= Mass Effect 2 =

Mass Effect 2 is an action role @-@ playing video game developed by BioWare and published by Electronic Arts . It was released for Microsoft Windows and Xbox 360 on January 26 , 2010 , and for PlayStation 3 on January 18 , 2011 . Mass Effect 2 is the second installment of the Mass Effect series and a sequel to the original Mass Effect . The game takes place within the Milky Way galaxy during the 22nd century , where humanity is threatened by an insectoid species known as the Collectors . The player assumes the role of Commander Shepard , an elite human soldier who must construct and gain the loyalty of a diverse team in order to defeat the enemy in a suicide mission . With the use of a completed saved game of its predecessor , the player can impact the story of the game in numerous ways .

For the game , BioWare changed several gameplay elements and put further emphasis on third @-@ person shooter aspects , including limited ammunition and regenerable health . In contrast to the exclusive focus on the main story of the original Mass Effect , the developers opted to create a plot where optional missions had as much intensity as the main mission . Mass Effect composer Jack Wall returned to compose Mass Effect 2 's music , aiming for a darker and more mature sound to match the mood of the game . Mass Effect 2 also supports a variety of downloadable content packs , ranging from single in @-@ game character outfits to entirely new plot @-@ related missions . Notable packs include Overlord , Lair of the Shadow Broker , and Arrival .

Mass Effect 2 was a commercial success and received considerable acclaim from video game publications , with the Xbox 360 version holding a score of 96 out of 100 at the review aggregate website Metacritic . Critics praised multiple aspects of the game , including its interactive storytelling , characterization , and combat . In contrast , some reviewers expressed concerns about the game 's simplified gameplay compared to the previous game in the series . The game received numerous year @-@ end awards , including Game of the Year at the 14th Annual Interactive Achievement Awards , and Best Game at the 2011 British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards . The game is frequently cited as one of the greatest video games of all time . A sequel , Mass Effect 3 , was released in 2012 .

= = Gameplay = =

Mass Effect 2 is a single @-@ player action role @-@ playing game in which the player takes the role of Commander Shepard through a third @-@ person perspective . Shepard 's gender , appearance , military background , combat @-@ training and first name are determined by the player before the game begins . The player may choose to import a character from a completed saved game of the original Mass Effect or start the game with a new character . Importing an old character allows several decisions the player made in the original game to impact the story of Mass Effect 2 and grants the player a set of starting bonuses . The game features six different character classes for the player to choose from . Each class is proficient in a different set of powers and weapon types . For example , the Vanguard class is specialized in close @-@ range combat and shotguns , while the Infiltrator class relies on stealth combat and the use of sniper rifles .

The world of Mass Effect 2 is a galaxy map that the player can explore to find and complete quests . Most quests consist of combat missions , but some involve the player interacting with local characters during visits to settlements . As the player progresses throughout the game , different locations and new squad members become available . Experience points are gained by completing quests . Each time a sufficient amount of experience is obtained , the player " levels up " and is awarded Squad Points that can be used to develop powers for both Shepard and the members of the squad . Powers provide enhanced combat capabilities , with each power having four ranks that can be unlocked . Each rank costs the same number of Squad Points as its rank . For example , unlocking the first rank of a power requires one point , but unlocking all four ranks of a single power requires a total of ten points . Upon raising a power to its fourth rank , the player must evolve the power into one of two given forms .

The player 's primary mode of transportation is a starship which serves as Shepard 's base of

operations . Aboard the ship , the player can interact with the squad members , customize the player 's armor , travel to numerous planetary systems , and scan planets for mineral resources . These resources allow the player to research numerous in @-@ game upgrades that are found in the missions , providing benefits such as increasing weapon damage , fortifying the player 's health , or extending the ship 's fuel capacity , among others . Scanning requires the player to move a reticle over a planet and launch a probe when an oscilloscope warns of near resources . Additional upgrades , equipment , and nonessential items such as magazines and decorations for the ship can be purchased from merchants in settlements .

