

= DJ Hero =

DJ Hero is a music video game , developed by FreeStyleGames and published by Activision as a rhythm game spin @-@ off of the Guitar Hero franchise . It was released on October 27 , 2009 in North America and on October 29 , 2009 in Europe . The game is based on turntablism , the act of creating a new musical work from one or more previously recorded songs using record players and sound effect generators , and features 94 remixes of two different songs from a selection of over 100 different songs across numerous genres .

To score points , the player must press buttons to activate accented beats , adjust their crossfade between the two songs , and " scratch " the turntable on the game 's custom controller in time to marks that scroll on the screen to score points and perform well for the virtual crowd . The game features both a single player Career mode and cooperative and competitive multiplayer modes . The game also features a mode for selected songs for a DJ player to play alongside another player using a Guitar Hero guitar controller . Many DJ and mix artists have contributed to the game both in the game 's development , the creation of mixes , and in lending their images for playable avatars in the game ; these including DJ Shadow , Z @-@ Trip , DJ AM , Grandmaster Flash , DJ Jazzy Jeff , and Daft Punk .

DJ Hero was generally well received by game journalists , praising the departure from the Guitar Hero series @-@ style of gameplay , the use of the turntable controller to simulate the motions of a DJ and how the game 's difficulty curve helps the player to become skilled on it , and the game 's soundtrack ; several smaller issues were identified as potential improvements for a possible sequel . However , the game did not perform as strongly as expected by industry analysts , believed to be due to the waning interest in music games during 2009 ; regardless , DJ Hero is stated by NPD Group to be the highest @-@ grossing new intellectual property of 2009 in North America .

= = Gameplay = =

DJ Hero primarily simulates turntablism , a musical style used by disc jockeys to create a new mashup song by incorporating one or more previously recorded songs played on record players along with sound effect generators . The game features score attack gameplay similar to the Guitar Hero games . The controller consists of a wireless deck consisting of a movable turntable that supports 3 " stream " buttons , an effects dial , a crossfader , and a " Euphoria " button ; a hidden panel contains additional controller buttons to interact with the gaming console outside of the game . A portion of the controller can be detached and reattached to adapt the unit for left @-@ handed players . Notes travel in an arc across a spinning record on screen , and the player holds down one of the 3 stream buttons to play notes ; two buttons reflect the two songs used in that particular mix , and the third represents samples to add to the mix which can be adjusted with the effects dial . The player must also constantly adjust the crossfader to match onscreen symbols , which alters the relative volume of the songs as to bring one song to the forefront of the mix for a short time . Certain tracks are shown on screen as a series of up or down arrow , representing scratching sections , requiring the player to turn the turntable in the direction of the arrows while holding down the button to score points , mimicking the scratching of the record needle on vinyl albums . " Euphoria " is equivalent to Guitar Hero 's Star Power , collected by successfully completing specific phrases in the song mix , called Perfect Regions , and can be released by pressing the Euphoria button , doubling the player 's current multiplier as well as automatic crossfading when active . There is also a " Rewind " meter that builds through consistent successful playing , and once full , allows the player to rewind the song to fix errors in their performance . The player must continue to perform well or their performance meter will drop and the music track will cut out . Failing the song is not possible , unlike in Guitar Hero games .

A single player career mode is available , as well both competitive and cooperative multiplayer modes (" DJ vs DJ ") , playable locally or remotely . Ten songs have been specially mixed to also support gameplay with Guitar Hero and other compatible guitar controllers in a " DJ vs Guitar " mode . Players can also use a microphone for a non @-@ scoring addition to the mix . A Party Play

mode allows the game to automatically play the songs with the ability for a player to jump in and play at any time .

= = Development = =

Activision had initially applied for a trademark on the name DJ Hero in early 2008 , leading to speculation that Activision was making plans to compete against Konami 's Beatmania series of music video games with their own DJ game as a possible spinoff of their popular Guitar Hero series . FreeStyleGames , a small developer of music games , was employed to help produce localized downloadable content for Guitar Hero games and develop another yet @-@ to @-@ be announced music game . This game was later revealed to be DJ Hero . Activision CEO Robert Kotick confirmed the existence of DJ Hero in an interview with CNBC on January 20 , 2009 , revealing a release " later this year " . Activision CFO Thomas Tipl stated that DJ Hero would be aimed at a broader audience than the Guitar Hero games primarily through the use of more contemporary music in its soundtrack . Producer Will Townsend stated they opted for a wide variety of music to " make sure that everybody has something in there that they want . " DJ Hero was designed as a party game and to make the player " the life of the party " , giving ways for them to be " in control of the music " , according to Townsend .

