

'Call of Duty' blasts to billion-dollar sales mark

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Activision Blizzard said Wednesday that sales of its "Call of Duty: Black Ops 2" video game rocketed to the billion-dollar mark just 15 days after its release.

Sales of the game hit a [billion dollars](#) two days faster than 3-D film blockbuster "Avatar," which set a box office record after its release in 2009.

"The release of 'Call of Duty' has been one of the most significant entertainment events of each of the last six years," said Activision [Blizzard](#) chief executive Bobby Kotick.

Since the latest installment of the game launched on November 13, players using [Xbox 360](#) or [PlayStation 3](#) consoles have racked up more than 150 million hours battling with or against each other online.

"Call of Duty: Black Ops 2"—the sequel to an earlier Cold War-set episode in the franchise—whisks players 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.

More than 250 people spent two years developing the new installment, 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 episode's main narrative offers around 10 hours of play, but gamers can then log on to battle one another in multiplayer teams.

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