= = = Combat = = =

 Combat in Mass Effect 2 is squad @-@ based and a maximum of two combat members may accompany the player on the battlefield . The player has direct control of Shepard while the squad members are controlled by the game 's artificial intelligence . Battles take place in real @-@ time , but the player can pause the action at any time to calmly target enemies and select different powers for the squad members to use . The game uses an over the shoulder perspective akin to a third @-@ person shooter , and places strong emphasis on using cover to avoid taking damage while fighting enemy forces . The player may also issue commands to the squad members , such as sending them to take cover behind a manually picked object or focus their fire on a designed target .

 Unlike the original Mass Effect , where weapons overheat if fired continuously for prolonged periods , the weapons of Mass Effect 2 have a finite magazine and must be reloaded after a certain number of shots . Shepard and the squad members are protected by a damage @-@ absorbing shield . When the shield is fully depleted , further damage reduces the hit points of a secondary health meter . Both the shield bar and health meter automatically regenerate when not taking fire for a brief period . The player can revive fallen squad members with the use of the Unity power . However , if Shepard dies , the player must start the game again from the last saved point .
 All enemies are protected by health , shields , armor , barriers , or a combination thereof . Each type of protection has its own vulnerabilities . For example , armor is usually vulnerable to powers such as Incinerate , which burns enemies over time , and to weapons with a low rate of fire such as sniper rifles and heavy pistols . In contrast , shields are vulnerable to powers such as Overload and to rapid @-@ firing weapons like submachine guns and assault rifles . Barriers are typically used by boss @-@ type enemies and are vulnerable to certain weapons and powers . When the shields , armor , or barriers of an enemy have all been depleted , the player can use status @-@ effect powers such as Pull , which temporarily levitates targets into the air , incapacitating them . Other powers may temporary benefit the player ; for instance , Adrenaline Rush puts the player in bullet time . Powers do not require any sort of expendable resource ; they only have a global refresh time period .

= = = Dialogue and morality = = =

 During conversations with characters , Mass Effect 2 employs a radial command menu , called Dialogue Wheel , where the player 's dialogue options depend on wheel direction . The left side of the wheel is normally reserved for options that will continue the conversation in depth , while options on the right side tend to move the conversation towards completion . Responses at the top are generally more polite and selfless , while those at the bottom are more aggressive and hostile . The game also introduces a context @-@ sensitive interrupt system , allowing players to interrupt the conversation with direct actions at certain times . Dialogue choices impact how others react to Shepard , the rewards for completing missions , possible discounts from merchants , romances and , most importantly , the Commander 's morality .
 Morality is measured by Paragon (charm) and Renegade (intimidate) points . These points affect the availability of new special Paragon and Renegade dialogue options with significant impact in the game . For example , the game features some missions to gain the loyalty of the squad . What the

player does during one of these missions will determine whether they gain the loyalty of a squad member , which in turn will unlock a special power and also help in the final battle . Endings range from the entire team surviving to the entire team being killed , Shepard included , and everything in between . Upon completing the game , a New Game Plus option is unlocked , allowing players to replay the game using the same character with which they finished it .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting = = =

Mass Effect 2 is set within the Milky Way galaxy during the 22nd century where interstellar travel is possible through the use of mass transit devices called Mass Relays , a technology believed to have been built by an extinct alien race known as the Protheans . A conglomerate body of governments known as the Citadel Council controls a large percentage of the galaxy and is responsible for maintaining law and order among races of the galactic community . Races that belong to the Citadel Council include humans , asari , salarians , and turians . Other alien races seen in the game include the reptilian krogan and drell , the environmental suited quarians , and a hostile race of networked artificial intelligences called geth .
During the events of the original Mass Effect , a geth army attempted to open a portal for a highly advanced machine race of synthetic @-@ organic starships known as the Reapers . It is believed that the Reapers eradicate all organic civilization every 50 @,@ 000 years . The galactic community has since lived in fear of another possible invasion . Meanwhile , a pro @-@ human organization called Cerberus believes that humans deserve a greater role in the galactic community and supports the principle that any methods of advancing humanity 's ascension are entirely justified , including illegal or dangerous experimentation , terrorist activities , sabotage , and assassination . As such , the Citadel Council has declared Cerberus to be a terrorist organization and will prosecute Cerberus agents accordingly .

