Crisis on Infinite Earths was a 12-issue American comic book limited series (identified as a "12-part maxi-series") and crossover event, produced by DC Comics in 1985 to simplify their then-55-year-old continuity.[1] The series was written by Marv Wolfman, and illustrated by George Pérez (pencils/layouts), with Mike DeCarlo, Dick Giordano, and Jerry Ordway (who shared inking/embellishing chores). The series eliminated the concept of the Multiverse in the fictional DC Universe, and depicted the deaths of such long-standing superheroes as Supergirl and the Barry Allen incarnation of the Flash.

The title of the series was inspired by earlier crossover stories involving the multiple parallel Earths of the Multiverse, such as "Crisis on Earth-Two" and "Crisis on Earth-Three", but instead of lasting two to five issues and involving members from as many superhero teams from as many parallel worlds, it involved virtually every significant character from every parallel universe in DC's history. It in turn inspired the titles of three subsequent DC crossover series: Zero Hour: Crisis In Time (1994), Infinite Crisis (2005), and Final Crisis (2008).
Overview

Prior to Crisis on Infinite Earths, DC was notorious for its continuity problems. No character's backstory, within the comic books, was entirely self-consistent and reliable. For example, Superman originally couldn't fly (he could instead leap over an eighth of a mile), and his powers came from having evolved on a planet with stronger gravity than Earth's. Over time, he became able to fly, his powers were explained as coming from the sun, and a more complex backstory (the now-familiar "last survivor of Krypton" origin story) was invented. Later it was altered to include his exploits as Superboy. It was altered further to include Supergirl, the bottled city of Kandor, and other survivors of Krypton. Further watering down the original idea of Superman having been the sole Kryptonian to survive the destruction of his world. There was also an issue of character aging; for instance, Batman, an Earth-born human being without super powers, retained his youth and vitality well into the 1980s despite having been an active hero during World War II, and his sidekick Robin never seemed to age beyond adolescence in over 30 years.

These issues were addressed during the Silver Age by DC creating parallel worlds in a multiverse: Earth-One was the contemporary DC Universe, which had been depicted since the advent of the Silver Age; Earth-Two was the parallel world where the Golden Age events took place, and where the heroes who were active during that period had aged more or less realistically since that time; Earth-Three was an "opposite" world where heroes were villains, and historical events happened the reverse of how they did in real life (such as, for instance, President John Wilkes Booth being assassinated by a rebel named Abraham Lincoln). Earth Prime was ostensibly the "real world," used to explain how real-life DC staffers (such as Julius Schwartz) could occasionally appear in comic stories; and so forth. If something happened outside current continuity (such as the so-called "Imaginary Stories" that were a staple of DC's Silver Age publications), it was explained away as happening on a parallel world, a premise not dissimilar to the company's current "Elseworlds" imprint.

Some have said that, over the years as new readers were introduced to the DC Universe, the "multiverse" theory — with its attendant multiple versions of Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, et al. — served to confuse those who did not have a working knowledge of DC's history. The editorial objective of Crisis on Infinite Earths was to streamline all of these parallel worlds into a single, consistent backstory, and thus hopefully make the DC Universe more "approachable" to new readers. It was also to free the company's writers from the "baggage" of 50 years of (dis)continuity.

The series was highly successful from a marketing standpoint, generating renewed interest in the company's books, enticing readers with the clichéd — but in this case accurate — tagline that "the DC Universe will never be the same." The story itself was rooted firmly in the cliché of "superheroes battle to save the world", but its unprecedented scope and its great attention to both drama and detail satisfied readers with its story. Along with Alan Moore's Watchmen and Frank Miller's Batman: The Dark Knight Returns, it contributed to the commercial and creative revitalization of DC Comics, which had been dominated in the market by rival publisher Marvel Comics throughout the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s.

Crisis also helped popularize the formula of the line-wide "crossover" comic book series, a concept first seen in Marvel's Contest of Champions (1983) and Secret Wars (1984). Since 1985, superhero publishers such as DC and Marvel have had frequent "summer crossover" series designed to tie many of their comic book titles together under a single storyline (and thus sell more comic books).

