

= Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex =

Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex is a platform game published by Universal Interactive Studios along with Konami and developed by Traveller 's Tales for the PlayStation 2 , Xbox and was ported by Eurocom for GameCube . It was first released on the PlayStation 2 in North America on October 29 , 2001 .

The game is the fourth main installment (sixth overall) in the Crash Bandicoot video game series . It is the first main installment of the series not to be developed by Naughty Dog , and the first of the entire series to not be released exclusively for a PlayStation console . The story centers on the appearance of Crunch Bandicoot , a genetically advanced bandicoot created by the main antagonist of the series , Doctor Neo Cortex , who is aided by a group of destructive masks known as the Elementals . Crash Bandicoot and his sister Coco must travel the world and gather special Crystals that will return the Elementals to a hibernated state , and defeat Crunch .

Critical reception of the game was mixed , with many reviewers opining that the game recycled elements from its PlayStation predecessors with minimal innovation . The PlayStation 2 edition has sold 1 @. @ 95 million copies in North America , and the game qualified for various best @- @ seller ranges , including the Platinum Range for PlayStation 2 , Xbox Classics , and Player 's Choice on GameCube . It was released as a launch title for the Xbox Originals line of downloadable original @- @ Xbox games for the Xbox 360 's Live Marketplace service on December 4 , 2007 .

= = Gameplay = =

Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex is a platform game in which the player controls Crash and Coco Bandicoot , who must gather 25 Crystals and defeat the main antagonists of the story : Doctor Neo Cortex , his new superweapon Crunch Bandicoot and Crunch 's power sources , the renegade Elementals . Much of the game takes place in a " Virtual Reality (VR) Hub System " created by Coco to help Crash gather the Crystals . The VR Hub System is split up into five " VR Hubs " ; initially , only the first VR Hub is available . Each VR Hub has five teleportation portals to different levels . The goal in each level is to find and obtain the Crystal hidden in the area . In some levels , the Crystal will be located at the end of a level or must be earned by completing a specific challenge . Most levels contain a " Bonus Platform " that leads to a special bonus area , where the player must navigate through a maze and collect everything in sight . Once a bonus area is completed , it cannot be played again unless the level is replayed . After completing all five levels in a VR Hub , a sixth teleportation portal to a boss fight with Crunch will appear . By defeating the boss , the next VR Hub will become available for play . When all 25 Crystals are collected and Doctor Cortex and Crunch are defeated , the game is won .

Besides Crystals , Gems and Colored Gems can be collected for extra accomplishment . Gems are rewarded to the player if all of the crates in a level are broken open or if a secret area is completed . Colored Gems are found in special levels and lead to hidden areas . " Relics " can be won by re @- @ entering a level where the Crystal has already been retrieved . To obtain a Relic , the player must initiate the " Time Trial " mode and race through a level in the pre @- @ designated time displayed before entering a level . To begin a Time Trial run , the player must enter a level and activate the floating stopwatch near the beginning of the level to activate the timer ; if the stopwatch is not touched , the level can be played regularly . The player must then race through the level as quickly as possible . Scattered throughout the level are yellow crates with the numbers one , two , or three on them . When these crates are broken , the timer is frozen for the number of seconds designated by the box . As no lives are lost in the Time Trial mode , the level can be played through as often as the player desires . Sapphire , Gold and Platinum Relics can be won depending on how low the player 's final time is . The first five Relics the player receives unlocks access to a secret level . Every five Relics thereafter open up another level in the Secret Warp Room . The levels in the Secret Warp Room must be won before the game can be fully completed .

Crash and Coco Bandicoot start the game with four lives . Crash and Coco lose a life when they are struck by an enemy attack or suffer any other type of damage . More lives can be earned by

collecting 100 " Wumpa Fruits " or break open a special crate to collect a life . Crash and Coco can be shielded from enemy attack by collecting an Aku Aku mask . Collecting three of these masks allows temporary invulnerability from all minor dangers . If Crash or Coco run out of lives , the game is over . However , the game can be continued by selecting " Continue " at the " Game over " screen .

= = Plot = =

= = = Characters = = =

Ten returning characters from previous Crash titles star in Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex along with five new characters . The protagonist of the game , Crash Bandicoot , is a genetically enhanced eastern barred bandicoot who must defeat the antagonist Doctor Neo Cortex and his new superweapon . Coco Bandicoot , Crash 's younger sister , is a highly intelligent computer expert with an interest in Hong Kong martial arts films . Aku Aku is an omnipotent witch doctor who guides and aids Crash and Coco in stopping the plans of Doctor Neo Cortex . Pura , Coco 's pet tiger cub , serves a very minor role and appears only in the introduction of the game .

The main antagonist of the series , Doctor Neo Cortex , is a mad scientist who created Crash Bandicoot among other characters and now seeks Crash 's elimination along with world domination . The controlling force behind Cortex 's plots for conquering the world is Uka Uka , the twin brother of Aku Aku . Four recurring villains from the series serve minor roles in the game : Doctor N. Gin , Cortex 's main assistant ; Doctor Nefarious Tropy , a scientist who specialises in time travel ; Tiny Tiger , a hulking and ferocious thylacine ; and Dingodile , a dingo @-@ crocodile hybrid armed with a flamethrower .