FreeStyleGames teamed up with London based music production company Crossfade Cartel owned by Ofei Sakyi and Dan Neil to ensure the overall quality of the soundtrack . The 16 man music production team used a combination of MIDI software along with the music sequencer program , Ableton Live ; the MIDI information was used to construct the gameplay elements such as crossfading and scratching with additional custom export software . Because of this nature , Neil stated that it was much easier to alter a mix to meet certain gameplay goals , taking only a few minutes to complete , compared with the development of songs for Guitar Hero .

The team worked alongside artists and DJ 's for incorporation of songs into the game . Neil stated they brought to artists and DJ 's working prototypes of the game and hardware to show them what the sampled music and final mixes sounded like , garnering interest from these groups . This led to securing of rights from several groups for their songs , though this did occur late in the development process . Mixing with celebrity DJ 's was performed either though electronic communications , or at FreeStyleGames ' studios or the homes or studios of the DJ 's themselves ; the team outlined the goals of the game and requested mixes that emphasized the gameplay featured , but avoided hampering the creativity of the artists .

DJ Shadow was brought in by Activision during November and December 2008 , at least a year into the development into the game , to help select individual songs , help with creating the mixes , and provide additional input for the game , and will also be a playable DJ avatar in the game . He was able to identify old effects samples that were used in the past for scratching for the developers to include the game . To create the mixes , DJ Shadow first created a " dry version " of each mix which did not include any embellishments . DJ Shadow then proceeded to build off that to create the " wet version " with added effects that was used as the base for the gameplay 's mixes . Artists Eminem and Jay @-@ Z have also served as consultants for the game ; a special edition of DJ Hero was branded with their names , and included a limited edition of the controller , a music CD of their songs , a DJ stand , and a travel case for the units . This version is titled " Renegade Edition . " Jay @-@ Z stated that he " [loved] the freedom " that the game gives him , and was able to work closely with Activision to put in new mixes that he envisioned , and considered the game " a DJ 's universe " , while Eminem believed DJ Hero was a game that he could " see [himself] actually playing " . DJ 's Z @-@ Trip and DJ AM both created mixes for the game and will also be playable DJ 's in the game ; Z @-@ Trip will also help demonstrate the game at the 2009 E3 Conference . Cut Chemist and J.Period will also be assisting in creating mixes for the game . Grandmaster Flash , DJ Jazzy Jeff , and Daft Punk have contributed remixes to the soundtrack and will also appear as playable avatars . In the case of Daft Punk , a special venue inspired by the group 's Alive 2007 tour was created , that Tim Riley , Vice President for Music Affairs at Activision , considered to be " the next best thing to being at a Daft Punk concert " . David Guetta has also contributed three mixes that were made

available as downloadable content for the game ; Guetta would also serve as a spokesperson in the game 's European marketing . As part of the game 's promotion , the DJ Hero controller appears in the music video for Kid Cudi 's " Make Her Say " .

On August 28 , 2009 , DJ AM , a significant contributor to DJ Hero , was found dead in his apartment in New York City . His death did not affect the release of the game . Tim Riley , vice president of music affairs for Activision , stated that " We are deeply saddened by the loss of DJ AM . We hope that his work on the game will be a fitting tribute to his creative spirit and musical talent " . Also , at least one promotional video for the game has included a screen commemorating the deceased DJ , with the message " DJ AM , 1973 ? 2009 . In memory of a visionary . "

Neversoft 's Brian Bright revealed that the use of Guitar Hero guitar controllers within DJ Hero arose when they tried to create mixes of guitar @-@ heavy and rock tracks in the game ; they felt something was missing in these mixes and added in the Guitar Hero @-@ style of play alongside it . Bright has stated that , while too late for the planned release of Guitar Hero 5 , they are looking towards future instrument controller interoperability , including use of the DJ Hero controller into gameplay for future Guitar Hero titles , or using drum controllers within DJ Hero .

= = = DJ Hero 2 = = =

DJ Hero 2 was officially announced in June 2010 and was released in October 2010 , featuring more than 70 mashups from over 85 artists . The game includes several new gameplay modes , including a " Empire " career mode , head @-@ to @-@ head DJ battles , social multiplayer modes , and a jump @-@ in and out Party Play mode similar to Guitar Hero 5 . The game includes more vocal options for singing and rapping to songs , and a freestyle mode for players . Artists include Eminem , Daft Punk , Chamillionaire , Dr. Dre , Chemical Brothers , Kanye West , Metallica , Lady Gaga , and Rihanna , while Deadmau5 , DJ Qbert , David Guetta and Tiësto are playable avatars in the game .

