FREE!

MMOZine

Issue 5 | Summer 2008

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

EVE ONLINE EMPYREAN AGE

THE BEST MMO EXPANSION EVER MADE!

HUGE REVIEW!

AGE OF CONAN

A brutal cut above the rest?

PLUS! LOTRO: BOOK 13 • WOW 2.4.2



WIN! NVIDIA 8600 GTS

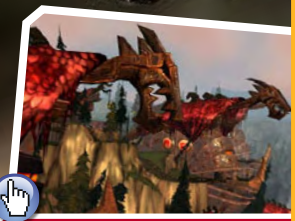
EVE Online Giveaway

Play Empyrean Age with this superb GeForce 8600 GTS!

+ GAMETIME & GOODIES

Empyrean Age

Art book, USB drives, mouse mats, baseball cap, plus three 50-day gametime cards!



WOW: WRATH OF THE LICH KING
New details at last!



INTERVIEW! JEFFREY STEEFEL ON THE LORD OF THE RINGS ONLINE + the Mines of Moria!



LEGENDS OF NORRATH
EverQuest starts playing at cards!

+ EVERQUEST II COMPO!

Rise of Kunark

Win full copies of the game, including every expansion pack ever released!



• SECRET WORLD • MORTAL ONLINE • EARTHRISE

Welcome to MMOZine



Age of Conan from MMO masters Funcom represents the first serious challenger to the mighty World of Warcraft for quite some time. It's unlikely to ever achieve the same mass-market success as WoW, thanks to its mature content, but with over 1 million units shipped already, there's definitely a hole in the market for an adult-themed MMO that the bulky Conan has had no trouble wedging itself into. You'll find the rippling review and toned tutorial in this issue. The other big news this month is Empyrean Age, the vast new expansion for EVE Online, representing not only a rare new spatial expansion, but the introduction of factional warfare with a four-way war that will draw the entire galaxy into exciting PvP combat. Enjoy the issue.

Steve Brown, Editor
mmozine@gamerzines.com

MEET THE TEAM

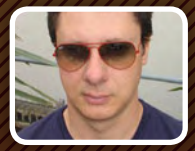
The MMOZine massive were told to go forth and multiplay, which they did…



STEVE BROWN
Found that LOTRO Book 13 wasn't unlucky at all.



IAN MORRIS
Went on a couple of quests that seemed to go on forever.



STEVE HILL
Went to Oslo in search of greased-up muscle men.

DON'T MISS!

This month's highlights...

WIN! EVE GOODS & GAME TIME



EVE ONLINE: EMPYREAN AGE

The most impressive free expansion we've ever seen reveals new factional warfare!



Wrath of the Lich King

New details unveiled



Lord of the Rings Online: Book 13

Be lucky!



Age of Conan: Hyborian Age

Massive review of the huge new MMO!



Empyrean Age

Your guide to the war

PLUS! AGE OF CONAN TUTORIAL

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away

Secret World
Mortal Online
Warhammer Online: Age of Reckoning
Earthrise
Mythos
APB
Football Superstars
The Chronicles of Spellborn
EVE Online: Empyrean Age
World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King
Lord of the Rings Online
Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures
EverQuest II: Rise of Kunark
Legends of Norrath



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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.



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

The Secret World

FIRST LOOK

From Age of Conan to a modern conspiracy tale…

Publisher: TBA
Developer: Funcom
Heritage: Anarchy Online, Age of Conan
Link: www.darkdaysarecoming.com
ETA: 2009

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of The Secret World



A mythological behemoth is a lurking horror in ruined NYC.

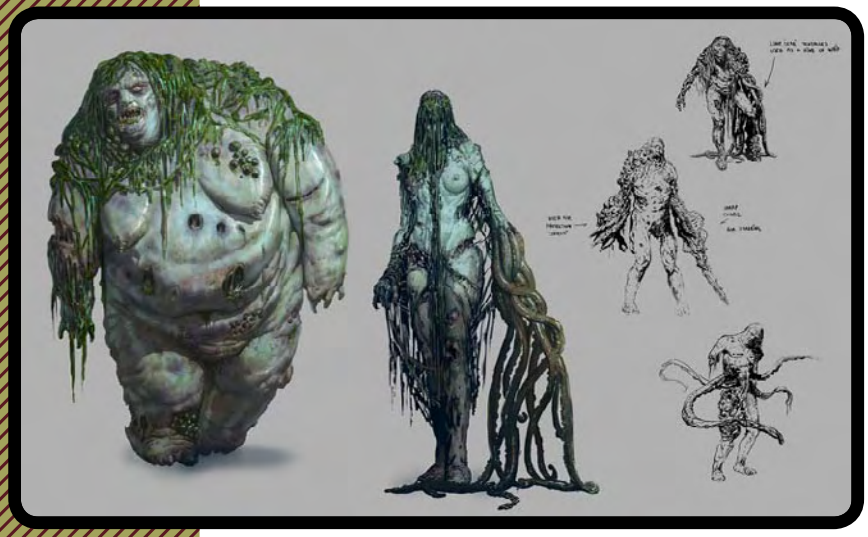
"You will be battling dark cabals and Lovecraftian monsters"



A London pub is a refreshing venue.



Shanghai is the third location we've identified so far.



What's the story?

As its name suggests, the next MMO from Funcom, developer of Age of Conan (see review and tutorial in this issue), is shrouded in secrecy. What we do know is that it will be set here on Earth during contemporary times, but you will be battling dark cabals and Lovecraftian monsters from the deepest recesses of the mythological past.

What do we know?

Funcom's Producer and Director of The Secret World tells us that, "We started envisioning this contemporary online world more than ten years ago, and as the years passed the ideas grew and improved. We always wanted a different kind of online world, something scary and contemporary, something deeper and closer to our reality. Our goal now is to create a detailed world where players feel empowered and part of something big, something mystical and epic."

When do we get more?

We'll have more details of the combat system soon, but if you visit the game's official site then you can get involved in a clue-gathering game now.

Anything else to declare?

The premise of a supernatural world beyond our own, where a knowlegeable few fight the powers of darkness has been inspired in part by modern Japanese horror, The Ring, Funcom has revealed.

Mortal Online

FIRST LOOK

The PvP-focused fantasy MMO where you can fight in a first-person perspective

Publisher: TBA
Developer: Star Vault
Heritage: First game
Link: www.mortalonline.com
ETA: Summer 2009

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



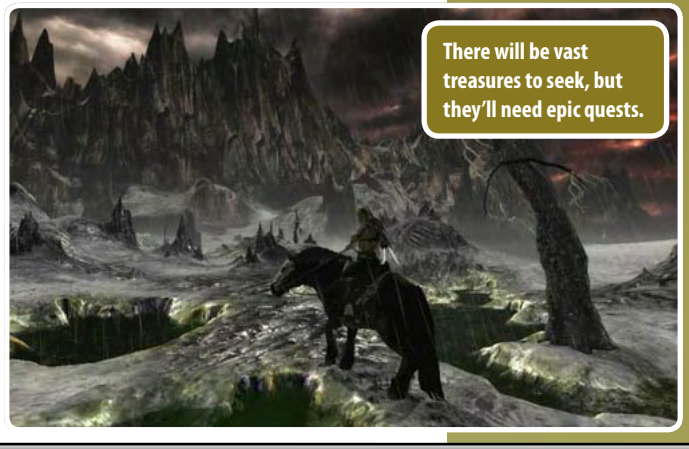
We bet that needs to be walked a lot.

"It's all about combat in this purist fantasy game"



You can build houses, but you'll need a guild to construct a castle.





There will be vast treasures to seek, but they'll need epic quests.

What's the story?

It's all about combat in this purist fantasy game, with absolutely no levelling up and a real sandbox world simply defined by the actions of the players. It's a world of warriors and fortresses, badlands and cavernous dungeons, where dragons await the brave and foolhardy.

What do we know?

In many ways this appears to be the fantasy partner to the sci-fi of EVE Online. It certainly carries a flame for the same ideals of true player freedom, less hand-holding and unique community experiences that don't repeat. It also looks the part, using stunning Unreal technology to great effect. While it is combat-focused, there are no artificial PvP zones, and conflict can be found anywhere and everywhere. The combat supports a first-person mode, is realtime and more based on player skill than abstract stats, which will make a refreshing change. There will also be PvE play and a guild system.

When do we get more?

We're hoping to secure an interview with the development team for our next issue.

Anything else to declare?

It looks like there will be mounts in Mortal Online, great horned Warg-like beasts appearing in the teaser video available from the official site.

