= Perfect Dark Zero =

Perfect Dark Zero is a first @-@ person shooter video game developed by Rare and published by Microsoft Game Studios . It was exclusively released as a launch title for the Xbox 360 video game console on November 22 , 2005 in North America and December 2 , 2005 in Europe . The game is part of the Perfect Dark series and a prequel to the original Perfect Dark . The story of the game follows protagonist Joanna Dark as she joins the Carrington Institute agency to prevent rival corporation dataDyne from getting possession of an ancient artefact which endows individuals with superhuman powers .

Perfect Dark Zero features a campaign mode consisting of 14 missions that can be played co @-@ operatively, and a multiplayer mode where a maximum of 32 players can compete against each other in numerous types of deathmatch and objective @-@ based games. Both the co @-@ operative and multiplayer modes support split @-@ screen, system link, and the Xbox Live online service. The game was under development for five years and was originally intended to be released for the Nintendo GameCube and later the Xbox.

Perfect Dark Zero sold more than one million copies worldwide and received generally positive reviews from critics , garnering a score of 81 out of 100 at review aggregate website Metacritic . The game 's numerous multiplayer modes singled out as strong features . However , some critics felt that the game did not meet the expectations , criticizing single @-@ player aspects such as its story and voice acting . Two sequel novels , Perfect Dark : Initial Vector and Perfect Dark : Second Front , as well as a comic series , Perfect Dark : Janus ' Tears , were released to continue the story of the game .

= = Gameplay = =

Perfect Dark Zero is a first @-@ person shooter where players control the player character mostly from a first @-@ person perspective . The combat features mechanics such as an evasive dodge roll and a cover system in which the gameplay switches to a third @-@ person perspective , allowing the player to strategically aim without taking damage and be more aware of the surroundings . Players cannot jump but have the ability to automatically climb obstacles as long as they can reasonably reach them . It is also possible to climb ladders . By doing so , the camera shifts into a third @-@ person perspective . The player has a certain amount of health which decreases when attacked by enemies . The health can recharge a bit if the player steps out of the line of fire for a few seconds , but it may not necessarily refill completely depending on how much damage the player took .

Players can only carry a limited number of weapons since the inventory features a 4 @-@ slot system in which single hand held pistols usually take a weapon slot whereas heavy weapons like sniper rifles or rocket launchers can take up to three weapon slots . The player 's movement speed is also altered by the weight of the weapon the player is currently holding . Besides the primary function , all of the weapons in Perfect Dark Zero have one or two additional function modes that generally grant the player with special abilities . For example , the Shockwave Rifle features an X @-@ ray function which allows the player to see enemies through walls , while the Plasma Rifle has a cloak function that renders the player character invisible to enemies at cost of its batteries . Some weapons also feature more unorthodox secondary functions . For instance , the Laptop Gun can be deployed as a sentry gun , while the SuperDragon assault rifle can launch bouncing grenades .

= = = Campaign = = =

The campaign is divided into 14 missions in which the player plays as Joanna Dark. Each mission provides a number of objectives that the player has to complete to progress. To successfully clear a mission, the player must complete all primary objectives, and if Joanna is killed or fails an objective, the player will have to start the level again. The missions also feature optional objectives that are not critical but add to the player 's overall completion score. Some objectives require the player to

use numerous high @-@ tech gadgets . For example , a device called Datathief allows the player to hack into electronic devices , while another called Loctopus can be used to open locked doors . Stealth is another important element of the gameplay , as the player is often given the freedom to kill enemies without being detected by sneaking up behind them . Unlike the original Perfect Dark , every mission contains a single checkpoint at which the player may restart if Joanna is killed or loses beyond that checkpoint . However , checkpoints are removed as the player plays through a higher difficulty . There are four difficulty settings through which a mission can be played : Agent , Secret Agent , Perfect Agent , and an extra one called Dark Agent , which becomes available once the player completes the entire game on Perfect Agent . As the player plays on higher difficulties , the game adds more objectives and makes enemies tougher to increase the challenge .

The game also provides a co @-@ operative mode where two players may play through the game 's campaign together via split @-@ screen , system link , or through the Xbox Live online service . In co @-@ operative , the missions are slightly altered to suit both players . For instance , some doors may require two players to open them . Additionally , in certain missions , the second player can occasionally start far away from the main player and takes over an allied character that was AI @-@ controlled in the single player campaign . The respawn procedure is also altered substantially , as if one player dies , the other has to find and revive the partner 's corpse to bring it back to life .

