FREE!

MMOZine

Issue 4 | April 2008

Free Magazine For MMO Gamers. Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates

WARHAMMER ONLINE AGE OF RECKONING

IT'S HAMMER TIME! MASSIVE BETA & STUNNING NEW SHOTS...

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HUGE REVIEW!

LINEAGE II: THE KAMAEL

Our verdict, plus claim an exclusive in-game item today!

INTERVIEW! BILL ROPER ON HELLGATE: STONEHENGE CHRONICLES Plus the next update!



JUMPGATE
Starstruck Beta of the spaced-out MMO



CHAMPIONS ONLINE
The next big thing in superheros is born!

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World of Warcraft
Battle Chest, Collectors Edition and Trading Card sets to be won inside!



Welcome to MMOZine



It's now been confirmed that Warhammer Online will not make a Spring release, but slip towards the end of 2008. The Age of Reckoning may be more distant now, but we can be happy in the knowledge that the extra time will be well spent making it the great game that Mythic always wanted it to be. Too many MMOs are released unfinished and with this, as with Age of Conan, we're frustrated in the delay, but happy that we'll get better, more polished worlds to explore at the end of the day. But even less finessed releases get brilliant updates down the line, so be sure to check out our reviews of the latest new content this issue. And don't miss our great giveaways, with a free item for Lineage II: The Kamael and an Alienware Area-51 7500 PC to be won!

Steve Brown, Editor
mmozine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

The MMOZine massive were told to go forth and multiplay, which they did...



JIM ROSSIGNOL
Just couldn't Adam-and-EVE his luck!



IAN MORRIS
Got Connected at Codemasters and jumped the gate.



STEVE HILL
Got absolutely Warhammered once again.

DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights...

PLUS! FREE IN-GAME MASK ITEM! PAGE 22



LINEAGE II: THE KAMAEL

One wing to rule them all and in the darkness bind them! PAGE 19



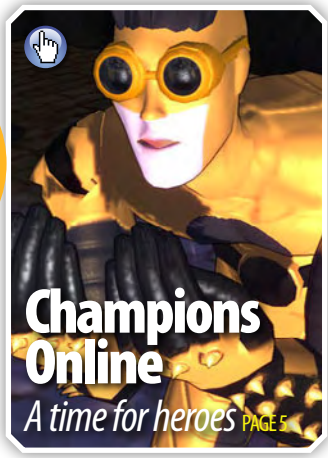
Warhammer Online

Orcward delay, but great new content! PAGE 9

PLUS! LOTRO TUTORIAL PAGE 32

EVE Online

Guide to the galaxy PAGE 30



Champions Online

A time for heroes PAGE 5

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

Requiem: Bloodymare
Champions Online
Age of Conan
Huxley
Star Trek Online
WoW: Wrath of the Lich King
The Agency
Aion
Stargate Worlds
Warhammer Online
Earthrise
Jumpgate Evolution
Hellgate: Stonehenge Chronicles
Lineage II: The Kamael
D&D Online
EVE Online
LOTRO

PLUS! WIN AN ALIENWARE PC p34

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We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.

AGE OF CONAN HYBORIAN ADVENTURES

'EASILY THE MOST VIOLENT MMO OF 2008' PC ZONE











PLAYBACK OPTIONS: ENHANCED

HEADS WILL ROLL...
...MAY 23RD 2008

Games for Windows

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Requiem: Bloodymare

FIRST LOOK

Genetically engineered walking nightmares headed your way!

Publisher: Gravity Interactive
Developer: Gravity Interactive
Heritage: Ragnarok Online
Link: www.playrequiem.com
ETA: Summer



When Extreme Makeover goes horribly, horribly wrong...

"This is a mature, bloody and dark MMO of deepest nightmares"



They look like a friendly pair, and so do their owners.



PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Requiem



Acquire bestial abilities yourself to fight the biggest monsters.



There certainly is a lot of blood in Bloodymare.

What's the story?

You are the Ethegian race of the Temperions, DNA-tampered warriors designed to battle the mutant results of ages of scientific and mystical warfare and experimentation. The natural world has become so twisted that grotesque beasts now threaten the world of Ethegia and it's your job to destroy them.

What do we know?

This is a mature, bloody and dark MMO, and as Peter Kang, CEO of Gravity Interactive says, "Requiem isn't a game for kids; this is for mature players that are looking for hardcore content that conjures up their deepest nightmares and fears".

When do we get more?

A closed Beta begins now, so we hope to bring you a nightmarish report next issue!

Anything else to declare?

Requiem has a mechanic known as the Nightmare System, which is unique in that it relates directly to the time of day or night. It's at night that many of the most dangerous and powerful mutated beasts will awake and attack the Ethegian cities. To combat these nightmare creatures, players will be able to tinker further with their own DNA and use a Beast Possession System to transform and acquire some of their foes' unnatural abilities.

Champions Online

FIRST LOOK

Fully customisable heroes and powers? That would be just super!

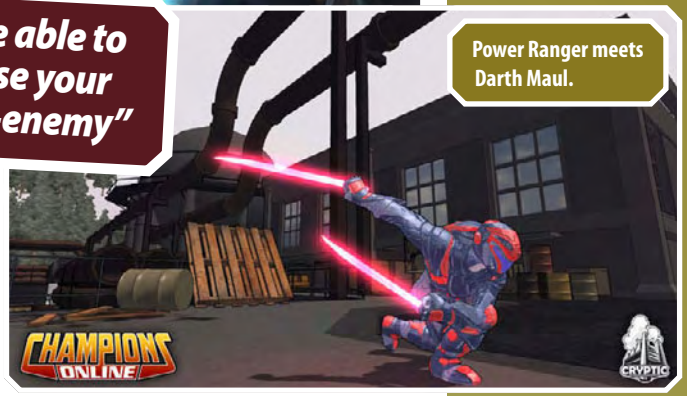
Publisher: Cryptic
Developer: Cryptic
Heritage: City of Heroes, City of Villains
Link: www.champions-online.com
ETA: Spring 2009

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Champions



The super-ability to untangle last year's Christmas lights!

"You'll be able to customise your own arch-enemy"



Power Ranger meets Darth Maul.





We like the under-arm rotary can-opener - very handy.

What's the story?

The Champions role-playing game has been popular since 1981, and experienced superhero MMO developer Cryptic has just acquired the brand from Hero Games. Cryptic has always been a big fan of Champions, Jack Emmert, Cryptic's creative head, explaining, "I love both the rich history and wide array of compelling characters, which made this an obvious choice for Cryptic Studios".

What do we know?

The emphasis in this superhero MMO is on complete customisation of your character, which Cryptic claims is near infinite, with billions of potential options, including user-generated names, back story, costume, powers and abilities.

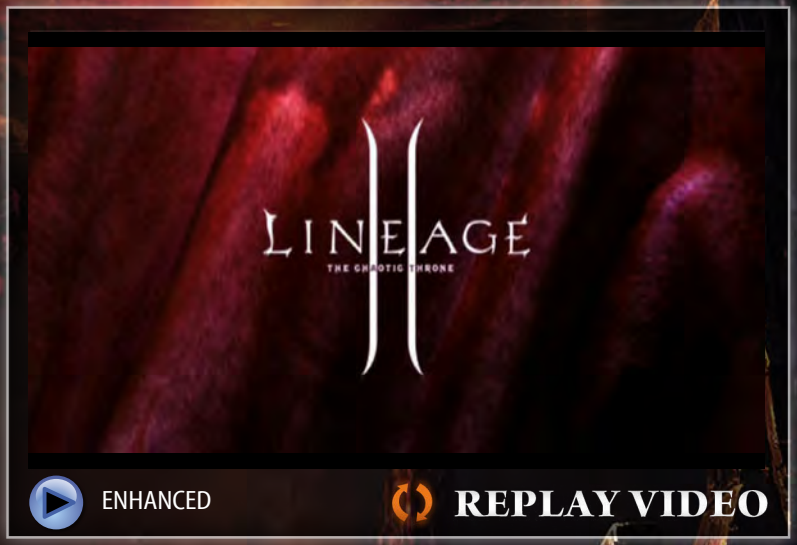
When do we get more?

We'll have more details of the combat systems powering this new project with our next issue.

Anything else to declare?

You'll also be able to create and customize your own personal arch-enemy in Champions Online, again with his own evil back story. This will make combat more interesting than simple hit-point slugouts, with special 'Showdown' scenarios forcing you to face your nemesis and his minions. These scenarios will vary each time you face a big boss, which should keep you on your colourful lycra-stockinged toes!

PREPARE FOR BATTLE!



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NCSOFT

LINEAGE II TEAM Game Develop Department

7 UP

New MMOs and content updates to mark on your calendar with a BIG RED PEN!



Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures

Publisher: Edios | **ETA:** Spring/Summer

The good news for nudity fans is that nipples may be allowed in this combat-heavy MMO, after US censorship boards passed judgement. Will the BBFC be as liberal? We wait with bated breath. Also shown off recently were war mammoth mounts and the massive scale of city building. We're hoping for the review next issue.