Origins

The title was originally conceived to be a celebration of DC's 50th anniversary; however, Marv Wolfman and Len Wein saw it as a chance to clean up DC's rather convoluted continuity (which was thought to have put many new readers off buying DC titles) that had built up over that time. The term "Crisis" was a word used frequently in DC Comics of the time, as it denoted an inter-dimensional crossover, such as the yearly Justice League/Justice Society crossovers that began with "Crisis on Earth-Two".

Wolfman came up with an idea which would reach across the entirety of the DC Universe and its 50-year history. First of all, he came up with the character of the Monitor who was initially a faceless character used in many of DC's titles over the course of a year. The Monitor supplied DC's villains with equipment in order to test its heroes for the Crisis ahead. As a result, the character was seen to be a villain himself and his real reasons were not revealed to the reader until Crisis #1.
Plot summary

The story introduces readers to two near-omnipotent beings, the good Monitor and the evil Anti-Monitor, who had been created as a result of the same experiment that created the Multiverse. The Monitor made cameo appearances in various DC comic book series for two years preceding the publication of the series and at first appeared to be a new supervillain, but with the onset of the Crisis, he was revealed to be working on a desperate plan to save the entire Multiverse from destruction at the hands of the Anti-Monitor. The Crisis series highlighted the efforts of DC Comics' superheroes to stop the Anti-Monitor's plan. Under the initial guidance of the Monitor, a select group of heroes was assigned to protect massive "tuning forks" designed to merge the surviving Earths into one that could be protected from the antimatter that had already annihilated untold numbers of alternate Earths. Eventually the conflict grew, and nearly every DC hero became involved in the battle.

The Monitor is murdered by his own assistant, Harbinger, while she is temporarily possessed by one of the Anti-Monitor's "shadow demons," but he expected the attack and allowed it to happen so his death would release enough energy to protect the last five parallel Earths (the homes of the known DC Universe) long enough for the heroes to lead an assault on the Anti-Monitor, under the guidance of the Monitor's assistants, Harbinger, Alexander Luthor, Jr., and Pariah. The villain is forced to retreat, but at the cost of Supergirl's life.

This lull in the war provides some breathing room for the heroes, but the various supervillains join forces under Brainiac and Lex Luthor to conquer the Earths, while the Anti-Monitor causes chaos on the Earths by forcing the Psycho-Pirate to manipulate the emotions of their inhabitants. The second Flash dies stopping the Anti-Monitor's backup scheme of destruction (to use an anti-matter cannon to penetrate the protective aura). The Spectre halts the hero/villain conflict, warning that the Anti-Monitor is traveling to the beginning of time to prevent the Multiverse's creation. Heroes and villains join forces in response with the heroes travelling to stop the Anti-Monitor, and the villains traveling to the planet Oa in antiques to prevent the renegade scientist Krona from performing a historic experiment that would allow the Anti-Monitor to succeed in his efforts.

The villains fail, and Krona proceeds with his experiment, while the heroes support the Spectre, whose battle with the Anti-Monitor creates an energy overload that shatters space and time. With that, a single universe is created and all the superheroes return to a present-day reality where the various elements of the five Earths were fused into one, with no one except the people present at the battle at the dawn of time remembering the original reality.

The Anti-Monitor attacks one last time, transporting Earth to the Anti-Matter universe and summons a massive horde of shadow demons. However, he falls to a carefully planned counter-attack, culminating in a battle with Kal-L (the Earth-2 Superman), Alexander Luthor of Earth-3 and Superboy of Earth-Prime, with some unexpected last-second help from the New Gods' adversary, Darkseid. As the Anti-Monitor crashes into a star and dies, Alex sends himself, Earth-2 Superman, Earth-2 Lois Lang, and Earth-Prime Superboy into a paradise reality.

The aftermath of the crisis plays out a few pages later, including Wally West becoming the new Flash. The final page shows the Psycho-Pirate, who was now imprisoned in Arkham Asylum, talking to himself in a monologue: "I'm the only one left who remembers the infinite Earths. You see, I know the truth. I remember all that happened, and I'm not going to forget. Worlds lived, worlds died. Nothing will ever be the same. But those were great days for me... I had a good friend in the good old days, really. He was the Anti-Monitor. He was going to give me a world to rule. Now he's gone, too. But that's okay with me. You see, I like to remember the past because those were better times than now. I mean, I'd rather live in the past than today, wouldn't you? I mean, nothing's ever certain anymore. Nothing's ever predictable like it used to be. These days... y-you just never know who's going to die... and who's going to live."