= = = Multiplayer = = =

In addition to the campaign mode , Perfect Dark Zero features a multiplayer where a maximum of 32 players may compete in numerous types of deathmatch and objective @-@ based games via split @-@ screen , system link , or Xbox Live . The multiplayer offers two main modes with their own customisable options : DeathMatch and DarkOps . DeathMatch is a standard gametype where players spawn in rooms , collect weapons that are available on the map itself , and continue to the actual map . The overall objective of the game is determined by the scenario being played . Scenarios range from Killcount or Team Killcount , where the goal is to kill as many opposing players as possible , to objective @-@ based games such as Capture the Flag and Territorial Gains . DarkOps , on the other hand , is a slower @-@ paced and team @-@ only gametype where weapons must be purchased from a player 's stock of credits and credits are earned by killing enemies and completing objectives . Scenarios in this mode include Eradication , where the last team with any members left alive wins ; Infection , where players score points by either infecting others or surviving infection ; Sabotage , where the team that causes the most damage to the other team 's property wins ; and Onslaught , where one team must defend a base while the other has to attack it .

Players can either choose to play a ranked Deathmatch or DarkOps , where they will be matched with other players using a system called TrueSkill Matchmaking , or they may choose a player match where they can choose their game from a list of player hosted games . Like the original Perfect Dark , these games can be highly customized and can also include computer game bots . Features such as their difficulty and behavior can be changed to match player preference . For example , the Judge bot always attacks leading players with the highest kills score . Players can also issue commands to them as long as they are on their respective team , such as follow or hold position , and set waypoints for them to walk to . The game includes by default six different maps and each has two variants ; the only change is the placement of the bases . Most of the maps are large ones , ideal for 32 players at once , with small variants for 4 @-@ 16 player games .

= = Plot = =

Perfect Dark Zero is set in 2020 where a large percentage of the world is controlled by corporations . The most notable of these corporations are dataDyne , headed by Zhang Li , and the Carrington Institute , headed by Daniel Carrington . The player is cast as Joanna Dark , a bounty hunter working with her father Jack Dark and computer hacker Chandra Sekhar . The team is after Nathan Zeigler , an independent researcher who has been captured by a Hong Kong triad gang led by a

man named Killian . Joanna and her father successfully rescue Zeigler , but Killian manages to escape . Zeigler explains that Killian was trying to obtain his research , which contains information about a dangerous weapon . As Zeigler refuses to go anywhere without his research , Joanna is sent to retrieve it while her father stays with Zeigler . After Joanna retrieved a case with Zeigler 's research from a nearby safe house , Zeigler takes a device called neurodrive from the case and uses it to implant his research data into Jack 's mind . Afterwards , Zeigler succumbs to his injuries sustained by Killian and dies . Before dying , Zeigler says that they must find a scientist named Dr. Eustace Caroll .

While escaping , Jack and Joanna are attacked by a dataDyne assault team assisted by Killian in a dropship . Joanna manages to kill Killian and escape with Sekhar , but Jack is captured by dataDyne . With the help of Sekhar , Joanna learns that her father has been taken to a mansion where Zhang Li lives . Joanna infiltrates the mansion and finds her father in a cell . He has been tortured , and begins speaking gibberish to her , an after effect of the neurodrive . The pair fights their way out of the complex , but their extraction is interrupted by Zhang Li 's daughter , Mai Hem , who kills Jack before Joanna escapes in a hovercraft . Joanna and Sekhar decide to pursue Zeigler 's lead and seek out Dr. Caroll , who works aboard a research platform on the Pacific Ocean . Upon meeting with Joanna , Dr. Caroll uses a neurodrive to extract Zeigler 's data from Joanna 's memory , which she gained when she rescued her father . Soon after , Sekhar betrays Joanna and shoots Dr. Caroll , stating that she decided to join dataDyne because Zhang Li had made her a large offer . A team of Carrington Institute agents arrives and saves Joanna , but Sekhar eventually escapes with the data . Joanna agrees to join the Carrington Institute to stop dataDyne .

Daniel Carrington informs Joanna that Zeigler had been working on an algorithm capable of decoding extraterrestrial glyphs at a dig site in South America . Traveling to Peru , Joanna learns that the glyphs are leading dataDyne to search for an ancient artefact which acts as a power @-@ source for the Graal , a device which endows individuals with superhuman powers . Joanna plants a tracking device onto the artefact before sneaking aboard a dataDyne dropship . The dropship takes her to Africa , where Zhang Li has located the Graal buried under the African sands . The Carrington Institute plans an offensive on dataDyne forces with the battle taking place on a large bridge . Joanna rescues several Carrington Institute agents before avenging her father 's death by killing Mei Hem . Joanna infiltrates an arena and faces off against Zhang Li , who dispatches Sekhar after using the Graal . Despite the advantage , Joanna defeats Zhang Li in a final battle .