Star Trek Online

Publisher: Cryptic? | **ETA:** TBA

It could be good news for Star Trek fans as a rumour has emerged suggesting that City of Heroes and Champions Online developer Cryptic Studios may have secured the redevelopment of the MMO. It's thought Cryptic want something new to show before confirming this.

Huxley

Publisher: Webzen | **ETA:** Summer

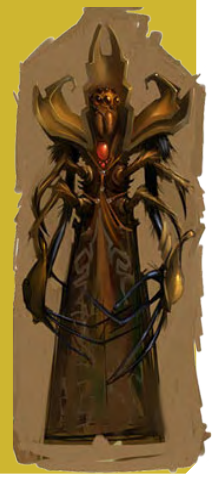
This massively multiplayer shooter has been showing off its combat systems recently as it goes into a second Beta stage. PvP battles of up to 100 vs 100 combatants are supported, so expect an unprecedented first-person experience. There will also be hundreds of weapons to choose from, although you will be limited to carrying three at a time.



World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King

Publisher : Blizzard | **ETA:** Summer

A new bestiary has been revealed for the new continent of Northren. The frozen lands will be host to all kinds of terrifying new creatures, which will include the Nerubian Vizier (half spider, half humanoid), Plague Eruptors (fast, violent zombies) and Shovel Tusks (fierce, moose-like, herd animals).



Stargate Worlds

Publisher: Cheyenne Mountain | **ETA:** Winter

This sci-fi MMO has recently been demonstrating the diversity of its worlds (powered by Unreal Engine 3 technology) and these now include a Hoth-like snow planet, an industrial mechanised world called Agnos and a dense jungle environment of giant plants and trees. Although designed for community play these worlds will also be open to solo exploration for intrepid adventurers.



ON THE RADAR

WINTER
- The Agency

AUTUMN
- Warhammer Online: Age of Reckoning

SUMMER
- World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King

SPRING
- Age of Conan - Hyborian Adventures

The Agency

Publisher: SOE | **ETA:** Late 2008

This Mercenary versus Spy espionage MMO is packed with gadgets, guns, international travel and the employment of NPC Operatives within your Agency to further your nefarious aims. The cartoon style is reminiscent of games like Team Fortress 2 and Battlefield Heroes, but if we told you more, we'd have to 'disappear' you.



Aion: Tower of Eternity

Publisher: NCsoft **ETA:** Autumn

The most recently revealed class of Spiritmaster is an intriguing one - able to summon and control creatures based upon the elements of Earth, Fire, Wind and Water.



Close Issue Search Issue Zoom In Zoom Out Toggle Full Screen Previous Page Next Page

Publisher: EA/GOA
Developer: EA Mythic
Heritage: Spellbinder, Dark Age Of Camelot
Link: www.warhammeronline.com
ETA: Autumn 2008

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Warhammer

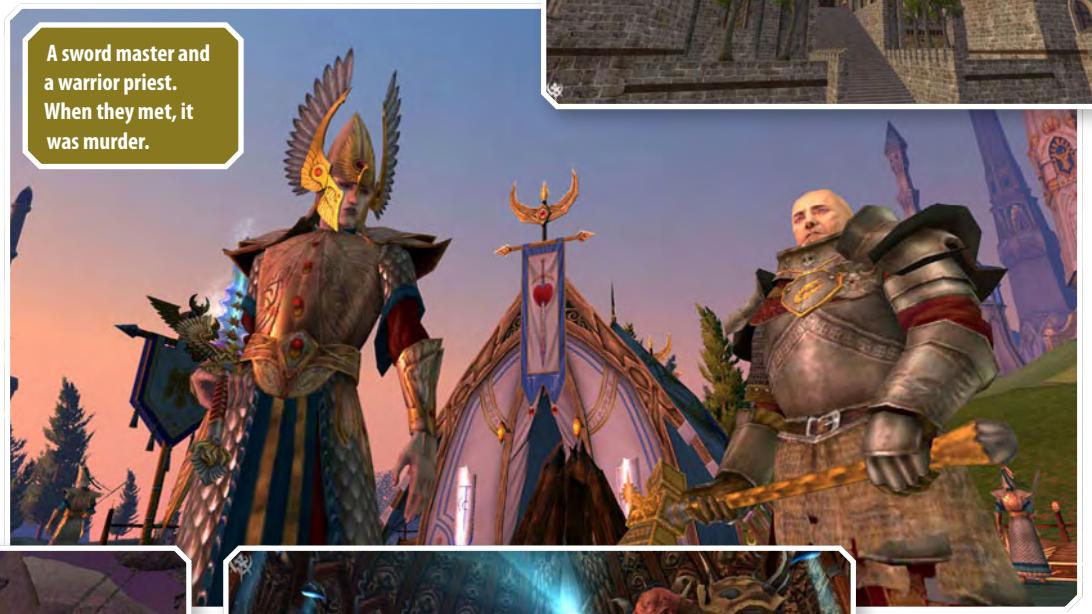
Warhammer Online: Age of Reckoning

You've read the books, painted the figurines, now play the game. We already have...

Twenty-five years ago, if you'd told the bearded hordes of Warhammer enthusiasts that one day their beloved lead miniatures would come to life in a massive interactive world, they'd have probably choked on their paint fumes. Assuming the release date doesn't slip again, that will become the reality this Autumn as Warhammer Online: Age Of Reckoning is finally unleashed, along with an extremely weighty collector's edition. As a show of strength, key members of the development team were flown from their Virginia base to rainy Paris to bombard a hungry press with a series of bewildering acronyms and abbreviations.

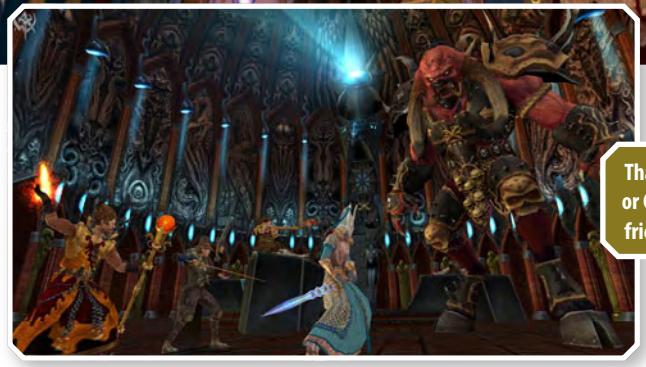
As any fool knows, like pre-EA MMORPG DAoC, GOA's WAR will have PvE, PQs and PvP in the form of RvR. - WTF? FYI, before being swallowed up the behemoth that is Electronic Arts, Mythic was best known for Dark Age Of Camelot, an Arthurian romp that distinguished itself from the mire through the inception of Realm versus Realm gameplay, whereby great big armies would go at each other


The Germanic city of Altdorf has a lovely palace.


A sword master and a warrior priest. When they met, it was murder.


That'll be the Deamoms of Nurgle. Nice bunch.


The undead prowl the Chaos Wastes.


That's Elragina, or Gina to her friends.

THIS IS YOUR LIFE

Assistant producer Carrie Gouskos tells us about her Tome Of Knowledge...

WHAT IS THE TOME OF KNOWLEDGE?
CG: There are three functions of the Tome Of Knowledge. The first is information and reference, about what you're doing, the story of the game and the things you are encountering. And it's about tracking achievements - your Tome Of Knowledge is unique to you so it's 'you've killed a thousand people in RvR, you've found this bit, this is what you like to do, this is the kind of person you are.' And the third aspect is this metagame, there's a whole game within the Tome Of Knowledge.

HAS ANYTHING EVER BEEN DONE ON THAT SCALE?
CG: There have been games that have had elements of it. I play a lot of videogames, I try to get things from all over the place. We just tried to hit every element of our game, and it became so robust that it ended up being this feature set.

WHO'S WRITTEN IT?
CG: We actually have dedicated writers for the Tome, there's so much text. There are little stories being told throughout the world. We've developed unique stories within the Warhammer world that tell the lives and stories of people as they would be if they were in the tabletop game.



Warhammer cont...

in a constant battle for power. This concept has been retained for WAR, with all manner of muscular heroes and buxom lasses involved in a constantly evolving conflict.

As senior producer Jeff Hickman barked, "Realm versus Realm is the foundation of our game, the keystone for everything that we do. It is a PvP system but it is so much more than that. So many games give you the ability to pick up a sword, run at someone and hit him over the head until he dies. That's PvP, it's all about what I want for myself. RvR is so much more than that. Foundationally it uses PvP but it encompasses your entire realm, thousands upon thousands of people, allies for you to fight with, and people for you to fight against, a built-in enemy on the other side, the bad guys. It's not about you, it's about your realm, it's about fighting for what you want and what you have, taking away from your enemy and making it your own. It's about realm pride and fighting for all you hold dear."

