

'Call of Duty' blockbuster returns with 'Black Ops 2'

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The blockbuster video game franchise "Call of Duty" returns on Tuesday with a futuristic new instalment in which shadowy activists use social networks to threaten the United States.

"Call of Duty: Black Ops 2"—the sequel to an earlier Cold War-set episode in the record-selling franchise—whisks the player to a fictional 2025, in which a Nicaraguan militant is plotting to undermine US security.

"The move to the near future provided us with the opportunity to tell a time and generation-spanning narrative, as well as access an entirely new world of technology, weapons," Mark Lamia, head of the Treyarch studios that developed the game for the US publisher Activision, told AFP.

"Call of Duty: Black Ops 2" hits stores worldwide on Tuesday, for [PlayStation 3](#), Xbox 360 and PC. A version developed for Nintendo's new [Wii U](#) will be released at the same time as the console, on November 18 in the United States and November 30 in Europe.

More than 250 people spent two years developing the new instalment, working with arms experts to imagine the weaponry of the near future, from warrior robots to ultra-sophisticated drones.

"Our fictional world of 2025 is the result of news headlines you see today," Lamia said of the game, whose [violent content](#) makes it

unsuitable for under 18s.

Total sales for the "Call of Duty" franchise, launched in 2003, exceed worldwide box office receipts for "Star Wars" and "Lord of the Rings", according to Activision.

The last published "Call of Duty" game, "[Modern Warfare 3](#)", hit a billion dollars in revenue 16 days after its launch last year—a day less than it took the [James Cameron](#) movie "Avatar" to reach the same milestone.

For "Black Ops 2", US vendors [GameStop](#) and Amazon both say they have logged record levels of pre-release orders.

The episode's main narrative offers around 10 hours of play, but gamers can then log on to battle one another in multiplayer teams.

Last year, more than two million players logged on the day of the new instalment's release.

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