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How massive is Mass Effect?



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The advent of a New Year always brings changes; New Year's resolutions, the starting up of the newest seasons of your favorite TV shows, and the end of Sunday night football. However, 2010 brings something special, something that in most other years you find in October or November: great new video game releases. Even though it's partially due to the amount of games that were delayed from last year, the first couple of months of 2010 are packed with great games. This issue, we're highlighting one

that stands out even from the great January lineup, Mass Effect 2.

Mass Effect 2, like the first game, is a Single-player third-person action RPG in which the player takes on the role of Commander Shepard in an effort to stop the Reapers from taking over the universe (no spoilers here). Even though it may not seem like it, the Mass Effect storyline is one of the most interactive and intriguing storylines ever created. Much of this game expands upon the storyline created in the first game, introducing new plot twists as well as possible endings to the game (which will lead into

the third game). One of the biggest aspects of the series is that each decision that the player makes (to be good or evil, save a teammate or let them die, etc.) has a "massive effect" on the player's own experience, not only in each game, but across the series. This is helped by the ability to continue a Mass Effect 1 save file on Mass Effect 2. Beyond the storyline, the game's setting takes place on many real planets, not only in our solar system, but also in other solar systems, galaxies, and nebulae with fictional cities, civilizations, and alien races.

Most games that have such com-

plex and interactive storylines often lack in most, if not all, other aspects of the game; however, Mass Effect 2 is anything but lacking. With six different character classes, five difficulty levels, over 200 character animations for the main character, interactive conversations, space exploration, and much more, Mass Effect 2 rivals games like Fallout and Final Fantasy in terms of content and replayability. Most of the combat system from the first game has been upgraded as well. People who have played the first game will notice subtle changes such as limited ammo, regenerating health, deeper character customization, and absence of "the Mako", all intended to make their gaming experience as great as possible.

Other major updates to gameplay also include easier access to Shepard and his teammates' weapons and abilities in battle, new abilities, and class upgrades.

Overall, the game has improved quite a bit from its first installment, which is still a great game to pick up. And with new ideas such as save file transfer and the "Cerberus Network" (an online news feed and downloading place on the Mass Effect 2 main menu), Mass Effect 2 is helping to improve the already great RPG genre by carving its own well-deserved place in RPG hall-of-fame.