"Thousands will nail their flags to the mast of the forces of Order or Destruction"

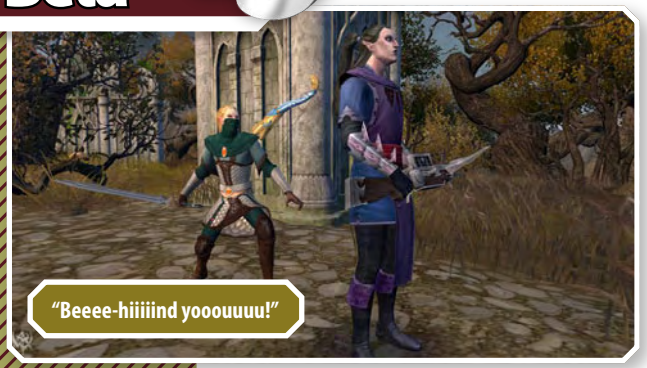
Elvish lives

Those thousands of people will have to nail their flags to the mast of either the forces of Order or Destruction, and choose their characters respectively from the ranks of Dwarfs, Empire and High Elves or Greenskins, Chaos and Dark Elves. The well-established world of Warhammer comes to life with each race having an elaborate capital city that plays a big part in the conflict. Essentially the jewel in the crown, your capital will increase in prosperity as your realm succeeds, with new areas and quests unlocked, and city events such as a travelling minstrels show, or a residency from a theatre troupe. The best players in the game will even have huge statues erected in their image. However, your city is a visible target for invading players, who will be able to storm the


Somewhere under the armour, there's a Black Orc.


"Are you looking at my shield?"


The fancy dress party received a superb response.





Warhammer cont...

barricades and for a bit of pillaging and even wanton desecration of those statues.

As for the obligatory guilds, they are also key to the WAR experience, as Hickman goes on to explain: "Guilds in other games, to be left unnamed, are generally these chat channels, and we think that those games are missing the boat. We really feel strongly that guilds can be so much more than just a chat channel, they can be living, breathing entities, things that progress through the game."

And if you're still wondering what a PQ is, it's a Public Quest, which as the name suggests is open to everyone in the vicinity. Often involving killing a boss character, there will be over 300 location-based PQs, which each recycle every five minutes, enabling you to have another bash if you enjoyed it. As for the rewards to be reaped, there's a pseudo-random system that reflects your adventurous efforts.

As Hickman explains, "Depending on how hard you work, depending on the contribution you as an individual made to that PQ, you get a better chance of winning that slot machine reward."

Our reward for two days of living on French finger buffets was the opportunity to squeeze between two Germans for an hour of hands-on questing. Playing as a lumbering great oaf called Thwomp, we got lost in the woods, humiliated and killed by a passing unicorn...





MMOZine Verdict

For enthusiasts and non-believers alike, it's more interesting than watching lead paint dry.

HOW COMPLETE

90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%



Publisher: TBA
Developer: Masthead
Heritage: First game
Link: www.play-earthrise.com
ETA: 2009

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Earthrise

Earthrise

Post-apocalyptic nanny state seeks clones for new adventures...

The Third World War is over, but trouble is brewing on a smaller scale in the city of Sal Vitas on the sole remaining populated Pacific island of Enterra. The Continoma mega-corporation (established pre-war) runs the official government of Sal Vitas, new energy sources providing high-tech services such as cloning, nanotechnology and quantum engineering. It's a brave new world, but also an authoritarian one.

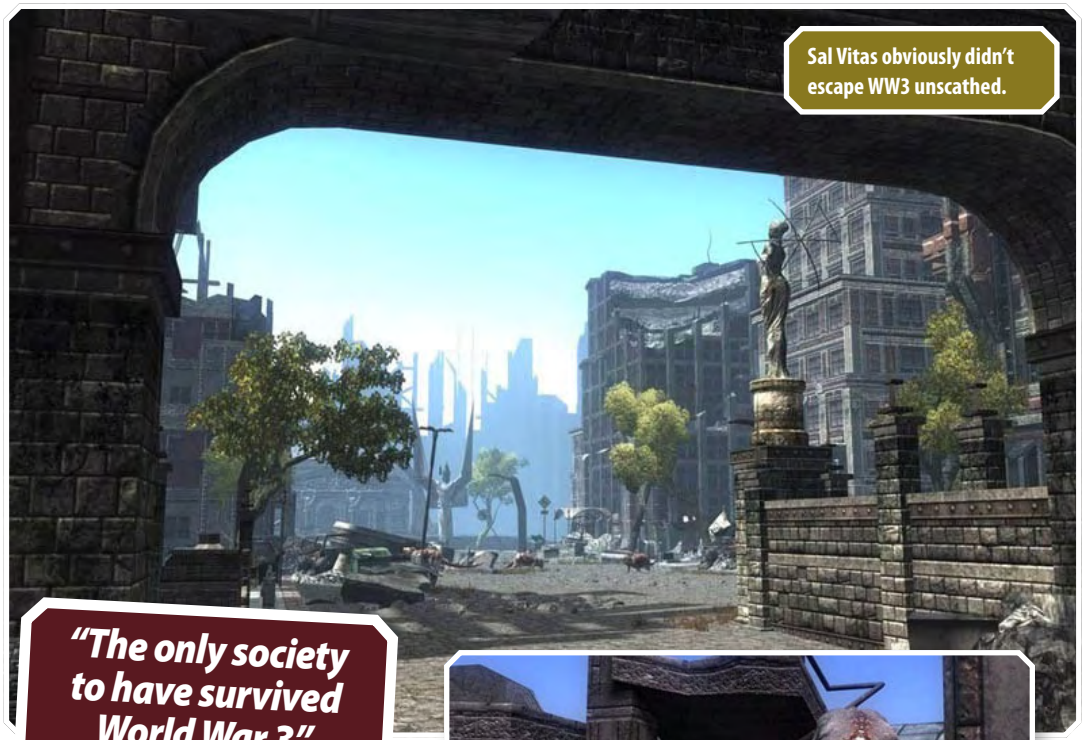
A rebel government, known as Noir, is not so happy that the Continoma corporation has the ultimate say over who dies forever, and who benefits from their selective consciousness-cloning program. It believes that an immortal elite is emerging as a god-like and not altogether benevolent upper caste. The Noir insurgents accuse Continoma of crimes against humanity and armed conflict threatens the only society to have survived the still-recent apocalypse of World War 3.



Now that's going to need a really big glass and a huge sheet of paper.

As an MMO, Earthrise features PvE and role-playing, but also features plenty of PvP combat, the constant battle for territorial control within non-secure areas of the island city. Almost every aspect of your character can be customised for combat, including attributes, skills, abilities and clothing, plus there's a unique crafting system to bolster items depending on allegiance. The Noir, for instance, will tend towards heavy battle-suits and mechanical add-ons, while the opposing Nathura prefer to craft items and clothing from natural surroundings.

PvP will usually result in the aggressor being flagged as a criminal by the victim's relevant authorities, with a worse reaction depending upon the perp's record for such attacks. In extreme instances this can lead to an inability to even enter certain areas of the island. However, you do gain excellent bragging rights, and if victims haven't insured or recovered their belongings, there can be loot to be had too. Territorial conquest for guilds will not be possible without PvP and the benefit of a captured area is the guild ability to gain new resources and set their own local laws. More confined PvP will take place in set arenas for direct rewards.



Sal Vitas obviously didn't escape WW3 unscathed.

"The only society to have survived World War 3"



The mutant beasts are utterly terrifying and seem to roam in packs.



Shanty towns will extend out from the main city.

Earthrise cont...

But Earthrise has plenty for players more interested in PvE, quests, trade and crafting too. Numerous quests are available for solo and co-op play and often they will have multiple solutions that actually allow players to choose, or even change sides. However, most will not be replayable. On top of such story-related quests, there will be loads of randomly-generated side-quests available through Enterra's centralised mercenary system and given out through smaller organisations. Completion of these quests not only changes your reputation positively with the party aided, but will negatively affect reputation with neutral and rival groups. Good reps allow you to ask favours from the organisations such as access to their tech and designs.

Designs will be useful in the unique crafting system, which allows players themselves to design and manufacture all special and powerful items (common items will be obtained by looting mainly). Crafting like this will be risky and individuals will have to judge whether designs involve too much effort and too much investment in components to make economic sense.

Earthrise is a good-looking and complex MMO that will have rivals in games like Huxley and Stargate Worlds, but could have enough unique drive to really set it apart.



The days of brass bands in the park are long gone.

"Players themselves will design all special and powerful items"



You'll also find the remains of more ancient civilisations on the island.



It looks like an acorn crossed with a pit bull and a crab.



The engine is their own, and looks very impressive indeed.

MMOZine Verdict

An authoritarian world with surprising freedom

HOW COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: NetDevil
Heritage: Jumpgate, Warmonger, Auto Assault
Link: www.jumpgateevolution.com
ETA: Winter '08

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Jumpgate

Jumpgate Evolution

A whole new world...

"Accessibility is our mantra." For many MMOs, accessibility may seem like a foreign concept, but for Scott Brown, the President of Jumpgate Evolution creators, NetDevil, it's been their number one priority from the very start of development.