7 UP

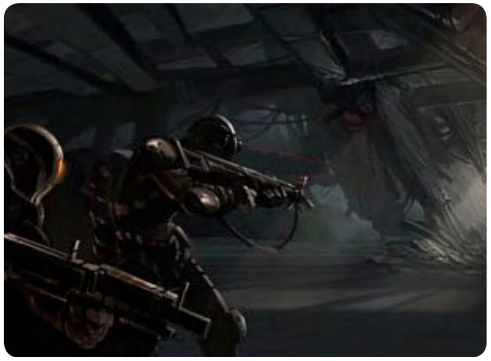
New MMOs and content updates to mark on your calendar with a BIG RED PEN!

Champions Online



Developer: Cryptic | **ETA:** Spring 2009

The latest superhero to be added to the ranks of this comicbook MMO from the makers of City of Heroes is named Justiciar. He's Canadian, with ice-themed abilities resulting from an accident that left him with limbs cybernetically reconstructed by evil genius Cyberlord on behalf of Justiciar's father, who he later murdered before dying himself in a raid by the Northern Guard!



Earthrise

Developer: Masthead | **ETA:** 2009

The latest details to emerge concerning this sci-fi combat MMO concern the accurate physics now being put into the game, affecting gravity, wind, the momentum of player mounts and even the physics of sound in different environments for incredible realism.

Mythos

Developer: Flagship | **ETA:** Summer

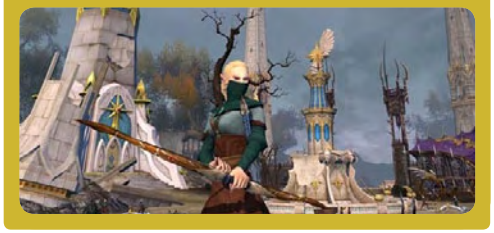
Hoping for massive success in the more casual market, this free to download and free to play Diablo-style MMORPG will fund itself via micro-transactions in the game world. Although a more accessible MMO, Mythos still offers plenty of depth, with a complex skillset and plenty of quests and dungeons to keep newcomers and experienced gamers happy.



Warhammer Online

Publisher : EA | **ETA:** Autumn

It slipped from summer to autumn, but this is still one of the most eagerly anticipated MMOs of 2008. New info concerning the magical land of Saphery has been getting us even more excited, with the promise of countless artifacts and items of power hidden there, which will be a powerful magnet to the armies of the Dark Elves.



The Chronicles of Spellborn

Developer: Spellborn International | **ETA:** Autumn

A beautiful Unreal-powered fantasy MMO, this world features a wonderful range of character customisation options, along with a region called The Midlands on the Parliament Shard. We can't wait to recreate the cast and set of 80's soap opera Crossroads. We just hope a Benny hat will be one of the custom items available.



ON THE RADAR

2009
- Champions Online

WINTER
- World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King

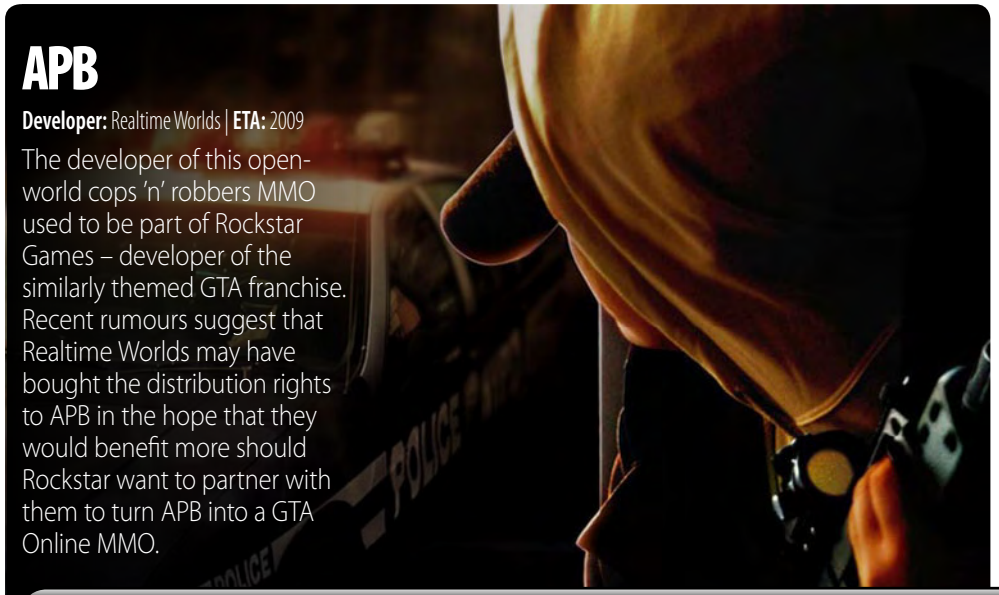
AUTUMN
- Warhammer Online: Age of Reckoning

SUMMER
- Requiem: Bloodymare

APB

Developer: Realtime Worlds | **ETA:** 2009

The developer of this open-world cops 'n' robbers MMO used to be part of Rockstar Games – developer of the similarly themed GTA franchise. Recent rumours suggest that Realtime Worlds may have bought the distribution rights to APB in the hope that they would benefit more should Rockstar want to partner with them to turn APB into a GTA Online MMO.





Football Superstars

Publisher: CyberSports | **ETA:** Late 2008

You'll live in a football-mad world and compete in 3, 5, 7 and 11-a-side matches at every level of play, management and competition. It's now feature-complete, so a Beta starts soon.

AION
THE TOWER OF ETERNITY

This was once your world. These were once your people.



Replay Video

www.AionOnline.com

PC DVD ROM

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NCSOFT

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Publisher: CCP Games
Developer: CCP Games
Heritage: EVE Online and expansions
Link: www.eve-online.com/empyreanage
ETA: Summer

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of EVE Online: Empyrean Age

EVE Online: Empyrean Age

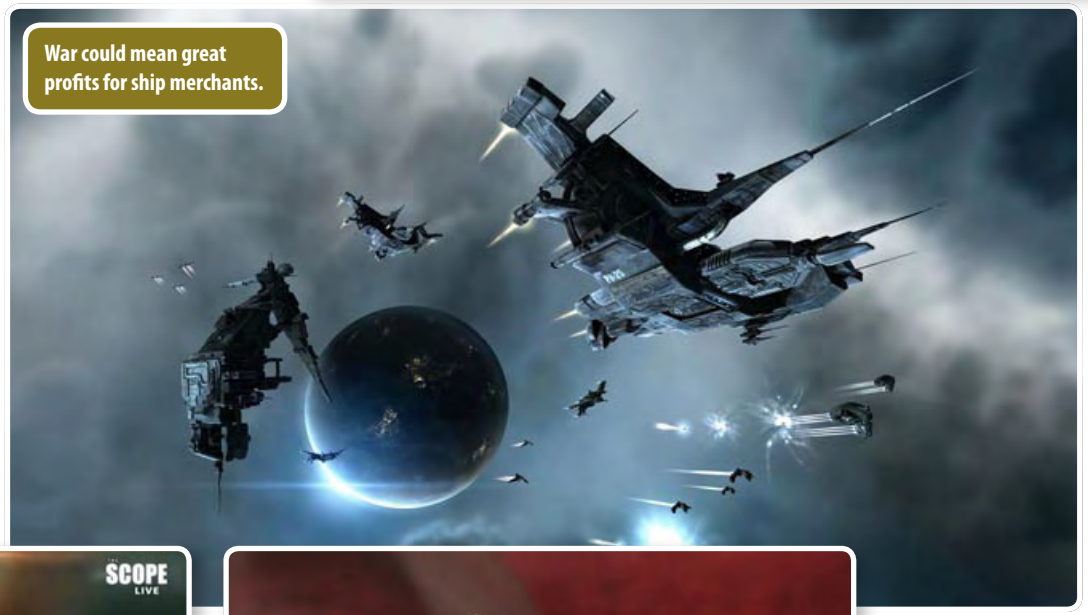
All-out galactic war looms in the greatest free expansion yet!


It's still a great-looking game, especially after recent upgrades.

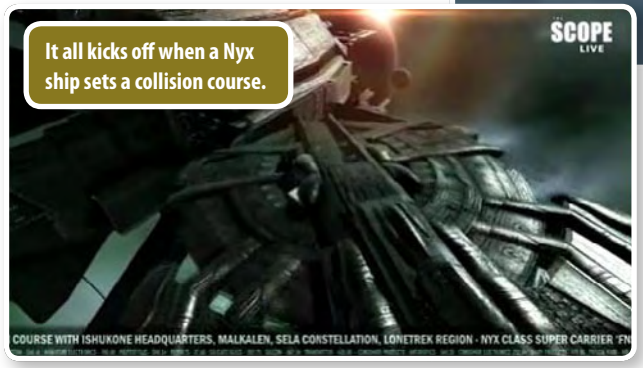
EVE Online is different. It flies solo in a universe of MMOs that too often wrestle controls from your hands and set your ship to autopilot, leading you between instances, set battles, organised events and repetitive levelling. Compared to the true sandbox of EVE, other MMOs seem like individual castles in the sand, surrounded by moats that safely confine them from true freedom.