Tie-In issues

- All-Star Squadron #50-56
- Amethyst #13 (Vol.2)
- Batman #389-391
- Blue Devil #17-19
- DC Comics Presents #78,86-88,94,95
- Detective Comics #558
- The Fury of Firestorm #41,42
- Green Lantern #194-196,198 (Vol.2)
- Infinity, Inc. #18-25 & Annual #1
- Justice League of America #244,245 & Annual #3
- Legion of Super-Heroes #16-18 & Annual #1 (Vol.3)
- The New Teen Titans #13,14 (Vol.2)
- The Omega Men #31,32
- Superman #414,415
- Swamp Thing #46 (Vol.2)
- Wonder Woman #327-329

Post-Crisis

Characters and other elements established before Crisis on Infinite Earths (especially those eliminated by it) are considered pre-Crisis, and revised ones are considered post-Crisis. However,
Crisis was used by DC as an opportunity to wipe much of its slate clean and make major changes to many of its major revenue-generating comic book series. Frank Miller's revamp of Batman with *Batman: Year One*, George Pérez's relaunching of *Wonder Woman* (see Gods and Mortals), and John Byrne's reboot of Superman (see *The Man of Steel*) all took place shortly following Crisis on Infinite Earths, and changed substantial elements of the characters' backstories.

Several other titles which were not significantly retconned were taken in very different directions following Crisis. *The Flash* was relaunched starring a younger main character, the previous Flash's sidekick, Kid Flash (also known as Wally West). *Green Lantern* was briefly changed to *Green Lantern Corps*, chronicling the adventures of a group of Green Lanterns led by Hal Jordan and stationed on Earth. The *Justice League of America* title was cancelled, to be replaced by a new series entitled simply *Justice League*, featuring a new and uniquely diverse cast, many of them drawn from what had been different universes in DC's pre-Crisis multiverse. While some of these revamps of classic superheroes were less successful than others, their new beginnings can generally be attributed to the success of Crisis on Infinite Earths.

### The "Post-Crisis" Crisis

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Please improve this article by adding references. See the talk page for details. (September 2007)

Since Crisis on Infinite Earths created a new, singular universe, with a new back history, the Crisis event itself (as told in the limited series) is obviously not part of it. Regardless, across time, various "revised" DC Universe characters have referenced a past event called "Crisis." In this history, many heroes opposed the Anti-Monitor, who sought to destroy the (single) positive-matter universe in favor of his anti-matter universe. Superboy did not die as she did not yet exist, but Barry Allen sacrificed his life to save the universe. Examples where this interpretation does not fit are:

- **Superman #8**: Superman was referred to mistakenly as Superboy (the young Clark Kent from the Time Trapper's Pocket Universe) by the Legion of Super-Heroes. He recalls meeting a Superboy (Earth-Prime) during the Crisis and that he wasn't around long enough to make any enemies.
- **Legion Of Super-Heroes #38**: during the mourning of Superboy, a statue of Supergirl is seen. The statue like the others in the background are made in dedication to fallen Legionnaires. The Supergirl statue would be removed when DC enforced her no longer existing.