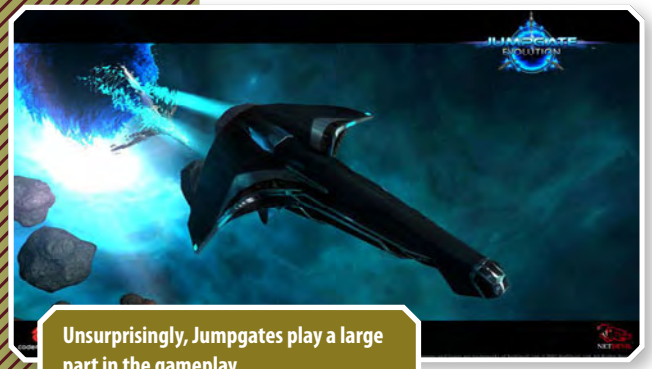
The sequel to classic MMO, Jumpgate, Jumpgate Evolution is a space faring, action oriented MMO, which, although it may draw instant comparisons with EVE, is actually nothing like it. Where EVE tasks you with building a huge corporate entity in space, and turning yourself into a powerful political figure, Jumpgate sets you the much more relatable challenge of shooting the crap out of everything in sight. As we found out when we went hands on with the game at Codemasters' recent Connect 08 event, it's this simple concept that provides the foundations for an incredibly impressive game.



All this, without pixel shaders, and with 512mb of RAM? How can you not be impressed?

"Shooting the crap out of everything in sight!"

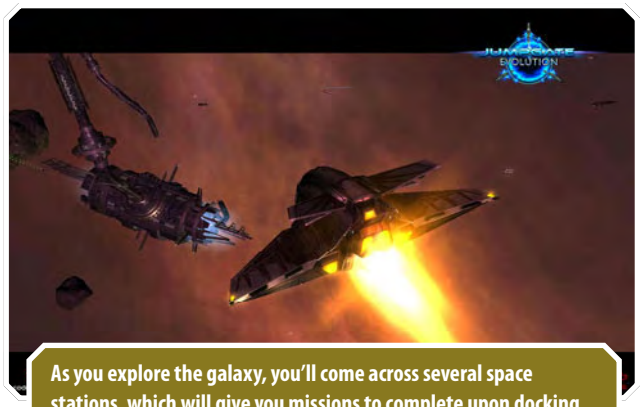
Giving you direct control over your spaceship, with either a mouse and keyboard, or a joystick, Jumpgate thrusts you straight into the cockpit of a fighter, and lets you get stuck into the action. Citing inspirations such as Wing Commander, X-Wing, and Privateer, it's obvious NetDevil has drawn heavily from the core gameplay that made their inspirations so popular.



Unsurprisingly, Jumpgates play a large part in the gameplay.



Despite the low system requirements, the game still looks gorgeous.



As you explore the galaxy, you'll come across several space stations, which will give you missions to complete upon docking.

Jumpgate cont...

Fast and thrilling, with more than a hint of arcade gameplay to it, combat in Jumpgate, even at this early stage, is a highlight of the experience - and that's a good thing, as there's a lot of it.

Even just flying around in space, Jumpgate is a lot of fun to play, and NetDevil's emphasis on playtesting has certainly paid off. More accessible than any other MMO we've played, simply picking up a joystick and flying around, exploring the vastness of space from your tiny craft is a large part of the experience. Flying alongside, or even venturing inside some of the larger stations the game has to offer is thrilling, while the flight model is just as smooth as you could imagine.

Due to the unfinished nature of the code we got the chance to experiment on, there's currently little variety in the missions, which were unfortunately mostly a variation of the "go here, kill these, go back" formula. That's not to say that things won't change in the future, as the developers have promised huge battles, with groups of players working together as a squadron to take down gigantic battleships and cruisers. And if that hasn't set your pulse racing, nothing will.

To keep you going throughout the game, there's also going to be an emphasis on player advancement, with a system which Scott likened to a Gran Turismo-style license system driving the progression. Moving through the game, and gaining experience will unlock new licenses, which will in turn grant you access to bigger and better ships, along with new abilities.

However, one of the most impressive things about Jumpgate is just how low the required specs are. Needing just 512mb of RAM to run, the game doesn't even require a pixel shader-capable graphics card, which is sure to open the game to a whole new market. We'll be keeping an eye out for this one when the Beta goes live later this year.



It's been a while since a game's successfully captured this feeling of exploration and scale - the last was X3.



The spaceship designs aren't too original, but the scale is incredibly impressive.

"A Gran Turismo-style licence system"



Even more incredibly, all this has been created with a team of just ten people.

MMOZine Verdict

A perfect mix of EVE and X3, this could be the best thing since X-Wing

HOW COMPLETE

50%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

80%

Get your rocks off with Hellgate: London

The Stonehenge Chronicles is the new content update for Hellgate subscribers, but is it worth upgrading your free account? Bill Roper hopes to persuade us...



Bill Roper is CEO and co-founder of Flagship Studios

Can you explain to newcomers the differences between free multiplayer and subscription multiplayer in Hellgate?
We have two ways that players can experience the game online. Most importantly is that we give our players a FREE way to play! The free online play is experiencing the game that we've created to the fullest. Gamers can go online and share their experiences with their friends, for free. We host players on our secure servers and offer them a great gaming and community experience at no cost. Free players can not only get online and play, but can also join guilds, access email, get skill and class updates, and much, much more. We've worked incredibly hard to provide an amazing value to all of our players with Hellgate: London. For gamers that want more, we have also a subscription service that provides access to ongoing content that touches all areas of the game. We're constantly adding content, both big and small, for our subscription members. The recent Stonehenge



Bras really are better in our M&S reality.

"A subscription service provides access to ongoing content that touches all areas of the game"



No sign of any crazed Solstice hippies then...



You'll need to defeat a load of bosses before Moloch.



The new series of Grand Designs had begun...

"Once you collect the heads of the Beast, Necro, Spectral and Demon overlords, the adventure moves on to Moloch's lair"

Interview cont...

Chronicles is a great example of this.

What makes Stonehenge Chronicles Caste Caves different from other caves in Hellgate?
These caves can only be found in the wilderness areas outside of Stonehenge. Each caste - Beast, Necro, Spectral, and Demon - has a powerful overlord that resides in these caves. The caves themselves are sealed by the essential aspect of their master's caste. These caves cannot be entered until the essence of five (5) Champions of the matching demonic caste has been collected. Essence can be collected from any Champion, so adventuring above and below the streets of London may gain you the keys to unlocking these special areas. Once a character has gathered the required essence of a single Caste, they can either solo or lead a party into the caves and battle against the resident overlord. Not only are there great and special riches to be won, but the head of the caste overlord is also claimed. Once a character has collected the heads of the Beast, Necro, Spectral, and Demon overlords, the adventure continues as they move on to Moloch's Lair. A great and powerful Demon known as Moloch resides in the rough countryside surrounding Stonehenge, and only the worthy may enter his domain. Characters that have collected the heads of the Beast, Necro, Spectral, and Demon overlords can then make their way deep into the realms of Moloch, the Pit Baron.



But do we find out why Stonehenge was built?

What are the incentives for defeating Moloch?
Moloch has very unique items that can only be won by defeating him in combat, so the long journey to his defeat can be well worth the effort. The items that can be won from him are very good, and we've had some great reaction to them. As far as defeating a demon with an eternal soul... well, I suppose you can only set him back for a while before he needs to be set down again. But that's the challenge and the fun of this area.

How do large open areas such as Stonehenge change player behaviour?
The other main area that lies outside of Stonehenge is known as The Wild. The challenges here are far greater than anywhere else in or around London, requiring raiding parties to properly navigate them. This means that players need to get together and form parties - something that isn't really required throughout much of the game.

Tell us something we don't know yet about the next major update, the Abyss Chronicle...
It's going to be HUGE with a major focus on PvP and an area you can experience over and over again that just... keeps... getting... harder...



The Wild is a new open area past Stonehenge.



Publisher: EA
Developer: Flagship Studios
Heritage: Mythos
Features: Free basic MMO play, subscription content updates
Link: www.hellgatelondon.com
OUT NOW!

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NCSOFT

CRYPTIC



Publisher: NCsoft
Developer: NCsoft
Heritage: Lineage II & four previous Chronicles (Harbingers of War, Age of Splendour, Rise of Darkness and Scions of Destiny)
Link: www.discoverlineage2.com
OUT NOW!

System requirements: Pentium 4 2.4GHz CPU, 1GB RAM, 12GB HD Space, NVIDIA GeForce FX 5700 or equivalent

REVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of The Kamael

Lineage II: The Chaotic Throne - The Kamael

FREE ITEM! Get your exclusive mask now!

New chronicle lends long-running MMO new wings - well, one wing, anyway...

Lineage II is a well-established, mature MMO that has been crying out for two things in recent times - new challenges for the hardcore fan, and fresh lifeblood by attracting new members. The Kamael, first expansion in The Chaotic Throne saga and certainly the most far-reaching add-on so far, has the potential to deliver both these benefits, with a new race, new lands, new quests, new items, weapons and armour.