This may be why many casual players try EVE Online and then give it up for more comfortable MMOs, and it's certainly why EVE has been able to maintain such a strong community of gamers who really get it. As CCP admit, EVE Online is as close to a real universe as a game can be, a parallel life for those who wish they'd been born in a sci-fi future rather than our humdrum present.

For starters, EVE Online exists in a single galaxy – there are no divisions by server or realm – and everyone co-exists on the same plane. The significance of this is massive and Einsteinian, for every action has a reaction, and any player can exert a real influence on a constantly evolving game world.


War could mean great profits for ship merchants.


Whole Corporations will be able to sign up to factions.



It all kicks off when a Nyx ship sets a collision course.


Red sky at night, there's a massive bloody space war on!

COMING OF AGE

Five changes that Empyrean Age will bring…

FACTIONAL MILITIAS
Each of the four sides will be recruiting pod pilots (that's you) to reinforce their space navies. You can even sign up your entire Corporation.

FEELING RANXIOUS
A real new draw for pod pilots will be the rewards of new combat Ranks, with 10 kudos levels for each faction to dish out to players of high standing.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS
Going beyond existing Sovereignty, Occupancy signs over a whole solar system to a faction if they're able to control the central star's System Control Bunker within 24 hours.

HIGHWAY TO THE COMBAT ZONE
To help create concentrated battles where it's never hard to find a fight, new regions of space have been deemed Combat Zones, many within low-security space.

EXPANDING UNIVERSE
In a rare move for CCP, the EVE universe is growing to encompass a new region named Black Rise. With 49 new star systems and 40 new stations, it's an area that's likely to be extremely hard fought when Empyrean Age launches.



EVE Online cont.

This has been taken further more recently by the introduction of the Council of Stellar Management, a brave move by the developers to create a democratically player-elected body of nine player councillors who will meet regularly with CCP to decide how the game will change through the massive free expansions that EVE has become famous for. CCP's policy for free expansions has traditionally been to use them to create greater depth rather than new areas. But this summer will see the release of the new Empyrean Age expansion for EVE Online, and in an MMO where war has always been the watchword, Empyrean Age will be a bellicose giant, introducing factional war, as well as a new region known as Black Rise that contains 49 new star systems and 40 new stations.

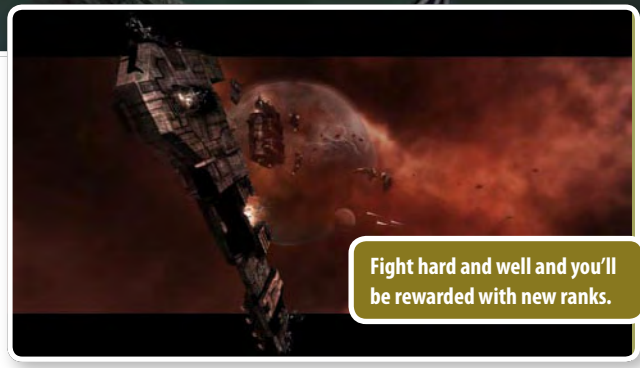
So what makes this upcoming war so different? Primarily the factional nature of the fighting, but also the strong story development it ushers in. With a full sister novel of the same name, Empyrean Age kicks off a galactic war between four great empires – The Minmatar Republic, The Amarr Empire, The Caldari State and The Gallente Federation. Until now, conflict in EVE has been on an individual and player corporation basis, but with Empyrean Age, myriad struggles are forced to a head and players will for the first time be able to unite under any of the four NPC banners for an almighty dust-up that will shake the galaxy to its core systems. For those players worried that the sudden external introduction of significant plot development contradicts the freeform nature of EVE, fear not…

Within the conflict everything is still up for grabs – continue to play in your own style, whether that's collecting new war missions, or simply flitting around under your own steam harrying enemy formations and installations that cross your path. And the

"Empyrean Age will be a bellicose giant, introducing factional war"



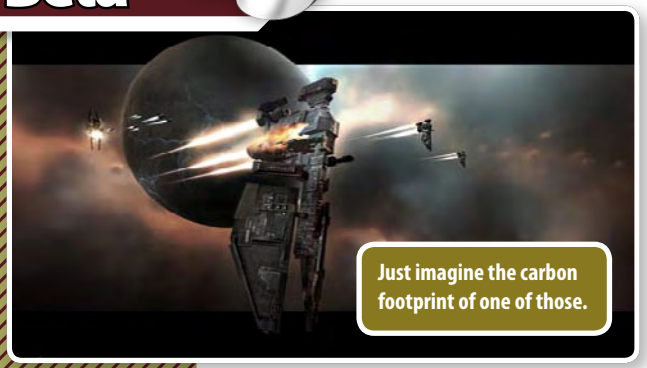
Pod pilots will be in great demand for new factional militias.

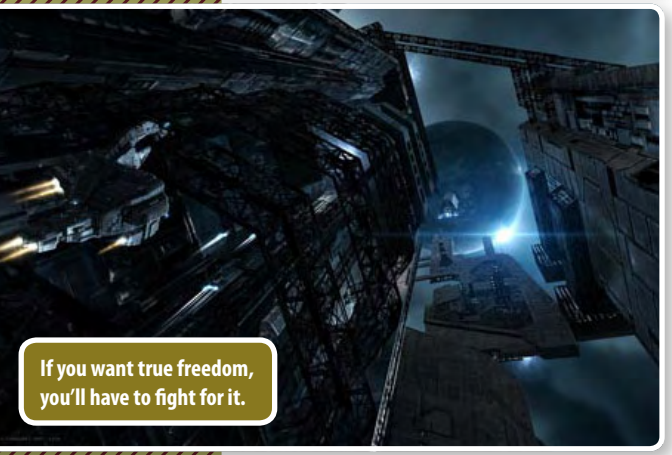


Fight hard and well and you'll be rewarded with new ranks.



An attack on the Ishukone HQ will start the four-way war.

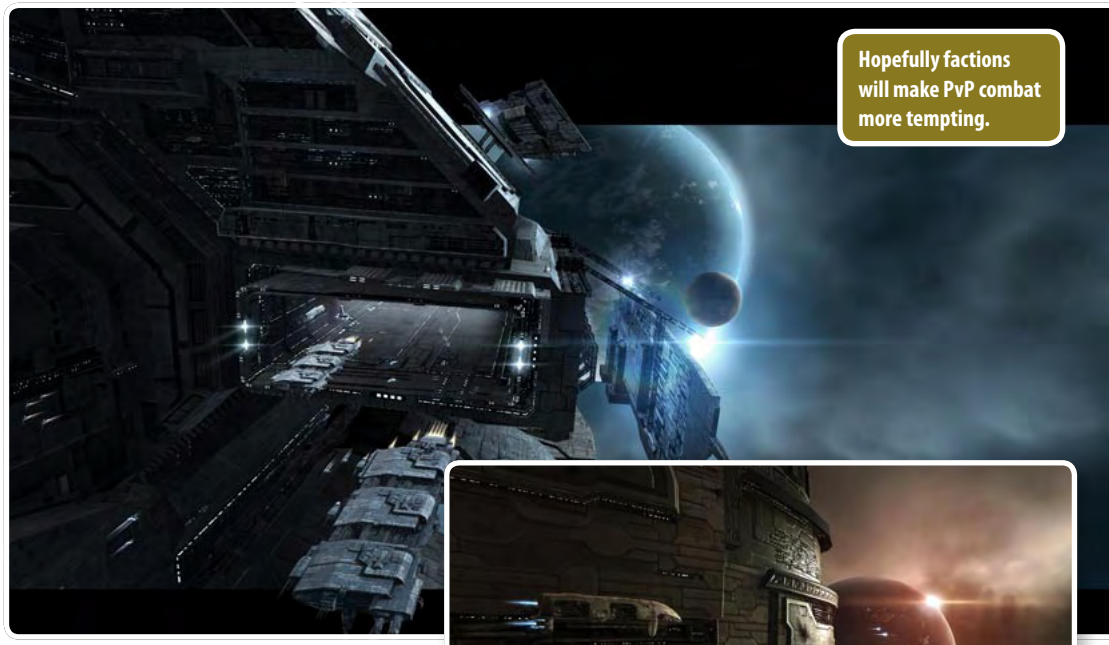

Just imagine the carbon footprint of one of those.


If you want true freedom, you'll have to fight for it.

EVE Online cont.

outcomes are far from set – whole systems will fall to new factions based entirely on player success and failure, contestable sites distributed through new target-rich Combat Zones and points rewarded for successful outcomes until your faction gains the chance to assault a central System Control Bunker and occupy that entire system.