Five new characters in the series make their appearance in Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex , of which the most important is Doctor Cortex 's genetically enhanced superweapon Crunch Bandicoot , a bionic bandicoot created for the purpose of destroying Crash Bandicoot . Acting as Crunch 's power source are the Elementals , a group of destructive masks who control the elements of Earth , Water , Fire and Air . The Elementals consist of Rok @-@ Ko , a temperamental and rock @-@ headed earthbending mask who controls earthquakes and landslides , Wa @-@ Wa , a waterbending mask who controls thunderstorms and floods , Py @-@ Ro , an easily perturbed firebending mask who controls volcano eruptions , and Lo @-@ Lo , a joke @-@ cracking airbending mask who controls tornadoes .

= = = Story = = =

In a space station orbiting the Earth , Uka Uka , having called a convention of villains , berates Doctor Neo Cortex , Tiny Tiger , Dingodile , Dr. Nefarius Tropy and Dr. N. Gin for their low " track record for spreading evil " , and orders them to come up with a plan to eliminate Crash Bandicoot , their main opponent . Cortex comes forward with the announcement of a previously secret " genetically enhanced superweapon of unbelievable strength " , but reveals that it is missing a power source . Uka Uka then suggests using the Elementals , a group of renegade masks who had elemental power over earth , water , fire and air and used these elements to ravage the globe until they were imprisoned by The Ancients with the aid of special Crystals that put the masks in a state of hibernation . Cortex deduces that if they awaken the Elementals and harness their destructive power , they can bring his secret weapon to life and eliminate Crash Bandicoot forever .

Back on Earth , the world is suddenly terrorised by severe natural disasters , leading Aku Aku to conclude that Uka Uka is up to something . A confrontation with Uka Uka confirms his suspicions and nearly results in his destruction at the hands of the Elementals . Aku Aku returns to Crash and Coco Bandicoot and alerts them of the current situation , disclosing that the only way to stop the Elementals is to imprison them once more with the Crystals , which have been scattered across the Earth . Using Coco 's new Virtual Reality Hub System , Crash and Coco travel the world and gather

the Crystals , fending off attacks from Cortex 's superweapon , Crunch Bandicoot , and the Elementals along the way . However , by the time the Crystals have been gathered and the Elementals have been put in their hibernation state , Crunch 's elemental powers have reached maximum capacity , forcing Crash to battle Crunch at full power in Cortex 's space station . Nevertheless , Crash defeats Crunch , which releases him from Cortex 's control . Infuriated by this failure , Uka Uka attacks Cortex with a fireball , only to have it hit a vital part of the space station , which causes a chain reaction that results in the space station 's self @-@ destruction . Crash , Aku Aku , and Crunch escape and return to the Bandicoot home on Coco 's space fighter ship , while Cortex and Uka Uka deploy an escape pod and end up landing somewhere in Antarctica , where Uka Uka furiously chases Cortex around a small ice floe .

= = Development = =

Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex was originally intended to be designed by Mark Cerny , who had designed all the games in the series thus far , and published by Sony Computer Entertainment . The game under Cerny 's direction was to be a free @-@ roaming title with puzzle elements that would see Crash travelling between different planets . In early 2000 , when Universal approached Traveller 's Tales to be the development team behind the game , they produced a 3 @-@ D rendered demo of Crash running through a volcanic level . Development of the game 's engine began in mid @-@ 2000 .

On September 21 , 2000 , Universal Interactive Studios and Konami announced that they had entered an agreement that would enable Konami to publish a Crash Bandicoot game for next @-@ generation game systems , with Universal Interactive handling the production of the games . The agreement served to break the Crash Bandicoot franchise 's exclusivity to Sony @-@ produced consoles and effectively made Crash Bandicoot a mascot character for Universal rather than Sony . After Universal fell out with Cerny and Sony , Traveller 's Tales was forced to alter the game from a free @-@ roaming title to a standard Crash title in the lieu of Warped , the third game in the series . Traveller 's Tales had to begin development of the game from scratch and were given only twelve months to complete the game .

The character Crunch Bandicoot was designed by Craig Whittle of Traveller 's Tales and Sean Krankel of Universal . The concept of battling mini @-@ bosses within the game 's levels was dropped to uphold the fast and frantic pace of the series ' gameplay . Multiplayer capability was also considered before being dropped . An earlier draft of the story featured an alternate version of the game 's climax and ending , which involved Crash battling Crunch in a mechanical robot suit . At the end of the fight , Crunch would destroy Crash 's suit with a bolt of electricity . The resulting debris would render Cortex unconscious , destroy the remote control device controlling Crunch and start an electrical fire in the space station . As the Bandicoots escape to resume their beach @-@ going vacation , the ruins of the space station would crash @-@ land onto the island of Cortex 's original settlement , conveniently allowing Cortex and Uka Uka to resume their world domination bids .