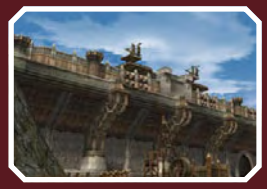
The new race of the Kamael is a warrior race, a dark magic race with one wing attached to their backs and the early ability to absorb souls. They are very different from the established Lineage II races of Human, Elf, Dark Elf, Dwarf and Orc and the only class initially open to them as a warrior race is fighter. Even their new environs have a very dark edge to them, with Kamael city sporting grand gothic architecture that really adds to the brooding violence of their nature. This is a very well-realised world and you'll certainly be impressed with both the imaginative depth and sheer scale of design on offer here.

But don't for a moment consider that The Kamael



KAMAEL DERBY

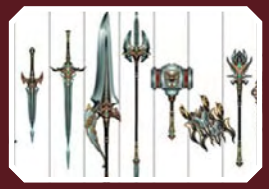
Back these favourites in the race for adventure within this dark and stunning new world...



FORTRESS BATTLE
New players and established clans can now take part in PvP and PvE sieges at any point.



INSTANCED DUNGEONS
A new gameplay mechanic for Lineage II, providing areas where players can hunt solo, with scripted encounters.



NEW ITEMS
Hundreds of new weapon, armour and equipment items are now available with new slots in bracelets and shirts.



RECORD & REPLAY
The replay system lets you capture your own battle videos to share, also with speed and camera angle controls.



THE NEW RACE
The Kamael are one-winged warriors, with an affinity to dark magic, always beginning their careers as soldiers.



While not cutting-edge, the visuals are still impressive.



The Kamael cont...

expansion only welds a new race onto Lineage II's ancient carapace. This isn't just a new race to keep hardcore players amused for a while longer, but a genuine splicing of a major new thread into the game's rich tapestry, weaving exciting new themes for newcomers and long-timers alike. There are significant upgrades to the user interface, inventory systems, instanced dungeons, grind areas, available items, fortress siege systems, market trading, high-level attributes and loads more!

First we'll consider the benefits to the newcomer. Lineage II is one of the few true PvP worlds, where you'll not only face danger from environmental nasties, but potentially from any passing rogue player that might fancy a hack at you. But here Lineage II's maturity is a real godsend - you'll find loads of established clans to join and the community is really helpful and genuinely welcoming to new starters. Plus you'll find that The Kamael expansion requires even old hands to restart from scratch if they want to play as the new one-winged race. So there isn't constant PvP threat to start with that could potentially discourage new arrivals to the world. Plus, the Kamael as a race are extremely capable right from low levels, so that's another bonus for the new player.

This isn't to say that Lineage II isn't a daunting world to start with - it is. But somehow The Kamael expansion helps to keep 'daunting' on the right side of 'awe-inspiring' rather than dropping off into 'chasmically offputting'. Other smaller, but equally important and newbie-beneficial tweaks to the game ushered in by The Kamael are the new overhead map in the UI and the manually arranged backpack. These might sound minor, and for the experienced player less of a deal, but the map adds boundless benefits for the Lineage virgin

LANDS AHOY!

The new areas to explore in The Kamael...

ISLE OF SOULS | ISLE OF PRAYER | HELL-BOUND

Where the Kamael began and where you'll begin if you choose the Kamael as your race. Three Strongholds and two Dungeons for you to explore.



The Kamael cont…

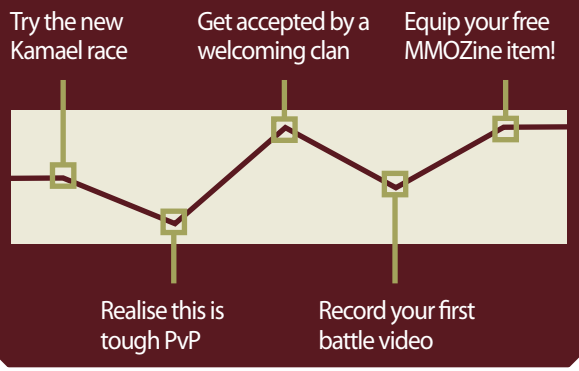
and the backpack's evolution from self-arranging items to a player-organised inventory is very welcome indeed. And experienced players may actually benefit even more, having greater loot to store. These are examples of features anyone would expect in a new MMO, but are nonetheless welcome in this older world and a good sign that the developers really listen to what the community are asking for.

For the hardcore, established Lineage II player, The Kamael also has much to offer. New instanced dungeons and over 25 new quests will have particular appeal (although newbies will also benefit from the reworking of many older quests to make them more appealing) and certainly offer serious new challenges. Really high level players will enjoy even tougher grind areas, where there are plenty of new points for the persistent, and the very top players will be rewarded with a new selection of elemental attributes (such as Fire and Water enhancements) that will allow them to further bolster their own weapons and armour.

Lineage II is certainly an old-school MMO, set in the firm foundations of Tolkienesque fantasy, and The Kamael is an extremely successful expansion to this world that makes it more welcoming to new members and injects fresh excitement for the world-weary. Going way beyond the cosmetic, there's some deep but subtle reconstructive surgery here that will roll back the years and make it far more attractive to players who might previously have passed on by. ●

Steve Brown

PULSOMETER: Signs of life



Roll over screen for annotations





> *"The Kamael is an extremely successful expansion to this world"*

MMOZine Verdict

The biggest and best expansion yet!

- ✓ Much more welcoming
- ✓ Loads for old hands
- ✗ Too old-school for some



LINEAGE II THE KAMAEL WHITE HALF MASK

You won't find this unique in-game item anywhere else, so hurry and apply today!

WHILE LINEAGE II boasts a wide array of character classes, unique clothing to customise your character's appearance is far harder to come by. Which makes our exclusive offer of a new in-game item all the more exciting! NCsoft has created a stunning White Half Mask for your character to wear in-game and we have 3,000 of these extremely limited editions to give away. Simply follow the instructions opposite to claim your mask and we'll send out the codes needed on a first-come-first-served basis. You'll then need to follow the further instructions to acquire and equip the White Half Mask while playing Lineage II: The Chaotic Throne - The Kamael.

TO CLAIM A WHITE HALF MASK...

STEP 1: Enter your details into the box below and register. There is only one successful registration per reader allowed. At the same time as registering for the mask you can subscribe to any of our GamerZines and we will email you whenever we publish an issue that interests you. Like our magazines, this is a free service and you can unsubscribe at any time. We are splitting the giveaway into 3 periods to try and give everyone a fair chance to get a mask. Each period will give away 1,000 codes to the first entrants, starting at Monday 7th April 2008 1600 GMT, Wednesday 9th April 1200 GMT and Friday 11 April 0900 GMT.



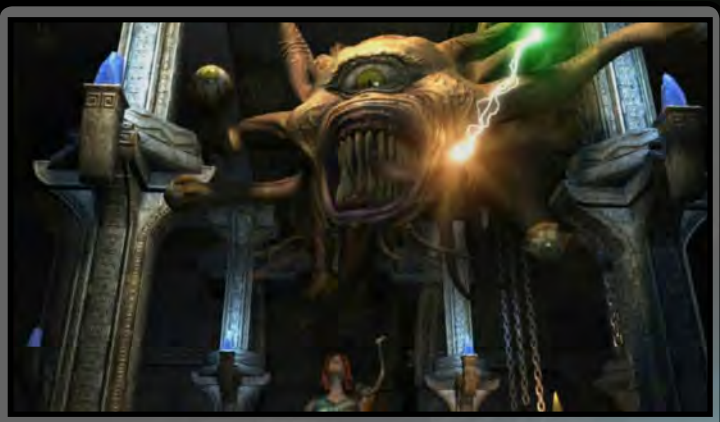
STEP 2: If you are one of the first 1,000 entrants in any one of the giveaway periods, you will receive an email with your unique item code. Do not share this code with anyone else, as it is only valid for one use. If you chose to subscribe to any GamerZines you will also receive a confirmation email for the subscription, which you must activate. You can subscribe to the magazines even if you aren't successful in obtaining a code, and if you subscribe, you can still try again to get a code in one of the other giveaway periods if you do miss out.

STEP 3: Using the following instructions, players must input the codes into their PlayNC account within the following time period – **7th April 2008 to 6th May 2008**. Codes input beyond these dates will no longer function.

1. Visit PlayNC.com http://eu.plaync.com/eu/ and click the **Account** link.
2. Enter your PlayNC master account and Password.
3. Click the **Use A Serial Code** link on the **PlayNC Account Management** page.
4. Enter the serial code you received from MMOzine. Click the **CONTINUE** button.
5. Select the account you wish to upgrade from the list, by clicking the **UPGRADE ACCOUNT** button.
6. Once you have added the code, return to the **PlayNC Account Management** page and click the Lineage II game account you upgraded from the Games List.
7. Click the **CHOOSE A CHARACTER** button to choose the character to receive the mask.