CCP's major aim with this forceful expansion is to bridge the gap between two distinct player groups they've identified as safe spacers and PvP engagers. There's no doubt that PvP can be daunting in EVE – the unforgiving loss of ships can put people off until you learn that the thrill of action is well worth the price you sometimes pay for failure.


Hopefully factions will make PvP combat more tempting.

The scale of EVE is just astonishing. Space really is BIG!

Empyrean Age's total war and addictive new combat ranking system will help to introduce the safety minded to the real thrill of battle under the semi-safety of large factions, while allowing them to continue in a non-PvP vein if that's what they want. For example, enterprising players will soon realise that this scale of war will cause unprecedented demand for raw materials and replacement ships.

If you're already an EVE Online player then you'll no doubt be slavering at the brilliant in-game news teasers for the upcoming conflict. If you haven't yet experienced the unparalleled freedom of this awesome and unique space MMO then now is the time to find out what all the fuss is about.

SHELF SPACE

Read it here first – the Empyrean Age novel…

To accompany the new expansion there's a new Tony Gonzales novel, EVE: The Empyrean Age, available from 19th June. Against the background of the factional war, it follows the exploits of a nameless clone at the centre of dark events. Look out for it at all good bookshops (and a few bad ones probably) in the next couple of weeks.



MMOZine Verdict

Could be the best free expansion any MMO has ever had!

HOW COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Publisher: Blizzard
Developer: Blizzard
Heritage: Warcraft, Diablo, Starcraft
Link: www.wow-europe.com
ETA: Late 2008 (TBC)

World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King

PREVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of WoW: Wrath of the Lich King

Death Knights, T-Rex and cyborg gnomes. Are you sure?

Although there's still no confirmed launch date for, (certainly in terms of numbers of salivating subscribers), the most hotly anticipated MMO expansion ever, Blizzard has now revealed far more of what's in store for us on the new continent of Northrend. And it's as weird as it is wonderful – far from the token efforts some naysayers feared and much more than simply a geographical extension to the home of over 10 million WoW players.


The desolate zone of the Borean Tundra.

But let's start off with a few geographical details. In recent demonstrations, Blizzard revealed to us several new zones of Northrend (the new continent between Kalimdor and the Eastern Kingdom), which will be divided into far more sections than Burning Crusade's Outland. You can warp speedily between the starting zones of Howling Fjord and Borean Tundra by engaging the dockmasters at the camps of a new walrus-creature race.

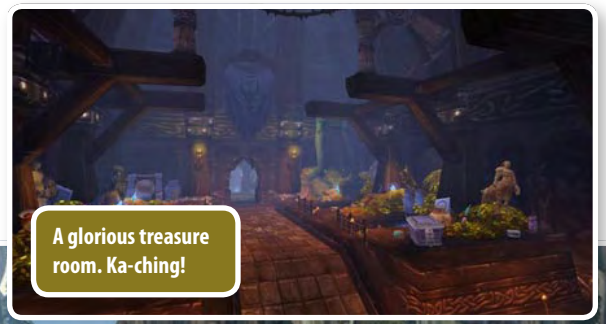
As you'd expect, the Tundra is a barren zone, broken up by a few Dalaran wizards, Gnome-built pools and coastal Murloc settlements. The Gnomes here have reassembled a giant robot, which unfortunately turns out to be the Gearmaster Mechazod, a Titan-built being who subsequently starts to convert Gnomes into evil cyborg Gnomes.

"Blizzard revealed to us several new zones of Northrend"

Dragonblight, as its name hints, is a mountainous zone enclosing graveyards for the five types of WoW wyrms, represented by fierce fires, rich gardens, dark caves etc., all studded with giant dragon bones, which Arthas has begun to resurrect as deadly frost wyrms, gathering at the central Wyrmrest Temple.

In Dragonblight you'll find the raid dungeon Naxxramas, a good example of how this expansion will usher in 10 or 25-player raid groups for all raids. Grizzly Hills is a zone of dense, Endor-like forest and features a Dwarf sister-city to Ironforge, as well as a Furbolg colony.

Zul'Drak is a wild, thorn-treed zone of wispy lights and trolls


A glorious treasure room. Ka-ching!


One of the new docks you'll be able to warp from.

World of Warcraft cont.

that have unlocked strange new powers by sacrificing forest critters. The whole land ascends in stages toward the centre, becoming snow-bound as you climb. In Zul'Drak you'll find Drak'Tharon Keep, a fearsome dungeon guarded by a T-Rex sub-boss. Sholazar Basin is, in contrast, a tropical zone populated by the wolverine Wolvar and Oracles, two warring factions that mercenary players will thoroughly enjoy questing for on both sides.

The other recent revelation of massive significance is the inclusion of an entirely new class in the Death Knight, which anyone of level 55 and above will be able to generate immediately. The Death Knight is a powerful all-purpose tank, focused on aggression over defence – it switches between dual-wield and two-handed weapon settings instead of using a shield. Death Knights use new presences such as damage-amplifying Blood Presence and attack speed-enhancing Unholy Presence, plus new resources of runes, self-equipped in combos to activate Jedi-like special abilities, including a death grip, target freeze effect and a resurrection spell that turns the fallen into a pet-like ghoul.

There's plenty to be genuinely excited about within Wrath of the Lich King, and plenty more to be discovered yet, so check back next issue for even more revelations!

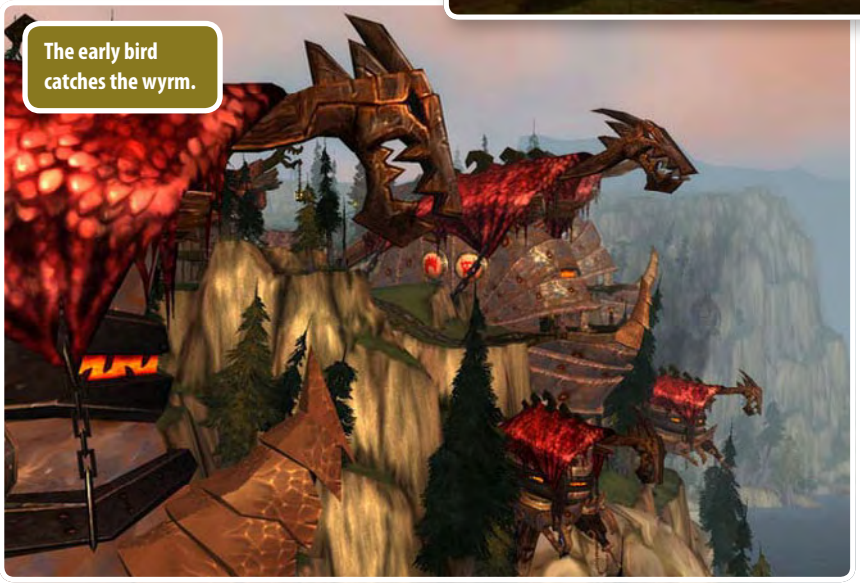
> *"The Death Knight is focused on aggression over defence"*



Grizzly Hills will have a new type of Dwarf.



The new Sholazar Basin tropical zone.



The early bird catches the wyrm.

MMOZine Verdict

A real cornucopia of creative content

HOW COMPLETE



FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Lord of the Rings Online: The Anniversary

"We did a 'Welcome back' weekend and we had thousands of people come back"

One ring to rule them all – two guys to explain it…



Jeffrey Steefel is the Executive Producer of Lord of the Rings Online.

LOTRO online is now one year old, and there are big things on the horizon. From the launch of Book 13, to the impending launches of Book 14 and the first expansion, the Mines of Moria, it's an exciting time for LOTRO developers, Turbine. We sat down with Executive Producer, Jeffrey Steefel to talk about all things Hobbit.

LOTRO is now officially just over one year old. How have you guys at Turbine been celebrating the Anniversary?

We did a 'Welcome Back' weekend – we had thousands of people come back. Basically, anybody who had an account for LOTRO on the first year could come back and play for a long weekend of free play. We saw a huge flux of people check it out again.

Things all come to a head with LOTRO Book 14 so we would imagine you've got some pretty huge updates planned?

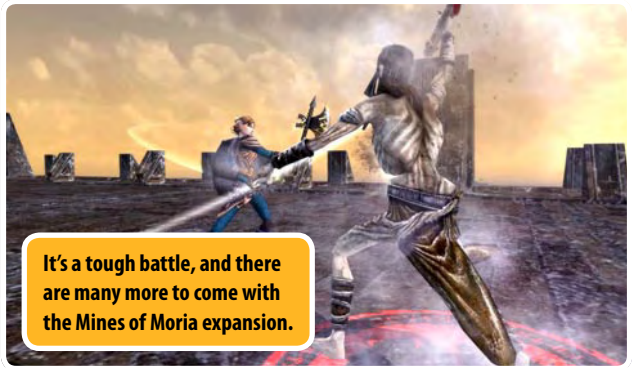
We're doing some interesting things we haven't done before for Book 14 – I don't want to talk about it too much yet, but we're utilising our live event system much more than we ever have to date, and there's also some dynamically triggered things happening in the game that have been put into Book 14. There's also the start of the wind-up to the end of the Epic Story for Volume 1 so we can move into Moria for Volume 2.

