of Duty respectively .

= = Plot = =

Perfect Dark is set in the year 2023 against the backdrop of an interstellar war between two races : the Maians , who resemble the stereotypical grey aliens , and the Skedar , reptile @-@ like extraterrestrials who can disguise themselves as humans , bearing similarities to Nordic aliens . On Earth the megacorporation dataDyne has developed in secret Dr. Carroll , the world 's first sentient AI computer . Feeling that dataDyne has betrayed ethical and moral standards , Dr. Carroll contacts the Carrington Institute , an espionage agency founded by Daniel Carrington , with the hope of revealing dataDyne 's sinister dealings . He is recovered by Joanna Dark , the Institute 's top agent , but is later recaptured by dataDyne at Carrington 's private villa . Joanna is then sent to Chicago to once again recover Dr. Carroll and uncover dataDyne 's plan . She learns that dataDyne and their conspirators plan to kidnap the President of the United States in order to get access to a deep sea vessel which will allow the conspirators to steal an alien megaweapon buried on the ocean floor .

Meanwhile , Joanna is ordered to rescue a Maian survivor named Elvis from Area 51 who is key in stopping the conspiracy . She succeeds and the pair work together to rescue the president . She learns the conspirators are actually Skedar aliens disguised as Scandinavian humans who intend to test the weapon on the Earth before using it against the Maian homeworld . Without permission from the president , dataDyne elect to hijack the deep sea vessel and take it to the ancient alien spacecraft . With the help of Elvis , Joanna follows where she finds a reprogrammed Dr. Carroll decoding the megaweapon . She replaces its current personality with a backup of the original , and the restored Dr. Carroll sets the weapon to self @-@ destruct in order to protect Earth . In retaliation , the Skedar capture Joanna and take her to their homeworld . Elvis rescues her and she then kills the Skedar High Priest , leaving the Skedar in disarray . The game ends with Elvis and Joanna leaving the Skedar planet just prior to an orbital bombardment from the Maian navy .

= = Development = =

Perfect Dark was ported by 4J Studios , the same studio that previously developed the Xbox Live Arcade versions of Rare 's platform games Banjo @-@ Kazooie and Banjo @-@ Tooie . According to Microsoft Game Studios creative director Ken Lobb , the development team " took the original code , ported it to the Xbox 360 and included deep [Xbox Live] integration . " The game was developed over a course of approximately 11 months after the creation of a working prototype . As the Xbox Live functionality had to be written from scratch , the developers opted to completely rewrite the game engine rather than do a port through emulation . As a result , although the game plays exactly the same , the code and renderer is different . The game also runs at 1080p and 60 frames per second .

While the original level geometry was kept , the levels received new textures , characters and weapons were recreated , and skyboxes were rebuilt . Lobb explained that " things are large and blocky because that 's what [Perfect Dark] looks like " , meaning that the sharper textures and higher resolution simply make the game look clearer . He also observed that , as character and weapon models were remodeled from their original low hundreds polygon count to polygons in the thousands , he was worried about them looking awkward in the low @-@ poly geometry level design . According to him , " it 's one of the areas that I give a lot of credit to the developer on . It just looks right . They were smart about the way they up @-@ resed the models so they still feel like they 're kind of retro , but they 're clean . "

Although music and sound effects were kept from the original recording sessions , original master

recordings have been used to update the soundtrack at much higher quality ; the original recording size was 16 MB , while in the remaster it is over 250 MB . Developers also decided to retain the free aim mode because they wanted to be faithful to the original game . According to Rare 's Producer Nick Ferguson , " We didn 't change the fundamental behavior of the aiming system simply because that is not how Perfect Dark was played " . He also observed that the idea of updating the controls was actually seen as a flaw in Perfect Dark Zero , which tried to " combine the original Perfect Dark system with aspects of Halo " . The original diagonal running , which allows players to move faster than by running forwards or sideways alone , did not work the first time they implemented the analog stick , so it was manually rewritten as it was considered essential for speedruns and achieving some of the target times required to unlock cheats .

= = Marketing and release = =

Perfect Dark was first teased to consumers in April 2009 via a screenshot of a Rare employee 's Xbox 360 dashboard which showed an icon for the game . It was confirmed to be in development on June 2 , 2009 via Xbox Live Director of Programming Larry Hryb 's Twitter account . The game was released on March 17 , 2010 as part of Microsoft 's Xbox Live Block Party promotion . As a cross @-@ promotion with the game Crackdown 2 , users can unlock that game 's protagonist , known simply as Agent 4 , although a Crackdown 2 savegame is required on the Xbox 360 hard drive . A title update was released in April 2010 which addressed bugs , added two control schemes , and expanded playlists . Perfect Dark was downloaded over 150 @,@ 000 times during its first week of release and grossed approximately \$ 1 @.@ 61 million at the end of the month . The game has sold more than 285 @,@ 000 units as of August 2010 and nearly 325 @,@ 000 units at the end of 2010 . As of year @-@ end 2011 , sales had increased to nearly 410 @,@ 000 units . In 2015 , the game was released as part of the Rare Replay compilation for Xbox One .

= = Reception = =

Perfect Dark received generally favorable reviews from critics . Writing for 1UP.com , Scott Sharkey highlighted the technical improvements , stating that the remaster is " a great way to re @-@ enjoy a game you already love " . Daemon Hatfield of IGN noted the game 's outdated dialogue , voice acting , and mission objectives , but nevertheless remarked that the game " wasn 't brought back for the uninitiated -- this is for the fans , and they will be very , very happy . " He also praised the game 's multiplayer mode over Xbox Live and highlighted the selection of weapons , the satisfying gunplay , and leaderboards , noting that they allow players to compare their performance with their friends .

Despite the praise , some reviewers criticized the game for its confusing level layouts and felt they have not held up very well over the years . Christian Donlan of Eurogamer stated that Perfect Dark is " not afraid to throw dead ends at you seemingly for the hell of it , or repeat textures so much in its huge maps that you can get a little dizzy . " GameSpot 's Tom Mc Shea noted that the campaign was " oddly paced " , and that " locked doors , unused rooms , and dead ends ... can be disheartening to stumble around in a circle until you finally happen upon the correct door you just couldn 't locate . " Nevertheless , he admitted that " it 's a lot of fun to replay them to try for high scores and figure out the many unique objectives . " He also remarked that that online play can periodically suffer from a significant amount of lag , but praised the amount of content and features .

The game 's original Counter @-@ Operative mode was very well received , with Eurogamer remarking that it " still feels ahead of its time even now . " Dan Ryckert of Game Informer stated similar pros , saying that " it 's even better this time around thanks to the framerate improvement . " Although the game 's controls have been upgraded to support two analog sticks , Steven Hopper of GameZone noted that the game still " feels a little different from what modern day shooter fans are used to " , while Eurogamer remarked that the aim assist can be unnecessarily generous on easy difficulties . At the end of March 2010 , IGN named Perfect Dark Xbox Live Arcade Game of the Month .