You must confirm your character selection before the mask will be given to the character. The White Half Mask will be placed in your character's warehouse during the weekly maintenance period (usually on Tuesdays). The mask cannot be exchanged or dropped.

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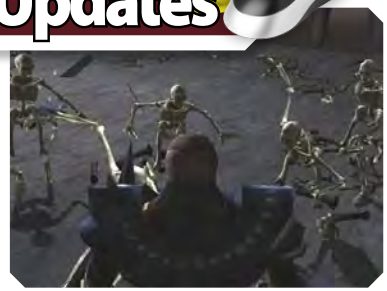
ATARI

codemasters online

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ONLINE

STORMREACH



D&D Online: Stormreach
Module 6: The Thirteenth Eclipse

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Turbine
Price: Free update

This excellent update introduces a new storyline which finishes with a new style of raid zone as Stormreach magicians, The Twelve, call for adventurers to help prevent Arraetrikos ushering in Hell on Eberron. You'll enjoy a new Wilderness Zone - The Vale of Twilight - and the welcome news that player death no longer impacts upon your XP!

- ✓ New crafting system
- ✓ No XP hits upon death
- ✓ New story and raid zone

Great new storyline, plus sensible tweaks to gameplay



City of Heroes
Issue 11: A Stitch in Time

Publisher: NCsoft
Developer: Cryptic Syudios
Price: Free update

If you're a veteran of this superhero MMO then you may well have levelled up fast and missed many of the lower level story arcs. This time-travelling update basically re-opens all the old content for replay by all levels from new starters to level 50, with separate versions for Heroes and Villains. Once in a Flashback Mission, you enter Task Force mode and this does mean you won't be able to recruit new team members after you've begun. While you can try missions solo, they're almost impossible to beat this way.

- ✓ Opens all the old content up
- ✓ Customise your weapons' looks
- ✗ Task Force too hard solo

Not exactly new content, but a good refresher nonetheless



Star Wars Galaxies
Chapter 8: The Nova Orion Crisis

Publisher: SOE
Developer: LucasArts
Price: Free update

This is probably the biggest content update since the Jump to Lightspeed add-on, adding the first Heroic Encounter set on board a Star Destroyer, a new quest hub for Master-level pilots, new spaceships for players and 50 new Collections. You may find Collections a tiresome way to gain new items and the N-1 Starfighter isn't everyone's cup of tea, but hooray for Star Destroyers!

- ✓ Get on board a Star Destroyer
- ✓ Biggest update since Lightspeed
- ✗ Collections can be a pain

A comprehensive update, aimed at established players



Hellgate: London
The Stonehenge Chronicles

Publisher: EA
Developer: Flagship Studios
Price: Free update (subscribers only)

If you're not yet a subscriber to Hellgate: London, this first major content update may go some way to persuading you, with the introduction of PvP areas, the first raid area for the game (The Wilds) and the Moloch instance preceeded by a number of boss battles against his minions. The PvP area is a little simple in design and features and nothing has been done to alleviate storage space problems for items, but it's a worthwhile new adventure.

- ✓ Engaging new chronicle
- ✓ Expansive new raid area
- ✗ Item storage still an issue

An interesting new storyline and imaginative locations



The Lord of the Rings Online
Book 12: The Ashen Wastes

Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Turbine
Price: Free update

With the purely cosmetic, but very welcome outfit customisation system (including haircuts from barber shops!), the evolution of 12-player raids into a new PvP environment (The Delving of Fror), 100+ new quests and an important new chapter in the epic storyline, there's really nothing not to love about this fourth massive content update.

- ✓ Innovative customisation
- ✓ Exciting PvP evolution
- ✓ Discover the lost ring, Narchuil

An epic continuation of the story, plus innovative evolution



Publisher: Vivendi
Developer: Blizzard
Heritage: Warcraft, Starcraft
Link: www.wow-europe.com
ETA: OUT NOW!

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
Windows: Intel Pentium(r) III 800 MHz or AMD Athlon 800 MHz, 512 MB or more of RAM, 32 MB 3D graphics card with Hardware Transform and Lighting, such as NVIDIA(r) GeForce(tm) 2 class card or above, DirectX(r) 9.0c or above, 6.0 GB available HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, A 56k or better Internet connection

World of Warcraft Patch 2.4

Fury of the Sunwell ushers in the Shattered Sun Offensive...

REVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of WoW 2.4

The latest content patch for WoW is a major one, and possibly the last for The Burning Crusade before the next expansion, Wrath of the Lich King, rolls out. In it you'll find a new 25-player dungeon, a new five-player instance, a new type of tournament and many technical and User Interface tweaks and improvements.

Sunwell Plateau is home to the Sunwell, an arcane energy pool that fed the powerful magic of the exiled high elves. But with the coming of the Scourge and attack by the Lich King's death knight, the Sunwell was corrupted, spreading poison and death through the elves, their lands and all they had built. Destruction of the Sunwell stopped the poison spreading, but led to the rise of the blood elves and their terrible new demon lord of the Burning Legion, Kil'jaeden. Now the evil must be purged as you join the Shattered Sun Offensive, a quest hub with five and 25-player instances.



The new five-player dungeon is known as Magisters' Terrace, where your party will face the most powerful servants of the Burning Legion demons and be rewarded by a new faction. But you'll also have up to 25 daily quests to attempt if you choose to, plus the opportunity to compete in the exciting new Global Arena Tournaments.

While some WoW hardcore see recent patches as dumbing down the game and denigrating their hard-won achievements, in fact this latest patch should be welcomed for opening up World of Warcraft to more recent converts, while providing plenty more challenge for the old guard. ● ***Steve Brown***

PATCH ME UP!

Three major benefits of the 2.4 update...

- **DAILY QUESTS**
- **TOURNAMENTS**
- **INTERFACE**

The daily quest limit is now upped to 25 and you can gain rep with the Shattered Sun Offensive, daily quests including new dungeon quests at the Sunwell's Magisters' Terrace dungeon.



MMOZine Verdict

A packed, exciting update

- Great new instances
- Higher Daily Quest limit
- Awesome new Tournaments

WIN! WORLD OF WARCRAFT GAMES AND TRADING CARDS...

An exclusive package of games and goodies that really will make you go WoW!



Whether you're into the World of Warcraft Trading Card Game, the MMO, or both, Vivendi and Upper Deck have teamed up to provide us with the ultimate exclusive bundle to give away to one lucky winner, plus even more great gifts for runners-up! The stunning first prize will include a complete set of Servant of the Betrayer loot cards and an awesome World of Warcraft Battle Chest (which includes the World of Warcraft game, The Burning Crusade expansion pack, and strategy guides for both).

Second place will receive a World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade Collector's Edition (includes the game, a making-of DVD, art book, in-game pet, trading card starter packs, mouse pad and soundtrack CD), plus four Servants of the Betrayer Booster Packs. And then we'll send out a single Servants of the Betrayer Booster Pack to 20 further winners until our big box of them is empty! **To be in with a chance of winning these great gifts, simply answer the question opposite...**



BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

UPPER DECK

Competition closes 10th June 2008. See website for full T&Cs.

PLAY AGAIN

Dungeons & Dragons Online - Stormreach



Publisher: Codemasters
Developer: Turbine
Heritage: D&D pen and paper
Link: www.ddo.com
Released: 2006
System reqs: P4 1.6GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 3GB HD Space, GeForce 2+ Video Card

REPLAY FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of D&D Online

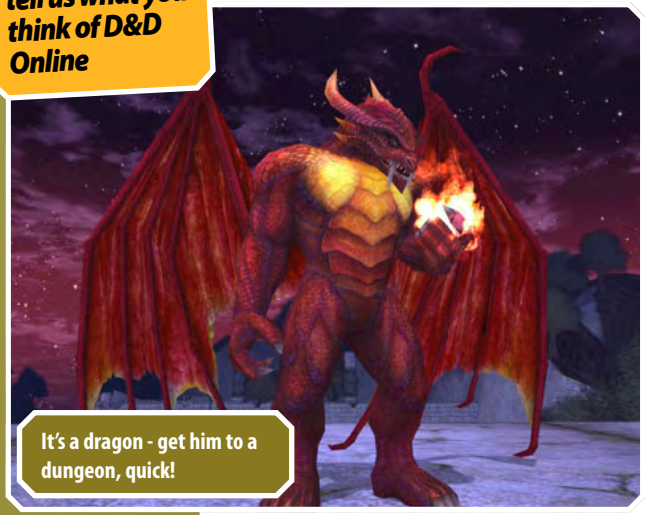
Take pen-and-paper and go back to the drawing board...

Originally released in 2006, this online realisation of Wizard of the Coast's incredibly successful and ubiquitous pen-and-paper game never really enjoyed equivalent popularity, perhaps in part due to the decision to replace tabletop turn-based rules with adapted real-time combat. While this seems like a sensible decision to most MMO gamers, many diehard Dungeons & Dragons fans were not so open to change. Nevertheless, if you can accept Turbine's reworking of the ruleset, then there's great team adventuring to be had in the relatively new (to the D&D universe) land of Eberron.