And then, it's on to the Mines of Moria for your first expansion. What are its main features?

Upgrading the advancement level path from Level 50 to



It's probably not a good idea to ask this guy where his eyes have gone...



It's a tough battle, and there are many more to come with the Mines of Moria expansion.



Ice, ice baby…



These chaps don't seem too happy Chelsea didn't win.

Interview cont.

Level 60 is huge. The biggest new system is probably the Legendary Item system, which is really cool. Basically, it's an entire system layered on top of our current advancement path. The most important thing about it is you're growing the weapon – it has its own experience points and its own levels; it goes on Deeds and Quests.

The one worry I had about the expansion was that at Connect, you guys mentioned a lot of it would be for high level characters. Will low level characters be able to go into it, or is this exclusively for people who've been there from the game's very beginning?

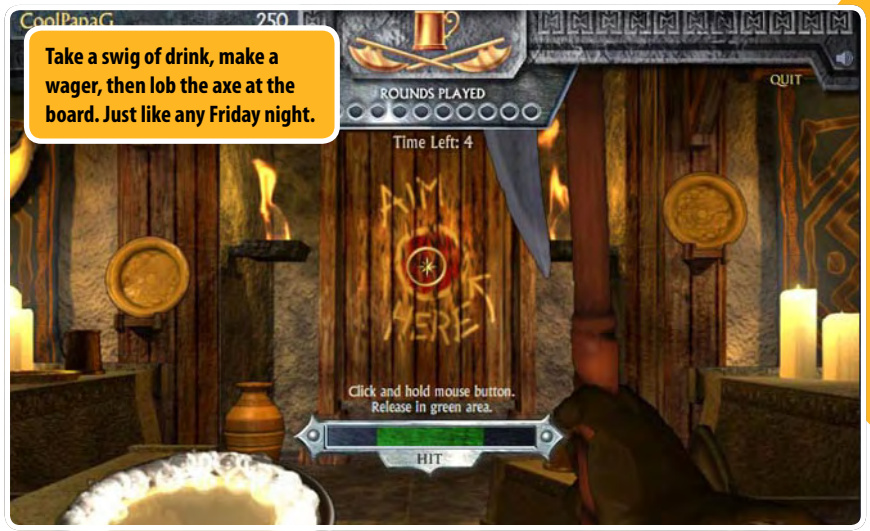
The expansion's for everyone. We're adding new classes, making changes to existing systems, improving existing content, or in some cases altering so that it fits better into where the story of Moria is going.

The way you've linked the website and the game is quite cool, and the way you can unlock things through playing the mini-games on the website seems a really good idea – is that something that's been quite popular with the fans?

We just launched the second game, so we're just beginning to get stats around that, but if you look at the first game, there's 270,000 hours of gameplay already!

What's also exciting, on a more macro level, is it's a first little baby step for us on LOTRO, building towards the idea that the game is not just something that happens in this walled-garden – the game is an entire community environment that develops organically.


Looks like we've wandered into the wrong part of the Shire…



Take a swig of drink, make a wager, then lob the axe at the board. Just like any Friday night.

One of the things I've heard people complaining about is the housing system. Are there any plans to change this?

The next steps are going to be around what the future of the economy is, and that is what we want to build around the housing and the neighbourhoods. Right now it's very one-dimensional – we are the only real estate land owner, and everyone else is essentially renting. When we can properly support it, we'll try to grow that economy and make it a lot more inter-dependent, and have some more relationships between the players themselves.

The thing we'd like to find more time for is taking neighbourhoods to the next step, create functionalities between players, between houses and between neighbourhoods.

And, finally, are there any plans to make LOTRO free to play and run it from microtransactions, or is this just something you're keeping a close eye on?

It's absolutely where the market's going, and we're doing a lot of work to understand how we can support different business models. I think the industry needs to be really careful to make sure it doesn't go off in the other way and go "Oh, subscriptions are dead, now it's about free games, and getting the money wherever you can from the player."

There's always going to be a subscription model available for the people who want that, and for some people who only want to play for a couple of hours a week, we need to find a way to let them do that, and find a way that seems fair. Paying $15 a month if you're only playing two to three hours a month doesn't really work. At the end of the day it's really going to depend on the product.

Publisher: Codemasters Online Gaming
Developer: Turbine
Heritage: LOTRO, Asheron's Call
Link: www.lotro.com
OUT NOW!

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REVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures



Publisher: Eidos
Developer: Funcom
Heritage: Anarchy Online
Link: www.ageofconan.com
OUT NOW!

System requirements: 3.0Ghz CPU, 1GB RAM, 32GB of free hard drive space and a shader model 2.0 128Mb graphics card

Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures

This is barbaric…

While Arnie's subtle and pioneering performances as Conan may hold a place in the heart of 80's movie fans, this is not the game of that film.

Five years in the making, it's based on the lore that is spread across an astonishing 70 or so books – plus a slew of comics – with little relation to those muscle-bound cinematic gems.

With such a raft of fiction to dip into, it's no surprise that the game takes a more narrative approach than the average identikit level-grinder.

This is evident from the start, and you begin the game as a humble galley slave, washed up on the shore with little in the way of memory or personal belongings. Setting out to reclaim your life, you're soon taking the lives of others, and it immediately becomes apparent that the emphasis is on brutality rather than pixies and fairies. Instead of attempting to ward off your foes with a fey spell, combatants in Age Of Conan


Hell of a night…


Heads, you lose…


Surely some kind of dark magic.


There is no shortage of improbable monsters in Hyboria.



Slave to the rhythm.



The Take That reunion had suddenly taken a very dark twist.

Age of Conan cont.

are more likely to smack their enemies on the head with a blunt – or indeed sharp – object. Cue rivers of blood, with the gore effects, along with some tenuous sexual content, enough to earn the game an 18 rating. And while claims to be the first truly adult MMO are wide of the mark, there's some strong stuff. There aren't many MMOs where you're sent to slaughter somebody and bring back his head so it can be mounted on a pole…

Attack, attack, attack!

The combat system has been designed to totally facilitate the bloodletting – in so much as there actually is a combat system, as opposed to the traditional method of clicking on an enemy and seeing what happens. In Conan you have three basic attacks, namely left, right and central. As such, fights largely consist of stabbing the 1, 2 or 3 keys to exploit your enemy's unprotected areas. These areas are graphically represented on-screen, making it something of a hi-tech version of fairground favourite Whack-a-Mole. Throw in special moves on the 4, 5, 6 and 7 keys, and the slightest scuffle has you going at the keyboard like a concert pianist – particularly when you throw in the dodge moves.

While the melee combat does favour the 'tank' characters, the tactile combat system does extend to other types, with Rangers able to actually

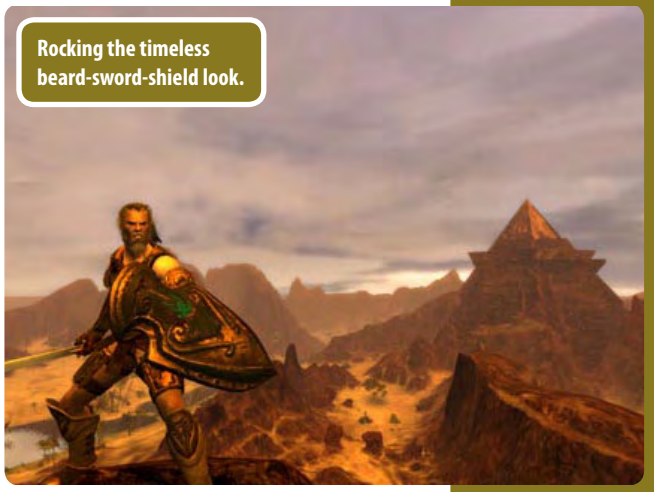
SADDLE UP!

Mount your mount

HORSE **MAMMOTH** **RHINO**

Your entry-level nag is commonplace in Hyboria, providing a speedy ride but not a great deal in the way of protection. Ideal for beheading unwitting pedestrians.





Rocking the timeless beard-sword-shield look.

Age of Conan cont.

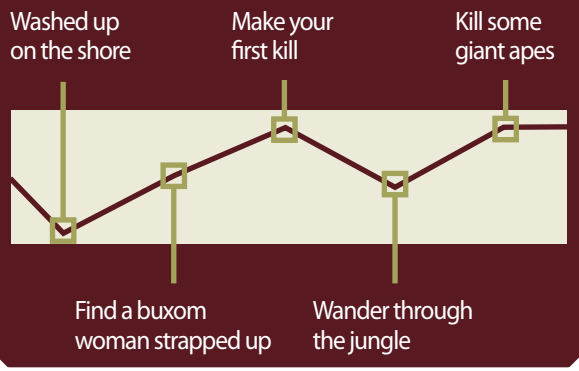
aim their arrows. And in a sizeable step forward for the genre, mounted combat is a fully-fledged affair, enabling you to wield your individual weapons from astride your beast, be it a horse, rhino, or a mammoth, with the speed and agility of each also having a unique bearing on the outcome of a battle.