The majority of DC Universe characters are unaware that the original, multiverse-wide Crisis on Infinite Earths occurred. Although the characters who were present at the epic battle at the dawn of time (Crisis on Infinite Earths #10, "Death at the Dawn of Time") - Psycho-Pirate, Lady Quark, Harbinger, and Pariah - were initially treated as exceptions, this idea did not stick. There have been occasional references to the event. A 2002 storyline in the *Supergirl* comic book saw the original pre-Crisis Supergirl landing on post-Crisis Earth, for example, and established that the Spectre, being able to see across dimensions and timelines, is aware the Crisis occurred. In addition, Grant Morrison's run on *Animal Man* heralded for its deconstruction of the concept of the comic book, initiated a "Second Crisis" in which characters such as the original Crime Syndicate of America from Earth-Three came back to life thanks to the Medusa Mask owned by the Psycho-Pirate, who remembered the original Crisis. *Per Degaton* is aware of the pre-Crisis timeline; he told the JSAs of the present and of 1951 that he would return them out of existence the same way the Huntress of Earth-Two was. With the *Fourth World* existing outside the Multiverse proper, Darkseid has also acknowledged the events of the Crisis. Members of the *Green Lantern Corps* were also aware of the Crisis, even though none participated in the battle at the beginning of time. Corps member *Chop*, the only character to have his timeline completely erased by the Crisis, was nonetheless recognized by his fellow Green Lanterns. John Constantine is also aware of the Crisis, as seen in *Swamp Thing* vol. 2, issue 70; additionally, a folder titled "Crisis" was seen in Constantine's possession in *Hellblazer* issue 10. Finally, in the *Planetary* special, *Planetary/Batman: Night on Earth*, it was implied that *Elijah Snow* had somehow temporarily left the *Wildstorm* universe to witness the Crisis.

### Deaths during Crisis

The following DC characters were explicitly shown to have died during Crisis on Infinite Earths:

- Alexander Luthor, Sr. of Earth-Three and wife Lois Lane-Luthor
- Alexei Luthor of Earth-Two
- Angle Man
- Anti-Monitor
- Aquagirl (Tula)
- Bug-Eyed Bandit
- Clayface (Matt Hagen)
- The Crime Syndicate of America
- Dove (Don Hall)
- Farmer Boy (identified as "Flower") of Easy Company
- Flash (Barry Allen)
- Green Arrow (of Earth-Two)
- Huntress (of Earth-Two)
- Icicle (Joar Mahkent)
- Icicle (Hal Jordan)
- Justice League of America
- Kid Flash (Barry Allen)
- Lex Luthor of Earth-Two
- Mirror Master (Sheldon Merriweather)
- Murder Machine (of Earth-Two)
- Nightwing (Dick Grayson)
- Osiris (Stephanie Brown)
- Phantom Stranger (of Earth-Two)
- Power Girl (Kara Zor-El)
- Psycho-Pirate
- Richard Jordan
- Separator (of Earth-Two)
- Starman (of Earth-Two)
- Superman (of Earth-Two)
- Superman
- Wally West
- Wildcat (of Earth-Two)
In addition, the sequel series, a "New Earth", in which certain elements of the DC Universe were changed. Three's Crisis, with Earth Two's Superman Kal-L returning to mainstream "reality," accompanied by Earth-Infinite Crisis whose background closely matched the pre-1986; a variety of characters named Supergirl were introduced. In 2004 DC introduced a Superman's cousin Supergirl from DC continuity was slowly revised in the years after this time with fewer wholesale revisions.

In 1994, DC's mini-series Continuing continuity issues

The changes made in the wake of the Crisis were not implemented consistently. The series was published over the course of a year, with ongoing series continuing simultaneously. In addition, several stories set in the previous continuity were published following the series' final issue. Initially, characters who were present at the final battle in the Dawn of Time remembered their original histories in addition to their post-Crisis histories. Furthermore, revamped or relaunched versions of titles debuted at different times, with DC continuing to feature old versions of characters until new versions were launched, sometimes a year or more later. As a consequence, a series intended to streamline DC continuity introduced additional complexities.

The new version of Hawkman did not appear until 1989; this raised questions about the character who had been appearing with the post-Crisis heroes since 1986. Similar problems faced the Legion of Super-Heroes, which had been affected by the removal of Superboy from continuity. Two female characters, Donna Troy and Power Girl also encountered continuity problems in the new DC universe. In 1994, DC's mini-series Zero Hour attempted to resolve these conflicts by again rebooting the DCU, this time with fewer wholesale revisions.

The erasure of Superman's cousin Supergirl from DC continuity was slowly revised in the years after 1986; a variety of characters named Supergirl were introduced. In 2004 DC introduced a Supergirl whose background closely matched the pre-Crisis Kara Zor-El of Krypton.