= = Development = =

Development of Perfect Dark Zero began on the Nintendo GameCube with a very small team of roughly ten people . At the time , Nintendo had a 49 % stake in Rare , making Rare a Nintendo second @-@ party developer . According to lead designer Chris Tilston , " It was basically prototyping , finding out where we could go and how we could get there . " The multiplayer mode was initially designed to be played offline because the team was told the GameCube would not support online play , even though some modem adapters were produced by Conexant later . In 2002 , Rare was fully purchased by Microsoft . As a result , the project was transferred to the Xbox and the multiplayer was redesigned to support the Xbox Live online gaming service . Tilston revealed that at one point they got to 50 players online simultaneously , but the graphics " just couldn 't handle it . "

When the Xbox 360 was conceived, it gave the developers more possibilities to include what they always wanted, since the initial version of the game pushed the original Xbox hardware very hard. Tilston credited the new hardware for allowing them to create the game 's co @-@ operative mode, which was one of the first that could be played via Xbox Live. Designing the co @-@ operative mode over Xbox Live was very challenging for the developers. According to Duncan Botwood, who was responsible for most of the multiplayer, " It was quite an effort to put it in, to be honest. You have to cater for a number of eventualities you just don 't get normally. We think we pulled it off, and because we pulled it off, other people might feel inspired to put the effort in, and we think that 's a good thing. The co @-@ op over Live, yeah, we 're very proud of that ... we 're proud indeed.

Perfect Dark Zero is also one of the first games to use the Havok 's HydraCore physics engine , which was specifically designed for multi @-@ core video game systems such as the Xbox 360 . The game 's renderer engine employs more advanced graphic technologies than was possible in the sixth generation of video game consoles , including parallax mapping , ambient occlusion , subsurface scattering , and high dynamic range . Initially , the game had a heavy anime style and Joanna Dark received several alterations throughout the development process . Lead Art Director Wil Overton explained , " We kind of wanted to bring her back in line with the way Rare do things . [...] We sorta wanted to stylize her up a bit and make her more iconic . " However , the designers ultimately decided to tone down the styling of the game a bit . According to Overton , " I think it 's now sort of a hybrid . It 's sort of a hybrid of Japanese and Western comic book look . "

The cover mode was designed to enhance the stealth aspect of the game , and the third @-@ person perspective was needed to get into and get out of quickly . It also allowed players to see the character they were playing . The idea of bringing the game into a total third @-@ person perspective was rejected as the shooting " works better " in first @-@ person view , explained Tilston . Like Rare 's earlier first @-@ person shooters GoldenEye 007 and Perfect Dark , developers decided not to include a jumping function since they felt it goes against the nature of the genre . Botwood pointed out that it can " look damn stupid when you see other players doing it " . For this reason , the team implemmented moves such as climbing obstacles or , more specifically , the combat roll , which makes players harder to hit since it breaks the game 's auto @-@ aim lock . The transition between first and third @-@ person view with some moves took a lot of work so that they did not become disorientating . A first @-@ person roll was implemented at one time , but it was ultimately dropped .

The game was intended to be a launch title for the Xbox 360. As a result , the last stage of development was very challenging and several intended features were canceled so that the game could meet the launch deadline . The number of players in multiplayer matches had to be reduced from 50 to 32, which was still twice the standard , and a " dataDyne TV " mode that would have allowed players to upload and watch multiplayer matches over Xbox Live was eventually rejected . Final development for the Xbox 360 was very rushed . The order was given to produce the discs five days before the Microsoft certification was complete . Rare later stated they felt very confident they would pass , but it was a significant risk producing 700 @,@ 000 disks if a bug turned up . According to Botwood , " very few people believed we could make launch , but everything came together in time and it was out there for day one ."

The actual development of the game took overall five years to complete and spanned three platforms : the Nintendo GameCube , the Microsoft Xbox and the Xbox 360 . Tilston remarked that , throughout the course of development , the team noticed how the video game industry had evolved as computing and graphics power increased , and how earlier games like GoldenEye 007 and Donkey Kong Country where their development costs were minimal could easily be profitable with a few programmers . Tilston also revealed that the team behind Perfect Dark Zero was composed of roughly 25 people for most of the project , which was " ridiculously " small compared to the seventh generation 's standards where there are 100 or 200 people working on a team . Despite this , Perfect Dark Zero , from a development cost , made four times its money back .