Prior to the game 's announcement , Activision revealed a month before the game 's release that it is actively seeking artists for downloadable content and a sequel to the game . One DJ in speculation to appear is DJ BJ , including mixer DJ Qbert . David Guetta has stated that he is set to work on the game 's sequel to arrive late in 2010 . Activision CEO Bobby Kotick stated that despite low sales of DJ Hero , they are committed to continuing the series , with the sequel due in 2010 . The sequel , DJ Hero 2 , was further confirmed during an Activision investors report for 2009 , citing it as one of only 2 major Guitar Hero titles to be expected from Activision in 2010 , with an expected late @-@ 2010 release date .

= = = DJ Hero 3D = = =

At Nintendo 's E3 press conference on June 15 , 2010 , the Nintendo 3DS handheld console was revealed . At the conference Nintendo listed a number of publishers and franchises coming to the 3DS , one of whom was Activision with DJ Hero 3D , a new installment in the DJ Hero series and the first handheld DJ Hero title . The gameplay is similar in nature to DJ Hero , where the stylus and touchscreen are used to mimic scratching and crossfading between songs . It is unknown if the game is still in development after Activision stopped production of the Guitar Hero and DJ Hero franchises .

= = = Legal conflicts = = =

On April 15 , 2009 , the publishers of Scratch : The Ultimate DJ , Genius Products and Numark , sued against Scratch 's developer , 7 Studios and Activision . The lawsuit contends that Activision purchased 7 Studios to both gain access to proprietary technology and to delay publication of the game so DJ Hero could come out first . The Los Angeles Superior Court in which the suit was filed did not grant the requested restraining order against Activision on DJ Hero . Activision states that Scratch was already delayed by as early as October 2008 , before they made contact with 7 Studios

, and their acquisition of the developers did not impede them from completing Scratch . However , on April 20 , the court reversed its decision , awarding Genius and Numark a temporary restraining order , and ordered the " immediate return " of all of the material from 7 Studios from Activision , including all source code related to Scratch . 7 Studios subsequently filed a counter @-@ suit against Genius Products , claiming that they engaged in " unlawful and unsavoury business practices " that limited 7 Studios from completing the game as planned .

= = Soundtrack = =

Over 100 individual songs based on master recordings were licensed by Activision , composed into 93 DJ mixes by both participating internationally known DJs and an in @-@ house remix team . Unusually , the audio team also acted as the design team , playtesting all mixes and creating gameplay in tandem with producing the mixes . All mixes were produced using Ableton Live , with most of the scratch routines being performed by former DMC World DJ Champion DJ Blakey . All mixes used in the soundtrack were unique at the time of the game 's release . Celebrity mix artists include DJ Shadow , DJ Z @-@ Trip , DJ AM , and Daft Punk in addition to other mix artists listed below , although Daft Punk did not create their levels - they were all created by the in @-@ house remix team . Initial industry speculation stated that DJ Tiësto would be involved with the game , but this was eventually denied . Mix Master Mike of the Beastie Boys was reported to have signed an exclusivity deal with 7 Studios to appear in their game Scratch : The Ultimate DJ , meaning that he would also not appear on DJ Hero .

The individual songs themselves were pulled from a large number of music genres , including Pop , Grunge , Soul , R & B , Techno , Hip Hop , House , Drum & Bass . Most mashup concepts were conceived by the in @-@ house remix team . In addition to mixes using individual songs from both Eminem and Jay @-@ Z , including Jay @-@ Z 's " Izzo (H.O.V.A.) " and " Dirt Off Your Shoulder " . Eminem also stated that he will have additional songs included later in the year as downloadable content for the game , such as the " Jay @-@ Z vs. Eminem Mix Pack " released in March 2010 , featuring three mash up @-@ style songs combining the works of both artists . Universal Music Group is providing much of the content for the game .

= = Reception = =

= = = Reviews = = =

DJ Hero has received positive reviews from the gaming press , who consider the title as a fresh restart of the music genre given the large number of titles based on guitar play . The turntable peripheral was considered to be well designed to meet the needs of the game . The unit 's weight , size , and shape , and ability to cater to both left- and right @-@ handed players was commended . Many reviewers noted a need to alter the action of the crossfader , either by having better physical feedback to the player to indicate the center of the knob 's track , or by reducing the width of the track to better handle the rapid crossfade maneuvers . Reviewers also noted that there was a certain weight to the turntable portion of the controller which made scratching imprecise , particularly with the inner blue button where only minimal torque can be applied . The learning curve of the game across the various mixes was highly commended by reviewers for helping players to get used to the new controller . When progressing from " Medium " to " Hard " and " Expert " levels and encountering more complex mixes , reviewers thought the game felt transformed , bringing a difficult but more rewarding experience to the player as they begin emulating every part of a real DJ 's motions . Johnny Minkley of Eurogamer considered that while the learning curve is steep , with the " Easy " difficulty being " less thrilling and engaging " compared to Guitar Hero , the game was " structured fabulously to nudge you gradually closer to the summit " with each successive career set and difficulty mode . Cam Shae of IGN Australia felt that the changes in " Hard " mode over " Medium " were somewhat excessive , introducing both more crossfade effects and button @-@