Infinite Crisis

Main article: Infinite Crisis

Infinite Crisis, a seven-issue limited series, launched in 2005, revisits many elements of the original Crisis, with Earth Two's Superman Kai-L returning to mainstream "reality," accompanied by Earth-Three's Alexander Luthor, Jr. and Earth-Prime's Superboy. The series concluded with the creation of a "New Earth", in which certain elements of the DC Universe were changed.

In addition, the sequel series, 52 ends with the DC Multiverse being restored, albeit with only 52 parallel worlds.

Final Crisis

Main article: Final Crisis
Spin-offs
There have been a number of spin-offs and tie-ins.

Action figures
To commemorate the 20th anniversary of Crisis on Infinite Earths, DC Direct issued a series of Crisis action figures. However, due to quality-control problems, DC Direct recalled the toys and asked retailers to cut off the heads and ship them back to DC Direct. They were re-released on June 28, 2006.

The first wave includes action figure representations of Earth-2 Robin, Supergirl, the Monitor, Harbinger, and Psycho-Page. The second wave includes action figure representations of the Flash (Barry Allen), Earth-2 Superman, the Anti-Monitor, Lex Luthor and Brainiac. A third wave has been recently released and includes action figure representations of Earth-Prime Superboy, Batman, a Weaponer of Qward, Earth-2 Huntress, and the female Dr. Light. There is no word at this time whether or not a fourth wave of figures are in the works.

Novelization adaptation
The iBooks, Inc., under the distribution of Publishers Group West, adapt the comic book miniseries as novelization with one of its writers Marv Wolfman. The whole event was narrated by Barry Allen himself. The hardcover version was released on April 2005 (ISBN 1-59687-290-X) and the paperback was released on February 2006 (ISBN 1-59687-343-4). Cover art was by George Pérez and Alex Ross.

Heroclix Expansion
On February 28th, 2008, a DC Heroclix set entitled CRISIS is was released. The set is the most current, successful, and popular set. The set contained 16 commons, 16 uncommons, 16 rares and 12 Super-Rares. The set includes 2 very valuable Superman chase figures (One E-2 version, and one Kingdom Come Superman) where you had a 1:50 chance of pulling one. The set also contained 8 LE feats and characters, along with a World's Finest figure that was accessible by buying a shrinkwrapped box of 10 packs, limited to 5000 figures. Packs come with 5 random figures, and 1 feat/BFC/Event dial.

Bibliography
- Official Crisis on Infinite Earths Index (March, 1986). A one shot publication providing a detailed description on each issue of the series, a list of alternate Earths, and a history of the Multiverse concept.
- Official Crisis on Infinite Earths Cross-Over Index (July, 1986). A one shot publication providing summaries of every comic book issue connected to the Crisis storyline, descriptions of alternate Earths, and a list of every character that appeared in Crisis.

Parodies and homage references
- Blackthorne Comics published the two-issue mini-series Freak-Out on Infant Earths in 1987.[5]
- Issues #4 and 5 (1991) of Marvel Comics' Mighty Mouse were titled "Mice on Infinite Earths," and had Mighty Mouse meeting Mighty Mouselet and helping the Minotaur. Harebringer, and Pancha fight the evil and powerful Anti-Minotaur. Issue #4 has a cover by George Pérez that parodies Crisis #7.[6] and Perez also drew the cover of issue #5, which parodies Crisis #12.[7]
- Crisis, along with other crossovers and "event" comics, was parodied by Simpsons Comics in the Radioactive Man series. Radioactive Man #679 (September 1994), written by Steve Vance, is entitled "Who Washes The Washmen's Infinite Secrets Of Legendary Crossover Knight Wars?"[8]
- In one issue, Radioactive Man also mentions a "Secret Crisis on Erstatz Earths".
- MAD Magazine #448 provided a review of the fictional "Infinite Secret Crisis on All Earthly Worlds," which sought to solve the continuity problems by killing absolutely everyone, in alphabetical order.
- Many images and themes from Crisis are repeated in JLA/Avengers written by Kurt Busiek and pencilled (as was Crisis) by George Pérez.
- In the Justice League episode "A Better World, Part 1", an alternate Martian Manhunter lures the Justice League into a trap by deploying a story similar to the maxi-series: the part that can be heard is "...and the dimensions appear to be collapsing on each other" and "...perhaps by combining our forces, we may be able to avert this crisis which threatens all the infinite earths and all the divergent timestreams."
- The Justice League Unlimited episode "The Once And Future Thing, Part 2, "Chronos's disruption of the timeline nearly results in history being erased with a "white field" effect similar to the anti-matter wave of the Crisis. A mastadon phases in front of the characters at one point. The Western era is visited. Batman and Green Lantern chase Chronos to the beginning of time, where they view a hand similar to the Anti-Monitor's holding the source spiral.
- The fourth and final issue of the Superman & Bugs Bunny mini-series was titled "Crisis on Infinite Earths".
- Issue #25 of the Animaniacs showed a preview of fictitious stories supposedly planned for later issues. One of them was "Chaos on Infinite Watertowers!", described as "an epic retelling of the massive Warner universe", in which "worlds collide", "titans clash", and "Wakko gets a new hat".