For at least the first 20 levels there's a lot of solo-player stuff, with a weird day/night, solo/multiplayer system in place. Quest-wise, a lot of it is meat and potato stuff, be it delivering letters, running banal errands, or even stealing stuff using the Thief-lite sneak move. When you do finally get to join a guild, you can physically build a home city by gathering and using resources. It can then be improved tier-by-tier, and then of course attacked by a rival guild. As for large-scale player versus environment rucks, spectacular raids can involve over 20 people and last a good couple of hours.

All of this is represented via graphics that are a step up from the standard MMO fare, albeit at a price, with the minimum spec proving not so much a guide as a blatant untruth, not helped by tooth-grindingly long loading times between areas. Elsewhere, the chat box interface is a bit on the clunky side, and at this early stage there are the inevitable bugs.

While, as ever, it remains to be seen how it pans out in the next few months, Age Of Conan is an ambitious attempt to elevate the genre beyond the usual rat-stabbing drudgery, with extreme violence, a graphical splendour and sense of individualism attached to your character through the evolving story. While it might still be a push to claim you actually care about your character, there is a certain sense of attachment, particularly if you put in the 250 hours required to get to level 80. If Funcom can sort out the inevitable early teething problems then a lot of people may be doing just that. ● ***Steve Hill***

PULSOMETER: Signs of life



Roll over screen for annotations



"Age of Conan is an ambitious attempt to elevate the genre beyond the usual"



MMOZine Verdict

Good looking, violent, temperamental

- ✓ Superb graphics
- ✓ Strong narrative
- ✗ Occasionally clunky



Publisher: SOE
Developer: SOE
Heritage: Everquest 2
Link: www.everquest2.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
P3 1Ghz, 512 MB RAM, 64 MB DX 9 Compatible video card, 10GB HD Space

Everquest 2: Rise of Kunark

REVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Everquest 2: Rise of Kunark

Bigger, faster, better. But also quieter, too…

Though it may be getting older, as another expansion pack hits the shelves, Everquest 2 just seems to be getting stronger. Rise of Kunark, the fourth expansion for the game adds a whole new region to the game, a new playable race, a new starting town, and raises the overall level cap to a huge level 80.

The new playable race, the Sarnak, are a race of dragons, centred mostly around the sparse new starting location of Timorous Deep. Further expanding Everquest's already diverse selection of characters, the new race compliments the others well, and gives those looking for an alternative to humans another option.



We wouldn't like to be going up against an angry Dragon like this.

"The new playable race, the Sarnak, are a race of dragons"

There's a huge host of new content here for you to explore too, with plenty for both high level and starter characters to do. With hundreds of new quests, new characters, and new locales catering to players of all abilities, this is a loaded expansion pack.

And though the engine may be aging, Everquest 2's graphics remain up there with the best of any MMO, with breathtaking vistas and stunning locales the norm as you move from one incredibly detailed world to another. And though many of these zones are updated versions of old favourites from Everquest, such as the Lake of Ill Omen, there's plenty of new stuff to explore too

Though the game world does seem quieter than we remember, there's no reason for the subscriber numbers to be falling, as Everquest 2 is stronger now than ever. With most PCs now better equipped to get the maximum out of Everquest 2's graphics, maybe it's time you gave Norrath a try? ●

Ian Morris

HEADING NORRATH

Challenging a legend…

Of course, Rise of Kunark is also intrinsically linked with the other Everquest game we've reviewed this issue, Legends of Norrath. Besides being able to unlock in-game items by playing the card game, you can also challenge people to a match while you're playing Everquest 2, with the game simply booting up Legends of Norrath alongside your game screen, and dropping you right in!



MMOZine Verdict

Plenty of bang for your buck

- Loads of new stuff to get stuck into
- Great new race of dragons to play as
- New level cap raises the bar successfully

Everquest: Legends of Norrath

REVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of Everquest: Legends of Norrath



Pick a card, any card... no, not that one, you've got that one already!

Publisher: SOE
Developer: SOE
Heritage: Everquest 2
Link: www.legendsofnorrath.com
OUT NOW

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
Will play on pretty much anything

Though it has the Everquest name, if you were expecting a full-on MMORPG experience from Legends of Norrath, you'd better guess again. A collectible card game in the vein of Magic: The Gathering, it's a free download that lets you collect, trade and battle against players from all over the world.

Whether you're a player of Everquest or not, if you're a fan of collectible card games then there'll be something to get your teeth into. Legends of Norrath is about as deep, and complex as trading card games get, and while that's sure to put some off, hardcore CCG players are likely to love it.

You play Legends of Norrath by simply downloading the standalone client, though if you don't hold a current Everquest account, you'll be limited to just online practice battles. To unlock all the features, you'll have to purchase at least one booster pack from the online shop. And herein lies the beauty of Legends of Norrath, as rather than purchasing real life cards, you pay real money for virtual ones.

Whether or not this'll be a popular mechanic remains to be seen, but while you run the risk of buying digital duplicates of cards you've already got, you also stand a chance of getting 'loot' cards, which can be redeemed for in-game items in either Everquest, or Everquest 2.

With a solid community already behind it, you'll have no trouble getting into games or finding people to trade with, and the community is more than helpful with easing you gently into the game. That said, there is still a steep learning curve here, but persistence pays great in-game dividends for EQ2. ● ***Ian Morris***



The basic game screen. Functional, we're sure you'd agree.

NO MOUNTING COSTS

How to get a free ride in Norrath

As we mentioned earlier, if you've got an Everquest, or Everquest 2 account then certain cards from the game can be then exchanged for in-game items – the best of which by far are the mounts you can get, which you effectively get for free! There are new loot cards being added with every expansion, so the amount of effectively free items out there is just going to keep on growing.



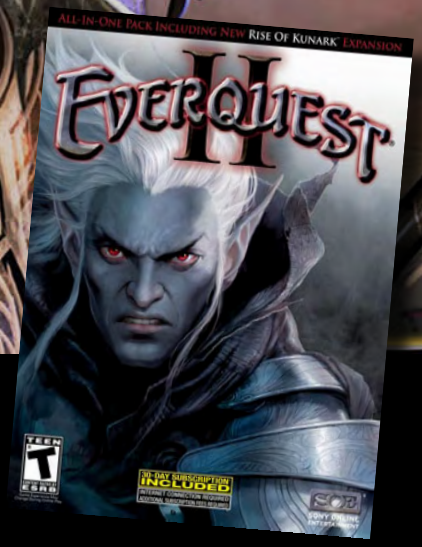
MMOZine Verdict

Gotta buy 'em all...

- ✓ Deep card game linked to EverQuest 2
- ✓ Good community that welcomes newcomers
- ✗ Poor tutorial lets it down slightly

WIN! 5 COPIES OF EVERQUEST II RISE OF KUNARK

Full game and latest expansion packs up for grabs



Sony Online Entertainment has sent us five copies of their awesome fantasy MMO to give away to lucky readers. These complete and inclusive editions of EverQuest II come bundled with the latest expansion Rise of Kunark, along with all previous add-ons (expansions and adventure packs) to this massive universe. Read our reviews of EverQuest II Rise of Kunark and Legends of Norrath in this issue.

To be in with a chance of winning one of these copies of EverQuest II Rise of Kunark, simply answer the question opposite…

Competition closes 7th August 2008. See website for full T&Cs.

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NCSOFT

CRYPTIC



Publisher: Codemasters Online Gaming
Developer: Turbine
Heritage: Asheron's Call, D&D Online: Stormreach
Link: www.lotro.com
OUT NOW

System requirements: Windows XP, P4 1.8GHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 64MB NVIDIA Geforce 3 or ATI Radeon 8500 video card, 7GB HD space

LOTRO: Book 13 – Doom of the Last King

Ice-cold free update is a monstrous addition to Lord of the Rings Online...

REVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of LOTRO: Book 13

It's fair to say that 13 may be an unlucky number for some, but in the context of the latest free content update for Lord of the Rings Online, it's a fortuitous figure that represents a feature-packed addition to this popular world. Book 13 - Doom of the Last King brings a massive new region, a whole new class, the first hobby and new levels of social interaction enabled by excellent tweaks to the interface.

Forochel is the name of Book 13's new region. It's a beautifully realised frozen landscape within the desolate northlands of Eriador, and in it you'll find an incredible 100 new quests, plus plenty of improved solo play.