pressing , and felt these could have been introduced separately in " Hard " and " Expert " modes . Richard Li of 1UP.com noted that the inability to fail a song is both " a bane and a boon " ; newer players would not feel frustration at trying to get used to the controller and would be able to quickly unlock all the sets in the game 's career mode , but without knowing where they failed , they would not have an idea of where they need to hone their skills to improve their performance at the game . The omission of a practice mode was noted by Daemon Hatfield of IGN , believing it would help in some of the more complex mixes by the DJ celebrities . Reviewers believed that the small faults in DJ Hero can be easily fixed for potential sequels .

Reviewers found the on @-@ disc soundtrack to be generally strong ; Hatfield believed that " the entire soundtrack is superb and could easily stand on its own outside the game " . Matt Helgeson of Game Informer considered it to be one of the " most adventurous " soundtracks of any music game , and said though it often relied too much on pop hits , it remained true to the spirit of the DJ mix scene . Minkley thought the game to have " vital , varied , surprising and vast musical content " and to be a fresh experience compared to previous music games . Other reviewers felt the soundtrack had some weak areas . Shae noted that many of the mixes felt like " random mash @-@ ups that take disparate songs " , which would be appropriate for a live DJ , but does not reflect well on the art of mixing that can be performed today . Li noted a clear distinction in the quality of the mixes between the early sets ? those mostly created in @-@ house by FreeStyleGames ? and the latter sets centered on the work of famous DJs . While Ben Kuchera of Ars Technica felt the soundtrack was good , he asserted that individual songs were unrecognizable because of modifications made to them for the mixes , and that they were more difficult to adjust to within the gameplay itself .

Many reviews for DJ Hero felt the addition of the non @-@ scoring freeform samples during certain parts of mixes were unnecessary and difficult to use , and with the limited number of samples available , ultimately would lead to overuse and make the mixes sound worse . Reviewers were critical of the game 's lackluster multiplayer modes . The DJ @-@ vs @-@ DJ mode was considered poor as both players play the same mix , in consideration of current band @-@ based music games where different players can play different parts of a song . This leads to minimal engagement between players , with each just attempting to maximize their score whenever possible on the controller . While some reviewers considered the DJ @-@ vs @-@ Guitar modes to be fun , others felt it was more a novelty due to the current tracks offered for this mode in the game . The game 's graphics were also considered as a negative , often using many strobing lights and creating concerns about possible epileptic seizures that could occur while watching the game . The character designs of the non @-@ celebrity avatars also continued to have the same Muppet @-@ like appearances that occur in the Guitar Hero series , and are overly stereotyped .

Time named DJ Hero one of the ten best video games of 2009 , considering it " the new contender for best party game " . USA Today considered DJ Hero the best music game of the year . DJ Hero also won Best Soundtrack at the Spike Video Game Awards 2009 . DJ Hero has been nominated for the " Outstanding Achievement in Soundtrack " Interactive Achievement Award from the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences .

== Sales ==

Prior to DJ Hero 's release , game industry analysts had projected the title would sell 1 @.@ 6 million units in its first fiscal quarter ; however , after disappointing sales performances of Guitar Hero 5 and The Beatles : Rock Band in the month prior to DJ Hero 's release , analysis had lowered that expectation to 600 @,@ 000 units . NPD Group figures for the month of October reported only 123 @,@ 000 units of the game were sold in the United States , below the 175 @,@ 000 units projected by analysts . November sales in North America were estimated at 211 @,@ 000 units . Through January 2010 , the game has sold 789 @,@ 000 units in North America . Ars Technica , in considering the game as a " flop " in its present market due to these numbers , attributes the failure being due to four factors : the game was not suited for social play , the cost was prohibitive in the current market , the mixes in the game were relatively unknown despite the individual songs being well @-@ known , and there was a lack of familiarity with how a turntable works for mixing

compared with a guitar or drum kit . However , despite these figures , Activision claims that DJ Hero is the highest grossing new intellectual property of 2009 in North America based on NPD data , which reporters attribute to the game 's higher cost . Activision 's Dan Amirsch cited total North American sales of over 1 .2 million units by June 2010 , and commented on the " long tail " of sales that made DJ Hero initially appear to be a failure but instead has been considered a successful title by his company but they ran out of business . They still make money off their games today .