= = Marketing and release = =

Perfect Dark Zero made its first appearance at Spaceworld 2000 , an annual video game trade show hosted by Nintendo in Tokyo . The demo briefly showed a 3D real @-@ time render of Joanna Dark . Some reports further suggested the development of the game with Rare applying to trademark the names " After Dark " , " Perfect Dark Evolution " and the phrase " Shot in the Dark " . The next year , at the Electronic Entertainment Expo in June 2001 , Nintendo advertised the title " Perfect Dark Zero " on a list of upcoming GameCube releases , but it was quickly removed . In January 2002 , it was allegedly announced that its release was pushed back to 2004 due to internal team problems at Rare .

When Rare was purchased by Microsoft in September 2002, several cartoony images of Joanna Dark were released, but few other official announcements were made in the following years. On May 10, 2005, one of the rewards in the OurColony viral marketing campaign for Microsoft 's Xbox 360 console was a new image of Joanna Dark. At the official unveiling of the Xbox 360, it was revealed that Perfect Dark Zero would be a launch title for the new system in the fall of 2005. A demo was shown during the Electronic Entertainment Expo 2005 shortly afterwards. Prior to its release, Microsoft arranged several deals with different publishers to promote interest in the game. Two novels, Perfect Dark: Initial Vector and Perfect Dark: Second Front, which were written by Greg Rucka, and a comic book, Perfect Dark: Janus 'Tears, which was written by Eric Trautmann and illustrated by Cold FuZion Studios, were released before and after the game. Around the same time, Joanna Dark made an appearance on the cover of FHM magazine. An official soundtrack produced by Nile Rodgers, Perfect Dark Zero Original Soundtrack, was also made available on November 8, 2005.

The first release of the game came on November 17 , 2005 in North America . The game was subsequently playable at the Xbox 360 Zero Hour Launch event , along with other Xbox 360 launch titles such as Rare 's Kameo : Elements of Power and Activision 's Call of Duty 2 . Other releases followed on December 2 in Europe and on December 10 in Japan . In Europe , Microsoft organized a party by simulating an apartment as Joanna Dark 's home , where several journalists could try out the Xbox 360 and the game . During the Japanese launch weekend , Perfect Dark Zero became the second best @-@ selling 360 game with roughly 15 @,@ 000 units sold , behind Namco 's Ridge Racer 6 .

Perfect Dark Zero was released in two forms: the standard version and a "Limited Collector's Edition". The collector 's edition features a second disc of content, a black metal game case, images of the staff and most of the in @-@ house testers which gave a glimpse behind the scenes at Rare, a special @-@ edition comic booklet which sets the scene for the game, titled Hong Kong Sunrise, and one of nine holographic collectible cards. The game has reportedly sold in excess of one million units worldwide. As a result, it was one of the first games to be re @-@ released under the "Platinum Hits" list. In 2015, it was announced that Perfect Dark Zero could be played on the Xbox One via emulation. The game is also included in the Rare Replay video game compilation.

= = Additional content = =

Shortly after the game 's release , new multiplayer scenarios and a counter @-@ operative mode like the one found in the original Perfect Dark were said to eventually become freely available as downloadable content . Senior game designer Duncan Botwood later clarified that it was unlikely to happen due to technical issues . According to him , " It would have required much groundwork to be laid in the core AI code , which meant that it was unlikely to be available as downloadable content post @-@ release . " He also remarked that the counter @-@ operative mode was planned during the development of the game , but was eventually rejected due to the pressure to cut planned content .

In May 2006, an auto @-@ update was made available on Xbox Live, responsible for fixing some bugs and adding additional multiplayer options to the game. The bug fixes included code to prevent an ongoing problem where players could walk through the air, an issue where some weapons could make use of rapid fire, and a map @-@ exiting glitch, among others. The new multiplayer options provide seven additional new bot types and the ability to use bots in DarkOps matches, since bots had only one AI variant and were only available in DeathMatch scenarios when the game was released. Additionally, a playable demo of the game was made freely available on the Xbox Live Marketplace shortly afterwards. The demo includes one campaign mission that can be played in solo mode or co @-@ operatively, and a new multiplayer map.

