

## Leaked Mass Effect 2 footage hits the web; BioWare discuss sequel

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Saturday, 28 March 2009  
Last Updated Saturday, 28 March 2009

### Mass Effect 2 'GDC 2009 Combat' gameplay clip

Coming out of their panel at GDC where we weren't going to see anything substantial, footage of an in-development version of Mass Effect 2 has been leaked onto the web. BioWare talk about and show the different stages of the title's development progress - from whiteboxing, all the way to near-final quality where AI and visuals are in place - and even gives brief glimpses at some new areas and dialogue that hints a mission directive. Look closely and you can even see that the shooting mechanic seems to have been tightened up a bit - something that BioWare confirms to IGN as one of the general gameplay enhancements of the sequel. Anticipation confirmed. Dr. Ray Muzyka and Dr. Greg Zeschuk of BioWare say that in addition to improving the game's engine so that there's less texture pop-in (which the Unreal Engine 3 is infamous for), they are streamlining the planet exploration process to make less repetition in the locales. There's only so many underground bases that have the exact same layout, you know.

"It's still optional and there's still uncharted world that'll be optional, but we want every single one of them to feel like they're adding something important to the main storyline. So you feel yeah they're optional, but I feel like I really want to do that. So that's a philosophy change too."

Mass Effect 2 also features a true third-person shooter mechanic, more so than than the original did - which was one of the complaints that the studio has heard loud and clear.

"There's a few bigger buckets of things we're working on. One of them is the intensity of the action, amping that up so people will see this as a shooter RPG&hellip;it's going to feel like shooter fans are going to have a great experience..."

And while the game isn't due on Xbox 360 and PC until "early 2010," DLC is already planned out. "Mass 2 is going to have some plans [for DLC]. We'll look at Mass Effect 2 differently because it's a different kind of game. It's a very cinematic action shooter / RPG and with different kinds of consumers and different kinds of likes for DLC, so that's something we're always going to be iterating on." Hopefully the already-confirmed second batch of DLC for the first game arrives before then. Maybe?

BioWare end the interview by saying that Shepard's "fate" in the teaser trailer is true, and re-iterating what they've hinted at before: that you should keep your Mass Effect save files, since your character stats and choices made will transfer over and affect how your story plays out.

"We've said two things. Everything we've said in the past about keeping your saves, that's all true. Everything you've seen in the teaser is all true. What does that mean? ... We look forward to sharing with you guys soon what that all means."

And on last night's GameTrailers TV, further details were uncovered. Mass Effect 2 project director, Casey Hudson revealed that while there won't be any 'space combat' in the sequel - it is a gameplay mechanic that the team is shooting for (get it?) at some point during the planned trilogy. Which means that it will be in the third installment. As for another infamous "alien sex scene" to get Fox News all in a tizzy?

"Romances will be as well done and as sophisticated in Mass Effect 2 as they were in Mass Effect 1 ... There's going to be more people that you can meet, that you can take with you on missions and stuff like that. So there's actually more romance options in Mass Effect 2."

Elaborating on what the good BioWare doctors said above, Hudson stated that by retaining your Mass Effect save files, your ME2 may start off entirely different than a friend who maybe didn't play the first, or who had different situations play out.

"If you chose to start a game by importing a Mass Effect save, your game will feel like your game ... The first moment will be different."