Book 13 represents an attempt to present higher level players with the same opportunities for solo play that Book 9 gave mid-level players, and in this it succeeds, with many hours of solo adventure for levels 44 to 50.

The region of Forochel is populated in part by the extremely wary new reputation faction of the Lossoth, and it's the Lossoth that have to be befriended if you're going to uncover the land's secrets, locked in lore for thousands of years before your appearance. Of course, the secrets of Forochel are highly sought by both warring factions of LOTRO – the Free Peoples and the servants of the Witch-king, so unravelling them is no easy task.

The new monster class that Book 13 brings is the orc Defiler. This truly horrible entity further fills out the ranks available to monster players, joining the other orcs, Uruk, spiders and Wargs in the range available. The orc Defiler comes from diseased lands and uses its knowledge of sulphur swamp funghi and slimes to create pastes and dusts that can be rubbed into their allies' wounds, healing with Fertile Slime and





LOTS OF LOSSOTH

Things to see and do in Forochel...

CULTURE TRAIL | MONSTER MEET | USE YOUR INUITION

The entire Lossoth culture has been extrapolated from a six-paragraph reference in The Lord of the Rings appendix. Look out for the snow-men of Forochel, who move on bone skates.




The icy lands even have atmospheric effects.



LOTRO: Book 13 cont.

Fungal Bloom as initial abilities. Later you'll also be able to restore morale with Fell Restoration and speed healing with Fungal Spores. The Defiler really rounds out the monster classes and has significantly changed PvMP combat for the better.

Hobbies have been long requested in LOTRO, and Book 13 ushers in the most popular requested – fishing! A staple hobby of the books, particularly among certain Hobbits, fishing can be tried anywhere in Middle Earth with Book 13's update and is an incredibly addictive pastime, where you have to increase your skill to find more exotic fish and discover new fishy recipes.

A final mention must go to the improvements to the interface, particularly in the LFF/Social panel, where a new look and vastly improved functionality bring benefits such as discovering shared quests and mustering your team. With a light touch, the developers have made the social experience far slicker and what could be more important to an MMO? Bodes well for Mines of Moria. ● ***Steve Brown***


Note the red hand marking his allegiance.


Mammoths can be beasts of burden as well.

MMOZine Verdict

Awesome new land, class and interface additions

- Massive new region
- High level solo play
- Birth of hobbies



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

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
Windows: Intel Pentium 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 GeForce 2 class card or above, DirectX 9.0c or above, 6.0 GB available HD space, 4x CD-ROM drive, A 56k or better Internet connection

World of Warcraft Patch 2.4.2

Fury of the Sunwell gets tidied up after the first raiding parties!

REVIEW FEEDBACK! Click here to tell us what you think of WoW 2.4.2

The last 2.4 content patch for WoW was a biggie, unleashing the Shattered Sun Offensive, a quest hub with five and 25-player instances. The brand new five-player dungeon of Magisters' Terrace also opened for adventurous parties to then face powerful servants of the Burning Legion demons, plus a new type of tournament was also offered.

2.4 was thought by many to be the last major patch for The Burning Crusade before the unconfirmed release late in 2008 of the next WoW expansion, Wrath of the Lich King (see preview in this issue). So patch 2.4.2 is, as expected, a series of important, but housekeeping tweaks to the additions 2.4 brought.


The Terrace has had a good old Spring clean in patch 2.4.2.

"Important housekeeping tweaks to 2.4"

Many classes have had their abilities, talents, pet characteristics and more adjusted slightly – mostly to fix minor bugs thrown up by new content. In the new tournament arenas, the points system has been adapted so that if any character's personal rating is over 150 points below his team's then they will earn points based on personal and not team rating. So be warned, dead weight will no longer be carried!

Quest categories have been fixed to fall under the new Magisters' Terrace header, and there have been numerous balances and corrections made to creatures and demons of the Sunwell Plateau, Magisters' Terrace, Black Temple, Karazhan and Tempest Keep dungeons and raids.

So continue to enjoy the major update that patch 2.4 brought, but there's nothing to concern you too much in 2.4.2 – just an inevitable smoothing of the new content's slightly rough edges. ● ***Steve Brown***

GIVE IT A TWEAK!

And now some housekeeping points…

SWEEP THE TERRACE

LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

SADDLE SORE

Dungeons and raids in Magisters' Terrace have been tidied up so that Vexallus is no longer immune to taunting and so that Wretched Skulkers, Husks, Bruisers and Sunblade Imps reset.



MMOZine Verdict

Mostly minor fixes

- ✓ Better balanced arena fighting
- ✓ New dungeons and raids feel smoother
- ✗ Still some minor tweaks needed

PLAY AGAIN

EVE Online

You can never have enough space, so let's all return to this Elite MMO…



Publisher: CCP Games
Developer: CCP Games
Heritage: EVE Online and eight expansions
Link: www.eve-online.com
Released: 2003
System reqs: PIII 800MHz CPU, 512MB RAM, 6GB HD Space, GeForce 2+ Video Card

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

Since its launch in 2003, EVE Online has always valued depth over breadth, and while it may lack the overall player numbers of monsters like World of Warcraft, it still boasts a unique unified game world, boasting hundreds of thousands more players in a single online community than any other MMO does on individual servers with no meaningful connections between them. But even more important are the well-established connections between the members of that community – a strength of purpose far stronger than mere numbers can achieve.

The freedom of this community to control the evolution of its own game world was illustrated early in the life of EVE Online. It fell out that large groups of international players naturally migrated to different areas of the galaxy – Scandinavians to the south, Russians south-east, Americans north, Germans, French and Benelux nations to the west.

Over the next three months a conflict now famous even outside of EVE's online world ensued. The Russians fought the Scandinavians, who were secretly funded by the Americans until discovered by the Russians, who persuaded the French to get involved, breaking American supply lines and allowing the Russians to win! More recently, CCP has allowed the community to democratically elect nine representatives to the Council of Stellar Management, who will meet CCP at summits and decide the evolution of the game through future free updates.

And there's never been a better time to get involved. With a free client download and eight free expansions now provided for subscribers, CCP has always sought to deepen rather than broaden this close-knit and now hugely experienced community. Every expansion has sought to address community concerns, and added incremental depth in new features such as NPC content, trade, PvP evolution, new ships and structures.

The most recent free expansion, Trinity, overhauled the graphics, bringing the look of EVE right to the cutting edge of MMO visuals and modern tech capability. It really is one of the most beautiful games you can play today. So go and taste the true freedom of EVE Online. Like a hyperspace jump, it's come a long, long way without really moving at all. ●

> *"Like a hyperspace jump, it's come a long way without really moving"*



The Trinity expansion brought a graphics update.



If you haven't played EVE, prepare for tough but rewarding PvP.



The Empyrean Age will be the ninth expansion for EVE.

FUTURE SHOCK

Where EVE Online will take you next…

MASSIVE WAR
As you can read all about in our Empyrean Age preview, the next free expansion for EVE will induce a four way factional galactic war that will help to encourage non-PvP players to try their hand at combat by joining new militias as pod pilots.

CHANGING STATIONS
CCP has recently been showing off a new feature that will add unimagined new depth to the EVE universe in a future update – the ability to step out of your ship and ambulate with other players in communal areas of space stations.

SURFACE TO AIR
Even further off, but now in prototype stage, is the ability to enter a planet's atmosphere and fly over the surface.

>Inbox

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

SECOND (HALF)LIFE
MY FRIEND TOLD ME that Valve of Half-Life fame are going to be making some kind of MMO. Is this right, and if so what kind of game will it be? I presume that it will a shooter? Also when will it be released?
> Jonny

>I think your mate's added two and two and come up with thousands there, Jonny. Valve has no concrete plans to step into the MMO arena and there's certainly no announcement of an MMO title from them. Doug Lombardi of Valve did recently state that Valve's founder Gabe Newell is a massive MMORPG fan and has always wanted to make one, but this is unfortunately still in the realm of very wishful thinking.

A LICH OF PAINT
I'M A HUGE WOW FAN, so as you can imagine that I'm


Age of Conan: it's not for kids!

desperately awaiting news of the release of the next expansion, Wrath of the Lich King. However, I've heard nothing yet to tell me if this will be a visual update to the ageing graphics, as well as providing masses of new content and gameplay updates. Will it be all sparkly and new to look at?
> JoBo

> I'm afraid you may have to wait even beyond Wrath of the Lich King for a visual overhaul of World of Warcraft. Although the expansion (which still has no fixed release date) is supposedly getting a few tweaks and touch-ups, these will be mostly optional special effects for those lucky enough to be playing on very high-spec gaming systems. For most of us it will be the content that is King!