= = = Characters = = =

The protagonist of the game is Commander Shepard (voiced by Mark Meer or Jennifer Hale) , an elite human soldier who is the Commanding Officer of the SSV Normandy and Normandy SR @-@ 2 starships . Shepard 's squad members include human Cerberus officer Miranda Lawson (Yvonne Strahovski) , human Cerberus operative Jacob Taylor (Adam Lazarre @-@ White) , salarian scientist Mordin Solus (Michael Beattie) , turian vigilante Garrus Vakarian (Brandon Keener) , human criminal Jack (Courtenay Taylor) , genetically engineered krogan soldier Grunt (Steve Blum) , quarian technician Tali 'Zorah (Liz Sroka) , drell assassin Thane Krios (Keythe Farley) , asari Justicar Samara (Maggie Baird) or Samara 's serial killer daughter Morinth (Natalia Cigliuti) , and geth mobile platform Legion (D. C. Douglas) . Two additional squad members , bounty hunter Zaeed Massani (Robin Sachs) and master thief Kasumi Goto (Kym Hoy) , appear in the game 's downloadable content packs Zaeed - The Price of Revenge and Kasumi - Stolen Memory respectively . Other characters include Normandy 's pilot Jeff " Joker " Moreau (Seth Green) , Cerberus leader the Illusive Man (Martin Sheen) , and Normandy SR @-@ 2 's enhanced defense intelligence , also known as EDI (Tricia Helfer) .

= = = Plot = = =

Mass Effect 2 begins weeks after the events of the original game . While patrolling for geth resistance , the SSV Normandy is attacked by an unknown starship , forcing the crew to abandon ship . During the evacuation , Shepard tosses Joker into the Normandy 's final escape pod before being blasted into space . After a suit breach , Shepard dies of asphyxiation as his / her body is pulled into the orbit of a nearby planet . Shepard 's body is recovered shortly after death by

Cerberus , who creates the Lazarus Project with the sole purpose of bringing Shepard back to life . After two years , Shepard awakens on an operating table to ringing alarm bells in a research station under attack by its own security mechs . Shepard teams up with Jacob Taylor and medical officer Wilson to reach the escape shuttle . However , Miranda Lawson , who was already waiting at the shuttle bay , shoots Wilson , citing him as the station 's betrayer . Shepard is brought to meet with the Illusive Man , who reveals that entire populations of human colonies are disappearing all over the galaxy .

Now working for Cerberus , Shepard is sent to investigate a recently attacked colony where he / she finds clues about the validity that the Reapers are working by proxy through an insectoid species called the Collectors . The Illusive Man explains that Shepard must construct a team in order to stop the Collectors who reside beyond the Omega @-@ 4 Relay , a place from which no ship has ever returned . Shepard is also given command of a new starship , the Normandy SR @-@ 2 , piloted again by Joker and equipped with an onboard AI named EDI . Shepard recruits four new squad members ? Mordin Solus , Garrus Vakarian , Jack , and (optionally) Grunt ? before receiving intel from the Illusive Man that another human colony is under attack . With the help of Mordin 's studies on Collector biology , Shepard successfully stops the attack , but a large portion of the colony 's population is captured . Shepard continues to recruit squad members , adding Tali 'Zorah , Thane Krios , and Samara , until the Illusive Man contacts Shepard about a supposedly disabled Collector ship . As Shepard and the squad board the ship , they encounter no Collector resistance and learn that the Collectors were originally Protheans turned into slaves of the Reapers . With EDI 's help , Shepard finds out how to bypass the Omega @-@ 4 Relay before being ambushed by the Collectors . Although Shepard and the squad manage to escape the Collector ship , relations between Shepard and the Illusive Man are strained due to the Illusive Man 's knowledge of the Collector trap .