Rare released a multiplayer map pack, called Perfect Dark Zero Map Pack One, to the Xbox Live Marketplace on June 7, 2006. It contains the demo 's new multiplayer map as well as three other new maps to add to the game 's original six. Unlike the game 's default maps, the new maps only have one variant instead of two. On October 31, 2006, Rare announced that a special platinum

edition of Perfect Dark Zero would be released, and would include the first map pack and two additional maps. The two new maps were later released for free in a pack called Perfect Dark Zero Map Pack Two. These maps are updated versions of two maps from the original Perfect Dark: Felicity and Ruins. The pack was released on November 1, 2006 for Gold Members and on November 8, 2006 for Silver Members.

= = Reception = =

Critical reception for Perfect Dark Zero was divided but generally positive , garnering a Metacritic aggregated review score of 81 out of 100 respectively . GameSpot 's Greg Kasavin awarded the game a rating of 9 @.@ 0 out of 10 and an Editors Choice , stating that Perfect Dark Zero " champions the Xbox 360 with its excellent assortment of single and multiplayer game types , as well as its incredible good looks and dynamic , intense action . " He also concluded that the game " delivers just about everything you could hope for from a first @-@ person shooter . " Charles Onyett of IGN praised the game 's replay value , but also criticized single @-@ player aspects such as the weak artificial intelligence of enemies , commenting that " they never display any advanced assault tactics . "

The graphics were highlighted positively . Kasavin was impressed with the amount of lighting and motion blur effects , and noted that the "excellent character animation helps make the guns feel as powerful as they look . "Bryn Williams of GameSpy considered the graphics as a "stunning look at what the 360 hardware is capable of ", but also admitted that the animation " is a little too slow and sometimes creates an unwelcome sense of cartoonishness ". IGN credited the attractive gun models , explosions , and sprawling vistas , but also felt that some areas such as the South American Ruins can unnecessarily look too shiny . The game 's audio was said to feature " heavy @-@ hitting weapon effects [and] fantastic , moody soundtrack that gives each mission its own pulsing rhythms ".

The game 's weapons were very well received . Reviewers praised the gun management and the implementation of the guns . GameSpot commented , " It doesn 't stray too far from convention , but it features some interesting twists in weapon and enemy design , making for a much more entertaining experience than the average shooter . " Critics generally agreed that the roll and cover system worked well and that they did not feel overpowered , but some criticized the fact that players need to be in a specific spot to use the cover mode . Reviewers considered the story and voice acting to be weak . IGN said that it is almost impossible not to notice how " laughably bad it is " , and that many plot twists are presented then never resolved , but also admitted that it does not really factor into the gameplay . GameCritics reviewer Mike Bracken commented , " It 's always sad when there 's voice acting in a game and I find myself being embarrassed for the voice actors . " Nevertheless , GameSpot added that the game 's weapon fire and musical score " easily drown this out . "

Publications judged the co @-@ op aspect of the game well . Kristan Reed of Eurogamer praised the fact that the missions were " designed with co @-@ op in mind . " He noted that , for example , the third level " has Joanna providing cover fire for her father Jack as he hops from one point of the level to the next . In the single player campaign Jack 's AI controlled , but co @-@ op lets you take direct control of his actions , making the experience a much more engaging affair all @-@ round . " Multiplayer matches of Perfect Dark Zero were widely well received . GameSpot stated that " the excellent weapon selection , flexibility of options , high @-@ quality maps , and smooth online performance ... make for a rock @-@ solid competitive shooter . " IGN stated similar pros , calling it " enormous " . 1UP.com reviewer Che Chou also praised the multiplayer , but observed that " constantly roll @-@ dodging to avoid enemy fire at close range [...] combined with the exceptionally slow movement speed of your character ... can occasionally be highly frustrating for beginners . "

Despite solid reviews , numerous publications remarked that Perfect Dark Zero did not meet the expectations . According to GameCritics , " It took Rare a whole console generation to do it ... and the wait wasn 't really worth it " . Game Informer found it to be quite disappointing and gave the

game a 7 out of 10 , reviewing it under the tagline " Don 't believe the hype " . In a positive review , GameSpy observed that " Perfect Dark Zero is a lot of fun and does a lot of things very well , but it 's just not the killer @-@ app that we 'd all hoped for " . In 2010 , GameTrailers placed the game 6th in their list of the " Top 10 Disappointments of the Decade " and 10th in their " Top 10 Worst Sequels " list .

= = = Accolades = = =