See also
- Crisis (DC Comics)
History of the DC Universe

Millennium

Zero Hour

Infinite Crisis

Final Crisis

References

2. ^ Crisis on Infinite Earths 01 "Crisis Beginings" by Marv Wolfman
3. ^ Green Lantern Corps Vol. 2 Issue #201
4. ^ DC Comics
5. ^ DC Comics
6. ^ Freak-Out on Infant Earths
7. ^ Mighty Mouse #4 at the Comic Book DB
8. ^ Mighty Mouse #5 at the Comic Book DB
9. ^ Radioactive Man #679 at the Comic Book DB

External links

- Jonathan Woodward's *The Annotated Crisis on Infinite Earths*
- Alan Kistler's Crisis Files - An in-depth retrospective by "would-be comic historian and general continuity nerd" Alan Kistler on the Crisis, including a comprehensive issue-by-issue summary, map of the multiple universes, a discussion on why the Crisis had to happen and how effective it was, various cover and interior art scans, and a discussion on Marv Wolfman's novelization.
- Crisis on Infinite Earths: The DC Canon - study of landmark series as canonical DC work
- Crisis on Infinite Earths: The Continuity Pages
- Infinite Crisis list of trades spanning Crisis on Infinite Earths to Infinite Crisis
- Portraiture of the Crisis - Justice League Unlimited Style
- Crisis on Infinite Earths at the Big Comic Book DataBase
- Crisis on Infinite Earths at the Comic Book Database Project
- Crisis on Infinite Earths at the DC Database Project

Results from FactBites:

Crisis on Infinite Earths - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2335 words)

Crisis on Infinite Earths was a 12-issue comic book limited series (identified as a "12 part maxi-series") and crossover event, produced by DC Comics in 1985 in order to simplify their fifty-year-old continuity.

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Crisis was used by DC as an opportunity to wipe much of its slate clean and make major changes to many of their major revenue-generating comic book series.

Infinite Crisis - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (1727 words)

Infinite Crisis was a sequel to DC's 1985 limited series Crisis on Infinite Earths.

The 2004 limited series Identity Crisis was not originally labeled as part of the story, but the Prelude to Infinite Crisis special later labeled it as a tie-in.

Countdown to Infinite Crisis was followed by four six-issue limited series: The OMAC Project, Rann-Thanagar War, Day of Vengeance, and Villains United, as well as a four-part limited series DC Special featuring the return of Donna Troy.

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COMMENTARY

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Crisis on Infinite Earths was a story told in American comic books in the year 1985. It lasted for 12 issues. Marv Wolfman wrote it and George Pérez drew it. It changed much about the history of the DC Universe, and allowed the editors of DC Comics to simplify their then 55 year old history. Prior to Crisis on Infinite Earths, DC was notorious for its continuity problems.[2] No character's backstory, within the comic books, was entirely self-consistent and reliable. For example, Superman originally couldn't fly (he could instead leap over an eighth of a mile), and his powers came from having evolved on a planet with stronger gravity than Earth's. Characters and other elements established before Crisis on Infinite Earths (especially those eliminated by it) are considered pre-Crisis, and revised ones are considered post-Crisis.