After optionally earning the loyalty of the squad , Shepard visits a derelict Reaper and acquires an IFF transponder necessary for safe travel through the Omega @-@ 4 Relay . Shepard may acquire a disabled geth that , if activated , voluntarily joins the squad and is given the name of Legion . The Normandy integrates the IFF into her systems while Shepard and the squad leave the ship in a shuttle . During their absence , the Normandy is attacked and boarded by the Collectors . Only Joker avoids capture and , with EDI 's help , is able to get the Normandy away from the ambush . After Shepard 's squad returns to the Normandy , the team uses the Omega @-@ 4 Relay to get to the Collector base , located in the Galactic Center . In the Collectors base , the team rescues any surviving members of the Normandy and fight their way to the central chamber . Squad members may survive or perish depending on their loyalty to Shepard , the upgrades made to the Normandy , and the tasks assigned for specific members to perform in the battle .

In the central chamber , Shepard discovers that the Collectors have been constructing a new Reaper made from the genetic material of the abducted humans , but EDI is unsure of its true purpose . Shepard destroys the machine powering the human Reaper and prepares to destroy the Collector base . However , before doing so , the Illusive Man contacts Shepard and gives the order to sterilize the base with a radiation pulse so that its information can be used against the Reapers . After choosing to destroy or sterilize the base , Shepard destroys the awakened human @-@ reaper larva and , if enough squad members survived , escapes the base before the bomb detonates . If no squad members survive , Shepard will be unable to escape the Collector Base and will die . Back on the Normandy , Shepard speaks with the Illusive Man , who either praises or condemns Shepard 's decision . As Shepard meets in the Normandy 's cargo bay with the survivors of the mission , Joker gives the Commander schematics of a Reaper . Humanity now has the full attention of the Reapers , who awaken in dark space and descend upon the galaxy , setting the stage for Mass Effect 3 .

= = Development = =

Mass Effect 2 was developed by BioWare and directed by Casey Hudson , who previously led the production of the first Mass Effect game . Development of the game started in early 2008 , shortly before the Microsoft Windows version of the original game was released . Before actual production

for Mass Effect 2 began , BioWare created a list of goals to work towards based on feedback from fans , reviewers and internal people . The development team 's main goal was to " create an experience that was less about being a game and more about being an experience . " In contrast to the exclusive focus on the main story of the original Mass Effect , Hudson explained that BioWare was interested in a plot where side stories had as much intensity as the main story and decided that the idea of recruiting people and making them loyal to the player so that they could survive a suicide mission allowed to explore these possibilities . He noted , " the funny thing is that people will say ' other than gathering your crew and building your team and getting ready for this mission , there 's not much story there . ' But that is the story . "

During the first stages of development , the designers ' priority was purely on streamlining and polishing the shooting aspects ; RPG elements did not start until this process was complete . According to lead designer Christina Norman , " we wanted more satisfying combat and a big part of that is making weapons more accurate and powerful at level one ? basically saying ' let 's take the RPG out of the shooter . ' " Since BioWare had no experience with shooter games , the team spent roughly three months tuning how combat would work using the original Mass Effect as a basis . Norman explained that they wanted the weapons to have their own identity , noting that the final build of the game has 19 weapons with 108 tuning variables . The inclusion of limited ammunition was not initially part of the main game design and was simply implemented for some early playtesting . However , the developers eventually felt it improved the tension and pacing of combat .

BioWare wanted more real @-@ time gameplay with emphasis on weapons and cover . Norman explained that the constant pausing to select powers interrupts the intensity of the combat . For that reason , the team added more options to assign different abilities to the game controller for use in real @-@ time . Developers also decided to introduce regenerating health because it prevents players from playing erratically and relying on health kits . Norman remarked that it was important not to oversimplify the RPG elements but to still make them easier to use . She explained that the original game offered " too many choices that weren 't particularly representative of how they would impact the game . In Mass Effect 2 , the leveling options were pared down and made more descriptive . " For the character classes , the developers wanted to create very different play styles , " even if it meant cutting some of the possible choices . " The powers were balanced with a unified recharge time since the earlier system where powers could be used sequentially was considered " ridiculous and endgame easy . "

Mass Effect 's inventory screen was criticized by video game journalists and players , and designing a new inventory system for Mass Effect 2 was one of the main concerns during development . The idea was to be able to handle a large number of characters with simplicity . To this end , Norman spent time examining various RPG inventory systems , though none could be applied to support such a large number of characters . The team ultimately decided to implement a unified system where a character could use a weapon without taking it away from someone else . Norman explained that the inventory of Mass Effect 2 is " so simple some people say it 's not an inventory system . " Keeping track of the enemies ' strengths and weaknesses was made more consistent with different types of health bars so that players did not have to estimate what types of challenges they were facing when fighting new enemies . The game 's HUD was revised eight times during development .