DDO still enjoys a relatively small, but very strong community and the game has been well nurtured with an impressive series of updates since 2006, fourteen in all. The latest is Module 6 (see Update reviews in this issue), which continues to tweak the balance of the game, a delicate process that has been ongoing since launch. But if you haven't revisited DDO since launch, then you may be pleasantly surprised on return. And by this we mean that DDO's excellent updates have populated the world with loads and loads of surprising experiences not usually associated with MMORPGs.

Environmental interaction - landscape puzzles that need to be solved to complete instances, Pac-Man-style mazes where dead enemies become ghosts and try to return to a central regenerating crystal, areas where there's no combat at all, but giant boardgames on the floor to complete. These complex puzzle, maze and platform elements make unexpected, but excellent breaks from more conventional gameplay, genuinely rewarding players beyond the hack-and-slash team adventuring that makes up the major part of DDO.

So we say get over the real-time combat - this isn't pen and paper after all - and enjoy a very diverse and unique MMO experience that expands the PnP world for D&D fans, but also provides a solid and in many ways unique adventure for newcomers. ●



It's a dragon - get him to a dungeon, quick!



Come out of the dungeons for new wilderness adventures.



Cartoon graphics, but not a Uni in sight, thank god!

DUNGEON MASTER

Three DDO essentials...

GO OUTSIDE! It's not all dungeons now. Since launch, updates have created many new Wilderness Zones to explore such as The Sands of Menechtarun, a vast desert populated by wandering monsters.

RUN THE GAUNTLET! Go to the 'Gauntlet' sub-region of Module 6 and experience the developer's tongue-in-cheek MMO take on the classic arcade game of that name, replete with skeletons and magical portals.

CRAFT FAIR There's a new crafting system now in place, which you'll access through Eldritch Devices found in public areas, with more powerful ones in raid zones. Combine items and use powerful shards with the devices to create new epic items.

>Inbox

Thanks for your feedback, keep the emails coming... MMOzine@gamerzines.com

MMOZINE FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of all things MMO!

CLANCIFICATION
I DO ENJOY MMORPGS but I'm also a massive shooter fan and I really need a new MMOFPS to look forward to, or at least an MMO with plenty of contemporary guns/warfare in it. What's coming up for gamers like me who are tired with swords and sorcery?
> Simon

>There's still plenty of gunplay to look forward to Simon. Huxley may not be contemporary, but its near-future sci-fi setting certainly promises plenty of projectile conflict. The Agency will also feature more than enough guns and gadgets in its contemporary espionage world. But just in is exciting news that Ubisoft, having recently acquired all IP rights to the Tom Clancy name, now intends to research the possibility of an MMO set in the Clancy universe. We don't know if this would be Splinter Cell, Ghost Recon, Rainbow Six, Air Combat, EndWar, or some awesome combination tying all of these combat aspects together, but if Ubisoft decide to invest the $50 million they estimate it would cost, this should definitely tick your shooter box!


Rainbow Recon Cell: Air Endwar

POWER TO THE MASSIVE!
DEMOCRACY IS A SYSTEM much bandied about in politics, supposedly the fairest social structure (or so we're told in the West). So why aren't more MMO societies operated by a democratic process rather than the more common might-is-right attitude?
> Wizbits

> It must be hard for developers who have worked for years on their vision to relinquish control of that world and allow communities to take direct control, and even harder for publishers to take the financial risk. However, CCP has done just that recently, announcing that EVE Online will become the first ever MMO to be run by an elected body of gamers. Voted in democratically for six-month terms, nine player representatives and five reserve members will be elected by player vote to The Council of Stellar Management and govern the social and economic aspects of the game.

MARVEL-LESS
IS IT REALLY TRUE? Is the long-awaited Marvel Universe Online really going to be canned? I loved City of Heroes, but I also really wanted to be able to play as some of my favourite licenced superheroes. Surely someone else will pick up development now?
> Amy Griffith

> It's bad news for you, we're afraid Amy. Marvel Online has indeed ceased development and it's unlikely to be resumed at any time soon. It was publisher Microsoft that decided to pull the plug, having worked out that the subscription-based business model just wasn't going to generate enough money to make it viable. We're not sure why it took so long to conclude this, years into the game's development, but at least you can look forward to Cryptic Studios now throwing all their energy into new superhero MMO Champions Online (see preview in this issue).

CHARACTER ASSASSINATION
I'M TAKING THE TIME to write this because I spent quite a bit of time playing this game [Pirates of the Burning Sea]...


Not feeling quite so super any more...

PROS: graphics, UI, easy-to-learn play style, nice storyline.

CONS: In-game economy is hard to learn, hard to get the items you need to upgrade your ship. Everything is all about your ship, which is fine, but why have a character at all? Very little to do with your character, except for storyline. After you do the first 20 missions, they are all the same after that. In fact you don't even have to do the missions at all - after you figure out how to board a ship you can just wonder around the sea killing NPCs.

CONCLUSION: This game was a lot of fun to play. for the 30-day intro. I don't think I will go back to it though.
> Kevin b2999

> Do try the new (and first) major content patch before giving up. Also visit www.burningsea.com/forums to make suggestions to the developer.


A long walk off a short plank? Let us know what you think!

Don't miss Issue 5
Out June 10th
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> **"Find a wingman, and then a corporation that you can join and fly with. Only through human interaction are you going to beat this game"**



EVE Tutorial

Activate your jump drive and prepare to engage our beginner's guide to the Icelandic space adventure.

Eve's learning curve is similar to that of climbing the side of a cliff with your hands and feet covered in baby oil. Luckily, however, we're going to throw you a rope and guide you through the most difficult stages of the game.

So let's be clear about this: EVE Online is a spectacular space-war MMORPG in which you will be flying alongside tens of thousands of other pilots in a single, gigantic galaxy. It's a game that really doesn't care if you live or die. If your ship gets blown up, it's gone.

The game itself won't provide a safety net, or help you out. This is why you need to be ready to join up with other people: find a wingman, and then a corporation that you can join and fly with. Only through human interaction are you going to beat this game and feel it's enormous rewards. Remember, it's massively *multiplayer*.

FINDING A CORPORATION

When you start out in EVE you'll instantly be in a corporation - one of the 'newbie' corps. These are great for a few days as you start out, and some people even stay in them for months or years, but you'll need to find a player-run corporation to really make the most of EVE.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Within minutes of logging in, your mission commences.

Things begin in the station. You're safely docked up and ready to board your spaceship. Follow the instructions you see on screen to do this. You'll receive a mail and this will be an invitation to go on a mission. Agents are available in most stations to give you various kinds of missions. On starting the game you'll see a black instruction panel overlaying each window you click on. This will tell you what you're looking at and how to use it. Go to your inbox (on the left sidebar menu) and start that mission. If you ever forget what you're doing just check out the mission description in your journal, also on the left. When you're ready, hit the yellow undock arrow. Once outside, right click and then use this menu to warp to encounter. Your adventure has begun...

Roll over screen for annotations



Staying alive!

How to not get exploded in space battles...

Staying alive in fights against your enemies requires careful use of tactics. If you're doing missions, or simply ratting in belts, you need to know what type of enemy you're going up against. The type of pirate will determine the type of damage they do. Once you know this you'll be able to make sure you're well armoured against that particular damage type. Guristas do kinetic damage, Angels do explosive, Serpentis do thermal damage, and Sanshas do EM. If you're unsure about the enemies you're going to be facing then it's a good idea to ask other pilots in the area, or in your corporation.

Fighting other people is a whole other ballgame, and there are plenty of tactics you can use against them. To start off with, however, you're just going to want to stay alive. Generally, spotting flashing red enemies before they get to you, perhaps by scanning the 'local' communications channel, is the best way to stay unexploded.

"If you're unsure of enemies, ask pilots"

Roll over screen for annotations



FITTING SCREEN

EVE's most important part

Being able to fit your ship correctly will be the difference between life and death, and between being laughed at by your enemies, or respected. Every module in the game has an associated skill. Every skill takes time to train. To fit a ship up with all the best stuff is going to cost lots of time, and lots of money. Play to the strengths of your ship: each ship has a bonus written into its description, and your setup should capitalise on that.

HIGH SLOTS These are your weapons and defensive systems. You can equip missiles, lasers, or cannons, but also armour repairers and energy transfer arrays.

MID SLOTS These are powerful because they allow you to either set up heavy shields, use electronic countermeasures, or boost attributes, such as the capacitor.

LOW SLOTS These feature auxiliary systems. Need more power? Then you put reactors down here. This is also where armour-tanked ships put their mods.

Stations are where you'll start out in EVE.



STARSHIPS FOR SALE

Some of the amazing craft you can look forward to...