The majority of the characters and vehicles in the game were built and textured by Nicola Daly and animated by Jeremy Pardon . The main game systems and game code as a whole were coded by John Hodgkinson . The game 's music is composed by Andy Blythe and Marten Joustra of Swallow Studios . A rearranged version of the original Crash Bandicoot theme by Mutato Muzika 's Josh Mancell also appears in the game . The game 's sound effects were created by Ron Horwitz , Tom Jaeger , John Robinson , and Harry Woolway of Universal Sound Studios . The game 's voice actors were cast and directed by Margaret Tang . Only two of the series ' original voice actors reprised their roles for the game : Clancy Brown voices the dual role of Doctor Neo Cortex and Uka Uka , while Mel Winkler provides the voice of Aku Aku . Debi Derryberry inherited the role of Coco Bandicoot from Hynden Walch , while Corey Burton voices the returning villains Doctor N. Gin and Doctor Nefarious Tropy , taking over for Brendan O 'Brien and Michael Ensign respectively . Kevin Michael Richardson provides the voice of new character Crunch Bandicoot , while the Elementals , consisting of Rok @-@ Ko , Wa @-@ Wa , Py @-@ Ro and Lo @-@ Lo , are voiced by Thomas F. Wilson , R. Lee Ermey , Mark Hamill , and Jess Harnell respectively .

Following the release of the PlayStation 2 edition on October 29 , 2001 , the Xbox version of the game was announced by Universal Interactive on January 31 , 2002 . The Xbox version features reduced loading times and improved graphics . On September 17 , 2002 , the game was released on the GameCube , initially in North America .

= = Reception = =

Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex received mixed to generally positive reviews , with some critics criticizing the game for making little changes to the formula established by its predecessors . Louis Bedigian of GameZone wrote a positive review , saying that " any Crash Bandicoot fan would be a fool not to go out and buy this game . I started playing at 2am one night and did not stop until three in the afternoon ! " Doug Perry of IGN described the game as " a decent playing and pretty looking Crash Bandicoot game . It 's nothing terribly special , but it 's not bad , not bad at all . " Official US PlayStation Magazine felt that " when the strongest feeling I get from a game is the desire to play its predecessors , something 's not quite right . " Game Informer criticized the " outrageously bad load times " , saying that they " keep the game from being average . " Star Dingo of GamePro cautioned that " if you were hoping the new management would give Crash a big kick in the pants , however , this is one pair of pants you will find quite unkicked . " Electronic Gaming Monthly criticised the trial @-@ and @-@ error gameplay , saying that " when forced to blindly jump , die , then discover what you missed , where I come from , that ? s just cheating . "

Play Magazine noted that " they 've caressed the music to great effect , made the bosses a bit more challenging , [and] adhered to a massive replayability standard that would drive any developer to drink . " Game Informer felt that " every little morsel of platforming goodness in The Wrath of Cortex has already been done to death on the Playstation . " Carlos McElfish of GameZone warned that " if you are looking for an innovative and original experience that does justice to the series you ? ll have to look elsewhere . " Official Xbox Magazine concluded that " this is a game for those who want what Crash has always had to offer ? good graphics , jump @-@ and @-@ spin gameplay , and tons of collectible items . Nothing more , nothing less . " Hilary Goldstein felt that while Crash Bandicoot : The Wrath of Cortex was " a fun game for the most part , " " it fails in some areas , like proper game balance and correct use of surround sound . " Star Dingo of GamePro concluded that " love it or hate it , Wrath of Cortex Xbox is more of more of the same . " Electronic Gaming Monthly felt that " save for a few additions to WOC , like some cool hamster @-@ ball levels , it 's almost identical to its predecessors . "

The GameCube version rated the lowest among critics out of the three versions . Ben Kosmina of Nintendo World Report promised that " gamers experiencing the wacky mascot for the first time may enjoy it . " Michael Lafferty of GameZone described the game as " safe , sterile and redundant . " Matt Casamassina on IGN concluded that " at the end of the day this is the same Crash game I played so many years ago without any real innovations or evolutions . " Nintendo Power praised the " sheer variety " of the gameplay . Kilo Watt of GamePro said that " graphically , this version is slightly below the recent Xbox release but in line with the competent PlayStation 2 iteration . " Electronic Gaming Monthly agreed that " Wrath on the GC is much more polished here than on the PS2 , " while Play Magazine denounced the GameCube version as " a shell of the other two console versions , so I beg you to pass . "

Commercially , the PlayStation 2 version sold over 1 @.@ 95 million units in North America , and around 170 @,@ 000 copies in 2001 in Japan . As a result , the game was re @-@ released for the Platinum Range on October 11 , 2002 , for the Sony Greatest Hits line @-@ up on October 15 , 2002 , and for the Best line @-@ up on October 17 , 2002 . The " Greatest Hits " version of the game features quicker load times than those of the original version . The Xbox version was re @-@ released for the Xbox Classics line @-@ up on April 11 , 2003 , and the GameCube version was re @-@ released for the Player 's Choice line @-@ up in Europe on October 22 , 2004 .