In March 2009 , a new development team of 30 people was set to work at the EA Montreal studio to supplement the teams already working on the game . The new team was composed of a number of people who worked on the original game but the majority was new hires . Mass Effect 2 contains voices from 90 voice actors who play 546 characters and speak over 25 @,@ 000 lines of dialogue . Voice recording for the game took twice as long as the original Mass Effect . Hudson mentioned two significant challenges that interfered with the development : the 2008 ? 2012 global recession limited the game 's budget , and the team had to get through it without impacting their ambitious goals . Additionally , due to the spread of the 2009 H1N1 virus , a significant part of the team was ill during the last months of development , resulting in a loss of a man @-@ year of time . Despite these factors , Hudson described the development of the game as successful " on time , on budget , and exceeding quality goals . "

Mass Effect 2 was simultaneously developed with the same level of dedication for the Microsoft Windows and Xbox 360 platforms . According to former BioWare and Electronic Arts vice president Greg Zeschuk , " our philosophy is to lovingly handcraft every version so that players have a different entry point , different interface , different controls that work really well . " BioWare initially denied that a PlayStation 3 version was in the works . Despite this , it was reported that the Microsoft Windows version of the game featured lines of code referencing the PlayStation 3 . BioWare responded that the Unreal Engine , the game engine that Mass Effect 2 uses , is a cross @-@ platform , which is the reason why it includes PlayStation 3 code . Eventually , a PlayStation 3 version of Mass Effect 2 was released a year later than the Xbox 360 and Microsoft Windows versions of the game . The PlayStation 3 version uses a modified version of the Unreal Engine 3 called Mass Effect 3 engine ; the same engine BioWare was using for the then @-@ upcoming Mass Effect 3 . In this newer version , character models were slightly improved and controls were updated to support the PlayStation 3 controller , even though an option which allowed to switch back to the Xbox 360 layout was also added .

= = Music = =

The music of Mass Effect 2 was primarily composed by Jack Wall . His previous work with BioWare was as the main composer for Jade Empire and the original Mass Effect . The score also features some pieces by Sam Hulick , David Kates , and Jimmy Hinson , with additional editing and in @-@ game implementation by Brian DiDomenico . Unlike the original Mass Effect , the composers aimed for a darker and more mature sound to match the mood of the game . The music incorporates both orchestral and classic sci @-@ fi arrangements which were inspired by the soundtrack of the cult classic film Blade Runner and music by German electronic group Tangerine Dream . The harmonic structure of Wendy Carlos 's Tron soundtrack also represented significant influences . To complement each character , the composers gave them their own theme song to convey their personalities and backgrounds . According to Kates , " it was one of our mandates to create a dynamic score that expressed a wide range of emotions . "
Music from the game has been released in several albums . BioWare released the main soundtrack album , Mass Effect 2 : Original Videogame Score , on January 19 , 2010 . The soundtrack spans two discs and 27 tracks , covering a duration of 1 : 55 : 43 . Major downloadable content packs for the game , which include Kasumi - Stolen Memory , Overlord , Lair of the Shadow Broker and Arrival , feature new music . The soundtrack from Kasumi - Stolen Memory and Arrival was composed by Sonic Mayhem duo Sascha Dikiciyan and Cris Velasco , while the music from Overlord and Lair of the Shadow Broker was composed by Christopher Lennertz . Mass Effect 2 's score was nominated for Best Original Music at the 2011 British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards and Best Soundtrack Album at the 9th Annual Game Audio Network Guild Awards .