INTERCEPTOR | CRUISER | BATTLESHIP

Frigates come in a number of variants, but the best of these for combat is the interceptor. These tiny craft are astoundingly agile, and are essential as scouts and as 'tacklers' designed to lock down enemy ships and stop their escape. If you can master the art of flying an interceptor then you can pretty much handle anything that EVE is going to throw at you. No commander will ever turn down an experienced interceptor pilot, either, because their skills are always good for reconnaissance or for support.



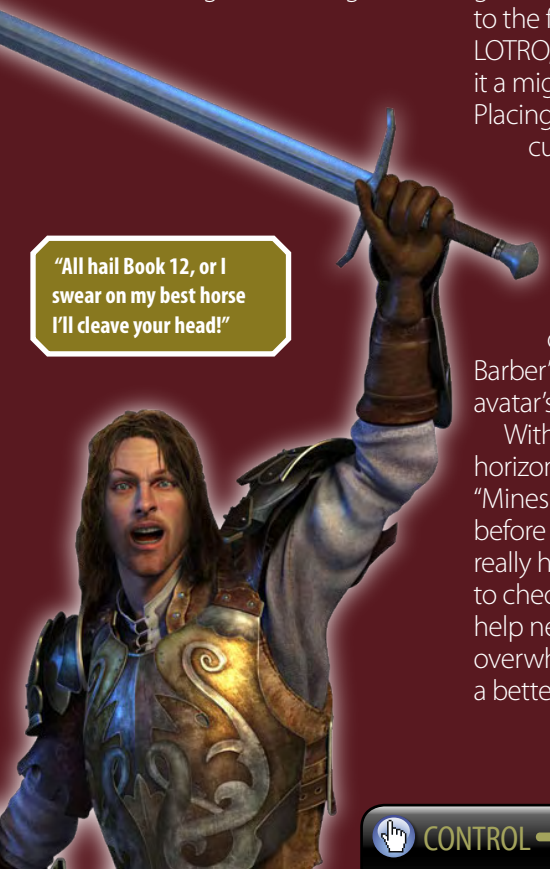
Lord of the Rings Online - Top Tips

All change in Middle Earth as Book 12 ushers in new content...

With millions of subscribers worldwide, and numerous "Game of the Year" awards to its name, the Lord of the Rings Online was one of the standout titles of 2007. Creating one of the greatest, and most accurate virtual worlds ever imagined, Turbine not only did Tolkien's epics justice, but expanded on his vision too.

Now, almost a year after the game launched, we've been treated to the fourth free expansion for LOTRO, Book 12, which brings with it a mighty list of new features. Placing an emphasis on character customisation (see New Look boxout), Book 12 adds a whole host of upgrades, including a brand new PvP dungeon, the Delving of Fror, updates to a number of classes, and, brilliantly, a Barber's shop, to let you tweak your avatar's hair, beard and moustache.

With more free stuff on the horizon, and the recently announced "Mines of Moria" expansion due before the end of the year, there really has never been a better time to check out Middle Earth. But to help newcomers from getting too overwhelmed, follow our top tips to a better Middle Earth experience.



"All hail Book 12, or I swear on my best horse I'll cleave your head!"

NEW LOOK

Short back and sides, Mr.Baggins, Sir?

So you've explored the highest mountain tops, you've fought through the darkest dungeons, and you've even taken the plunge, and bought your own house, but when was the last time you stopped to think about yourself?

In Lord of the Rings Online - Book 12, along with the usual additions of new quests, a new area, and a variety of other minor tweaks, the latest expansion brings with it one important feature the community has been crying out for - character customisation.

Letting you put different clothing over the top of your armour, without having it affect your stats, or even providing a haircut at the local barbers, there are now all manner of ways to affect the look of your avatar, for a nominal fee.

If you've ever wished you were a Hobbit, but were just waiting till you could sprout exactly the right handlebar moustache, now's your chance to engage in a bit of battling across the Shires of Middle Earth. One 'tache, to rule them all.

Roll over screen for annotations



TOUCH OF CLASS

Although there are no new classes added with this update, several have been tweaked to give them a new lease of life, during what's known as the Month of the Burglar, Guardian, and Champion (part 2).

BURGLAR

A host of new tweaks, additions and skills fleshes out the Burglar class for both high and low level characters, making this an ideal choice for a beginner.

GUARDIAN

Once known for being a damage sponge, with a poor ability for dishing out the pain, the Guardian has seen an overhaul, thanks to its new 'Overpower' stance, allowing you to deal more damage, at the expense of defence.

CHAMPION

More a minor upgrade than an overhaul, this is the second do-over the Champion class has received, with a variety of tweaks based on player feedback making this a much better all-round character.

Changing Rooms

Make your hobbit hole a home with Book 12 options...

When you reach level 15 in Lord of the Rings Online, you'll be given the ability to buy a house, by visiting the relevant vendor. When you buy a house, you can choose to live in either a Dwarven, Hobbit, Elven, or Human neighbourhood, and the choice you make here will determine the style of your house.

Whilst the prices of the houses may seem extortionate, ranging from 1g, with 50s upkeep for a standard house, to 7g with 150s per week upkeep for a deluxe house, the benefits of having access to the extra storage a house adds is obvious for players, and the added bonuses of being able to have neighbourhood parties, or share a house with your other half making it worthwhile.

Book 12 adds even more customisation options for your house, letting you rotate objects inside, and light the rooms by candlelight (perfect for when you're inviting Ms.Hobbit round for dinner), although at the moment, if you forget to pay your upkeep, you'll lose your house, and have just one week to reclaim your possessions before they're "donated to charity". Harsh!

Roll over screen for annotations



WE SEES HOBBITSES

Choosing your race in Middle Earth...

One of the biggest decisions when playing any MMO comes right at the start, when you're asked to choose your character, and LOTRO does little to make this any easier. With four races to choose from, each of which is as established, and fun to play as the last, this can be a really tough choice, and one which requires quite a bit of thought before you go rushing in.

HOBBIT When picking up LOTRO for the first time, we're sure this is the race most will go for. Though diminutive in stature, the Hobbit is synonymous with Lord of the Rings culture. Tough, and sturdy, the Hobbit's classes are limited to either a Guardian, Minstrel, Hunter or Burglar, making them one for experienced players.

DWARF Competing with the Hobbits in the small-but-tough stakes, Dwarves are warriors, and pride themselves on their fighting prowess. With four classes available to them, three of which are combative, the Dwarf is a powerful choice, and good for the beginner.

ELVES Tall, skinny, and talented in ranged combat, the elves are one of the more noble races on offer in LOTRO, and with five classes available.

HUMAN The 'standard' LOTRO race, Humans are probably themost popular, next to Hobbits. Known for their short life span, Humans can play as any of the available classes, making them one of the most flexible options.

"You'll lose your house and have just one week to reclaim possessions"

TIPS FROM THE TOP

We ask Lord of the Rings Online's executive producer, Jeffrey Steefel, what his top tips are for players new to Book 12.

TIP 1 | TIP 2 | TIP 3

"Play around with the customisation. Really get a sense of what it's like to put on different clothing over your equipment (without impacting your stats)."



WIN! THE ULTIMATE PIRATES PC

Play Pirates of the Burning Sea with the ultimate rigging...

PIRATES of the Burning Sea

DEEP SILVER

Deep Silver, publisher of the superb swashbuckling MMO, Pirates of the Burning Sea, and Alienware, gaming PC experts par excellence, have plundered the parts to build one of the fastest rigs on the high PCeas, the Area-51 7500. They've buried it for safekeeping somewhere on Gamerzine Island, but we've got the treasure map for one lucky marauder to dig it up. To be in with a chance of winning this awesome gaming PC (see boxout for full specs) simply answer the question below!



...THE ALIENWARE AREA-51 7500

Processor: Intel(r) Core(tm) 2 Duo E8200 2.66GHz 6MB Cache 1333MHz FSB

Operating System: Genuine Windows(r) Vista Home Premium - English

Chassis: Alienware(r) P2 Chassis - Conspiracy Blue

Chassis Customisation: Alienware(r) AlienIce(tm) 3.0 Video Cooling - Fusion Red

Motherboard: Alienware(r) Approved NVIDIA nForce 680i SLI Motherboard

Graphics Processor: Dual 512MB NVIDIA(r) GeForce(tm) 8800 GT - SLI Enabled

Memory: High Performance 800MHz DDR2 SDRAM - 2GB - 2 x 1024MB

Power Supply: 750 Watt Alienware(r) Approved Multi-GPU Power Supply

System Drive: Single Drive Configuration - 250 GB Serial ATA 3 Gbit/s, 7,200 RPM with 16MB Cache

Primary CD ROM/DVD ROM : 20X Dual Layer DVD±RW/CD-RW Writer

Enthusiast Essentials: Dual High Performance Gigabit Ethernet Ports

Sound Hardware: High-Definition 7.1 Performance Audio - Standard

Keyboard: Logitech(r) Classic Keyboard UK - Space Black

Mouse: Standard Optical 3-Button Mouse with Scroll Wheel

Warranty: AlienCare 1-Year Free Phone 24/7 and Collect & Return

ALIENWARE

Competition closes 10th June 2008. See website for full T&Cs.

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