= = Marketing and release = =

Mass Effect 2 was formally unveiled at the Game Developers Conference on March 17 , 2009 , accompanied by a teaser trailer which declared Shepard to be " killed in action " . The announcement also confirmed that the game would be released for both Microsoft Windows and Xbox 360 . In June 2009 , the game was presented at the Electronic Entertainment Expo . New features were shown off and , for the first time , fans were shown a guided demo . The demo also confirmed that Shepard would be alive and playable in Mass Effect 2 , but the character could die at the end of the game . The game 's release date was announced on October 16 , 2009 . If the game was pre @-@ ordered at certain retailers , players could receive special items such as in @-@ game armors and weapons . Players could also redeem codes on specially marked Dr Pepper products for one of three pieces of headgear , and on registered copies of Dragon Age : Origins for a new armor . In the months leading to the game 's release , BioWare launched six class walkthroughs narrated by Norman and released a final cinematic trailer .
Mass Effect 2 was initially released for Microsoft Windows and Xbox 360 on January 26 , 2010 in

North America and January 29 , 2010 in Europe . The game was released in multiple editions : alongside the standard edition , a digital deluxe edition and a collector 's edition were made available for purchase . The collector 's edition featured a different packaging , an artbook , bonus in @-@ game content , behind @-@ the @-@ scenes DVD , and one issue from the Mass Effect : Redemption comic series . Electronic Arts sold @-@ in more than two million copies of the game to worldwide retailers in its first week of release . Despite being released at the end of the month , Mass Effect 2 became the second best @-@ selling game of January 2010 with 572 @,@ 100 units sold , behind Nintendo 's New Super Mario Bros. Wii .

At Gamescom 2010 , BioWare announced that a PlayStation 3 version of the game was in development . Microsoft responded to the announcement that , despite losing the game 's exclusivity , the Xbox 360 was still the most appropriate console to play the game due to the game 's compatibility with the original Mass Effect , which was only available on the Microsoft Windows and Xbox 360 systems at the time . The PlayStation 3 version was released on January 18 , 2011 in North America and January 21 , 2011 in Europe . Unlike the Xbox 360 and Microsoft Windows versions of the game , which span two DVDs , the PlayStation 3 version of Mass Effect 2 fits on one Blu @-@ ray Disc . The downloadable PlayStation Network version accounted for more than 10 % of the game 's overall sales on PlayStation 3 . As of April 2011 , it was reported that both the original Mass Effect and Mass Effect 2 combined have sold more than seven million units worldwide . In 2012 , a compilation featuring the three main games of the series , titled Mass Effect Trilogy , was released for Microsoft Windows , Xbox 360 , and PlayStation 3 .

New purchases of the game are provided with a one @-@ time use card granting access code that unlocks the game 's Cerberus Network , an online downloadable content and news service that enables bonus content for the game . However , users who bought the game used would have to pay for the Cerberus Network separately if they wanted access to the new content . This policy allows publishers to combat the used @-@ game market ; companies like GameStop have allowed costumers to sell used games back to the retailer so that the company can resell them at a small discount to other customers , but the publisher does not make a profit . BioWare online development director Fernando Melo revealed that 11 % of all Mass Effect 2 's downloadable content revenue came from the Cerberus Network . The policy attracted criticism from some of the fan community , who have criticized downloadable content as being overpriced and an incentive for developers to leave items out of the initial release .

= = = Technical issues = = =

Shortly after the game 's release , it was reported that the game 's font @-@ size had been formatted in such a way as to make in @-@ game text difficult to read on standard definition televisions . Representatives from BioWare stated that the issue was " a design choice , not a bug " . Mark Barlet , president of the website AbleGamers , which advocates for making games more accessible to the disabled , observed that " It 's not just the size of the text of Mass Effect 2 that is the problem , it 's the coloring of the text " that is the problem . After investigating the complaints further , BioWare released a statement acknowledging that " on some standard definition TVs the smallest text in Mass Effect 2 can be difficult to read " , and concluded that they were unable to resolve it through a title update . However , they stated that they would take it into consideration for future games .

Other issues with regards to crashes , temporary freezes and long load times were found on single core computers , but these were ultimately addressed in a patch . A second patch , which reduced the amount mining time required to acquire upgrades , fixed some saved game loading issues , and addressed other minor bugs , was also released . On PlayStation 3 , a concerning number of players reported that their save files can become corrupted if the game crashes unexpectedly . Community chief Chris Priestly of BioWare responded with : " Just to make it clear , we are aware of this issue and are working to understand what is [occurring] and how we can fix it . If you are encountering this issue , please provide details about your PS3 and your playthrough . " On February 21 , 2011 , BioWare released a PlayStation 3 patch designed to combat save bugs , game

freezes and crashes experienced .

= = Downloadable content = =

 Mass Effect 2 supports additional in @-@ game content in the form of downloadable content packs that were released from January 2010 to May 2011 . The downloadable content ranges from single in @-@ game character outfits to entirely new plot @-@ related missions . Major packs include Lair of the Shadow Broker and Arrival , which are vital to the series ' plot . In Lair of the Shadow Broker , Shepard helps former squad member Liara T 'Soni to find an information dealer known as the Shadow Broker . In Arrival , Shepard investigates evidence of a Reaper invasion , leading to events that bridge to Mass Effect 3 . Other plot @-@ related downloadable content packs include the loyalty missions Zaeed - The Price of Revenge and Kasumi - Stolen Memory , and Overlord , which adds five new missions to the game .

 Unlike the Xbox 360 and Microsoft Windows versions of the game , the PlayStation 3 version includes the Kasumi - Stolen Memory , Overlord , and Lair of the Shadow Broker packs . Since the first Mass Effect game was originally not released on PlayStation 3 , BioWare also released a new downloadable content , titled Mass Effect : Genesis , which allows players to impact the story of the game with several major plot decisions of the first game . These decisions are made through an interactive comic book which appears at the beginning of the game . Mass Effect : Genesis was eventually released on May 17 , 2011 for Microsoft Windows and Xbox 360 users . The game 's downloadable content was generally well received by critics and some packs were nominated for Best DLC (downloadable content) at the Spike Video Game Awards .

= = Reception = =

 Upon release , Mass Effect 2 received universal critical acclaim from video game publications . At the review aggregate websites GameRankings and Metacritic , the Xbox 360 version of the game holds an average review score of 95 @.@ 77 % and 96 out of 100 respectively . Substantial praise was given to the game 's diverse characters , interactive storytelling , voice acting and art design . IGN reviewer Erik Brudvig called Mass Effect 2 a very personal game , with a lot of emotion involved . He praised the option of importing a character , stating that the overall experience changes as different saved games from the previous game are used . Tom Bramwell of Eurogamer highlighted positively the weight of social interaction on the outcome of events and that players feel actual pressure for their decisions . Further praise was given to the game 's characters . Edge credited them for their complex personalities and great characterization , while Game Revolution pointed out that the loyalty missions " reach deep enough into their characters to make you empathize with all of them " .

 The game 's visuals and atmosphere received similar praise . GameSpot reviewer Kevin VanOrd remarked that Mass Effect 2 is more detailed and darker than its predecessor . He wrote that " deep reds and glowing indigos saturate certain scenes , making them richer and more sinister ; eerie fog limits your vision in one side mission , while rain pours down upon you in another . Subtle , moody lighting gives certain interactions great impact . " Reviewer Adriaan den Ouden of RPGamer credited the conversations and cutscenes for being better shot than the first game , stating that " it 's hard to imagine them becoming much better in Mass Effect 3 " . Critics also gave high marks to the game 's extensive cast of voices , in particular Martin Sheen 's performance of the Illusive Man , which was singled out for " steal [ing] the show " . Andrew Reiner , writing for Game Informer , opined that the music " flows beautifully " in both the story and action sequences . The IGN reviewer felt that the game 's presentation and direction are " miles ahead of the competition " .

 Numerous publications declared the gameplay was an improvement over the original . John Davison of GamePro wrote " BioWare has done a spectacular job moving the role playing genre forward , and blending disparate gameplay styles into genuinely exciting sci @-@ fi epic . " VanOrd praised Mass Effect 2 for possessing an identity , which was something that its predecessor lacked . He noted that the shooting is " more immediate and satisfying , which keeps the pace moving and

intensifies the violence of each encounter " . Similarly , GameSpy 's Gerald Villoria observed that , while the original Mass Effect " walked the line between RPG and shooter [...] Mass Effect 2 has become a much more focused shooter experience " . Jeremy Parish of 1UP.com credited the combat for being more balanced , stating that the game encourages players to use different weapon classes and squad abilities when the situation requires it . Despite the praise , some publications like GameCritics and RPGamer expressed concerns about the game 's simplified RPG elements , calling it " stripped @-@ down " and with a " dumbed @-@ down feeling " . Some reviewers also criticized the slow planet scanning . Game Revolution felt it was a " chore , mandatory if you want upgrades and boring because there is no tension or challenge " , but ultimately concluded that the game as a whole " does more than enough to live up to its predecessor " . Italian journalist Jaime d 'Alessandro of la Repubblica defined Mass Effect 2 as " dazzling " and " a great sci @-@ fi fresco that would be a shame to miss . "

Reception for the PlayStation 3 version was similar . Colin Moriarty of IGN described it as " the best , most complete version of the game available " due to the upgraded game engine and the extra downloadable content packs . In contrast , VanOrd criticized the inclusion of the character Kasumi Goto from the Kasumi - Stolen Memory pack , stating that " she never fits in with her more fully developed cohorts ? . He also remarked that the PlayStation 3 version suffers from technical issues such as frame rate inconsistencies , graphic glitches , and other minor bugs , which are mostly present in the downloadable content sections of the game . Game Informer reviewer Joe Juba reacted negatively to the lack of save importation from the original Mass Effect , which was originally not released on PlayStation 3 , and pointed out that the decisions made in the Mass Effect : Genesis interactive comic book " have practically no context " . Despite the criticism , he stated that the game itself is equally as good on PlayStation 3 as it is on Xbox 360 .

= = = Accolades = = =

Mass Effect 2 collected numerous year @-@ end awards . At the 14th Annual D.I.C.E. Awards , formerly known as the Interactive Achievement Awards , Mass Effect 2 won awards for Game of the Year , Role @-@ Playing / Massively Multiplayer Game of the Year , and Outstanding Achievement in Story . At the 2010 Spike Video Game Awards , the game won for Best Xbox 360 Game and Best RPG ; BioWare was also recognized for its work on the game and was awarded Studio of the Year . At the 2011 Canadian Videogame Awards , the game was awarded Game of the Year , Best Console Game , Best Game Design , and Best Writing . Mass Effect 2 also received several other notable awards , including Best Game at the 2011 British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards , Best Writing at the 2011 Game Developers Choice Awards , and two Golden Joystick Awards : Best RPG of the Year and Ultimate Game of the Year .

Mass Effect 2 is frequently cited as one of the greatest video games of all time . In 2011 , Mass Effect 2 was selected as one of 80 titles from the past 40 years to be placed in the Art of Video Games exhibit in the Smithsonian American Art Museum , and IGN ranked it # 1 on its " Top 100 Modern Video Games " list . In 2014 , entertainment site WatchMojo.com placed Mass Effect 2 at # 1 on its list of " Top 10 Electronic Arts Games " and Empire listed the game at # 18 in its readership poll of " The 100 Greatest Video Games of All Time " . In 2015 , PlayStation Official Magazine - UK ranked the game seventh on its list of best PlayStation 3 games of all time . The game was also included as one of the titles in the book 1001 Video Games You Must Play Before You Die .

= = Sequel = =

The Mass Effect series was envisioned as a trilogy from its inception , and production on a sequel began shortly before Mass Effect 2 was released . The sequel , entitled Mass Effect 3 , was released for Microsoft Windows , Xbox 360 , and PlayStation 3 on March 6 , 2012 , and for Wii U on November 18 , 2012 . The game begins on Earth with Commander Shepard having been detained following the events in the Arrival downloadable content pack . The story of the game is influenced by decisions the player made in the original Mass Effect and Mass Effect 2 . However , if Shepard

dies at the end of Mass Effect 2 , the character cannot be imported into Mass Effect 3 .

 BioWare stated that the game ends Shepard 's story arc and that future games in the series would feature a different context . Unlike the previous games in the series , Mass Effect 3 also features a multiplayer cooperative mode in addition to the single @-@ player campaign . The game received critical acclaim from video game publications , with an aggregate score of 93 out of 100 for the Xbox 360 version at Metacritic . However , there was some controversy over the ending , which fans said did not meet the expectations .