YOU HAVE TO ADMEIER HIM
I THINK THAT STRATEGY is really under-represented in the MMO world and I'd really like to see a major player prove that it's not only possible, but that there's a real hunger for it. I have loads of friends who would love something more tactical within a persistent world.
I know there are a few out there like Mankind and Shattered Galaxy, but they lack the polish that an established franchise could bring to this field. Can you tell me if there is anything on the horizon along these lines?
> *BUCK

> We ran a preview a couple of issues back on Kingdom Under Fire II, which should have some interesting strategic elements, but you may also be interested to hear that the king of strategy, Sid Meier, has recently been hinting at an MMO direction for a future game. Of course this is mostly speculation on Sid's part, and would probably be two or three games down his project list, but he has expressed a desire to make an MMO, and we'd imagine that Civilisation would be the most likely franchise to get the treatment, not Pirates! – seeing as Pirates of the Burning Sea has filled that gap recently.

AGE RATING OF CONAN
HOW ON EARTH DO people manage to get it so wrong and slate Age of Conan for featuring excessive nudity and violence – damaging to kids? Can't they read the age rating on the back of the box? Idiots, all of them!
> Biggy

> It would seem to be a parental responsibility, as it's clearly rated 18+.

Don't miss Issue 6
Out Sept 2nd
Sign up now!

mmo mmosite.com

MMOpinion

Our new regular columnists are the gaming staff of www.MMOSite.com – this month MMOSite's Torrez argues the benefits of MMOs that 'borrow' ideas from others…

Lately, people are talking and comparing (and also complaining) about games with similar features which tend to copy each other, but I think that it's a good thing.
Why? Because it will promote the genre heavily, and I have seen plenty of examples in my life of how copying (or borrowing) an idea can lead to many great products that are more than capable of standing on their own two feet.
Clone war will help to promote the genre heavily. If the genre becomes alive and interesting then it will attract many companies to consider penetrating the genre's market, by being more creative. So basically it's all good. A non-game example of this is Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola, as the cola genre was getting heavily promoted during the infamous cola war. If we then refer to Maple Story vs Wind Slayer, I feel that I don't even consider to try Wind Slayer, but because of clone war debates raging online, I am 'forced' to download it.
In the world of games, we find similarities between Dune II with Warcraft, but I also believe that the Warcraft series copied some features from Dune. And Warcraft is one of the best games that I've ever played. They start with similarities, but that act is an embryo of many great games.

So, do not underestimate the power of the clone…

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Age of Conan: Hyborian Adventures

You're not Conan, but this is his land. Here's how to get round it…

"Your first weapon is a broken oar, and you'll do well to learn how to use it, with the combat system involving reacting to your enemy's weak spots"



Welcome to Hyboria, a land where life is cheap and ale is expensive. And don't turn up hoping to wave a magic wand and make everything disappear, as you're fighting for your life from the outset with your bare hands and anything you can get hold of. Your first weapon is a broken oar, and you'll do well to learn how to use it, with the combat system involving reacting to your enemy's weak spots. You'll soon stumble across a fair maiden trussed up in the jungle, so do the decent thing and slay her captor to free her. Then risk your life countless times escorting her to the city of Tortage, where she promptly sods off without so much as a by your leave…



HORSES FOR COURSES

Nag nag nag…

TRUSTY STEED | CHEERS! | PONY POWER

Use your trusty steed to trot around the countryside, taking in the spectacular scenery of Hyboria.



CLASS WAR

Our brief guide to four classes in the game. Read on and choose wisely…

SOLDIER
Essentially the tank class, they can give a lot of damage and also take it. Choose from Guardian, Conqueror or Dark Templar.

MAGE
The game's concession to magic, it's all of the dark variety, whether cast by a Demonologist, Necromancer or Herald Of Xolti.

PRIEST
The healers in the world of Conan, these do-gooders come in the form of Bear Shaman, Priest Of Mitra and Tempest of Set.

ROGUE
Able to use a reasonably advanced level of stealth, plus melee and ranged weapons, the choice is Barbarian, Assassin or Ranger.



Who are you?

Weapons ready!

GUARDIAN
Heavily armoured, fighting with sword and shield.

CONQUEROR
Dual-wielding with heavy armour, they are inspirational in battle.

DARK TEMPLAR
Wielding vile sorcery, they can feed off the life of their enemies.

DEMONOLOGIST
Mighty sorcerers, they can summon up a servant of hell, which is handy.

NECROMANCER
They command the undead, like some crazed zombie leaders.

HERALD OF XOTLI
Mage and soldier hybrids who wield spells, and are handy with a sword.

BEAR SHAMAN
Summoning the power of the bear, these boys go feral, but can also heal.

PRIEST OF MITRA
With the strongest healing powers, they can even resurrect the dead.

TEMPEST OF SET
Armed with lightning strikes and massive healing powers.

BARBARIAN
They possess strength, aggression, and possibly steroids…

ASSASSIN
Hyboria's most lethal killers do it with daggers, crossbows and poison.

RANGER
They can pick a flea of a horse's tail with their deadly bows.



Roll over screen for annotations



One of the unique aspects of Age Of Conan is the ability for guilds to build living cities, replete with defences and trading posts. While you can't simply plonk a city anywhere, of the designated areas it's worth considering what resources are nearby, as well as strategically positioning your city in order to make it hard to attack.

Siege warfare is a fully-fledged feature of Age Of Conan, and rival guilds will inevitably come knocking at your door. As such, it pays to be ready for them, and you should be prepared to protect your city to the death. Building a great big wall round it would be a start, preferably manned with some Rangers.

COMBAT ROCK

There's a system to this combat…

Conan's combat system requires you to react to your opponent by pressing the correct key – his shielded areas are shown via an onscreen cue. To cause further damage to him (or indeed her, as we're all for equality here), pre-set combo moves can be thrown in. You will often face multiple enemies, and while your primary target will receive the brunt of the blows, it is possible to injure multiple foes with a big sweep. Naturally, you yourself are open to attack, but you can block blows by holding the X key, at a cost to your stamina. Double-tapping the movement keys also causes you to dodge out of the way, although be careful if you're at the edge of a bridge over a river of lava…

EVE Online: Empyrean Age - an introduction

Get ready for factional warfare in advance of the free expansion...

It's time to take a stand, but which of the four navvies will you join?



There's big change afoot in the EVE Online universe, as you can read all about in our cover feature this issue. Empyrean Age will usher in a new age of four-way factional warfare for this space-bound sandbox MMO, making PvP combat far easier to get involved in for those who tended to avoid it before. So now is the time to practice your war face in the mirror and use our introductory tips to ready yourself for the battle.

We'll show you how to go about capturing an entire system, along with how to join a factional militia in the first place as a pod pilot, and how you can expect to be rewarded via the all-new ranking system. Look out next issue for our full review and even more advanced tips.

SYSTEM OF A DOWN

Your basic guide to taking over a star system

Before you can claim occupancy of an entire system in the new factional warfare of Empyrean Age, you'll need to capture control points – basically plexes. So first scan for these using your on-board scanner, which will reveal opposing control points only, as your own cannot be scanned.

Once you've identified the control point that you need to attack, warp to the gate, which controls the ship type allowed into the control point. Once you arrive, a beacon will appear showing everyone that the fight is on to take it.

You will next need to take the control point by getting within a certain range of this object, at which point a countdown timer will begin, that starts ticking down from around 15 minutes.

Once you've captured enough control points, including the main one, the central system bunker becomes vulnerable to attack for the next 24 hours. This assault will require massive concerted firepower, but results in system capture.



GAINING CONTROL

Capturing a control point isn't rocket science (except in the strictly technical sense obviously), but there are certain factors you should be aware of...

LOW-SEC

The new control point complexes can be found in all of the factional warfare low-sec regions, and their beacons will alert attackers and defenders in the area when they're threatened.

OUTPOSTS

The control points have outpost beacons you will be able to capture by flying within 20km of them. This will alert the NPC defenders, who will retaliate, respawning periodically.

SHIP RESTRICTIONS

Currently the star gates that allow access to the control points restrict entry to certain ship types. At this point in testing only frigates, cruisers, destroyers and industrials can pass through. This should maintain CCP's focus with Empyrean Age on smaller-scale conflicts. Some control points will be accessible to battleships.

JOINING A MILITIA

How to make the first advances towards a faction

One of the first things you'll notice when you fire up the new login screen is that it has changed hue to a light brown – although you can still customise this – and the style has changed from the old animated logo zoom to a cleaner, crisper presentation.

But more importantly, you can now log in to your chosen faction's station and click on a new 'Militia' button to join the station race's extended forces. You are then shown a propaganda window that calls you to war, urging you to join up and fight. Here you should note the consequences of signing up – you will be at war with the enemy militia of the faction you join and entering enemy-controlled high-sec space will get you attacked by the enemy's powerful navies.

You should also be aware that you'll need a fairly good standing with a faction to be allowed to join its militia, so if you have a faction in mind now that you want to join, it may well be worth increasing your standing with a few missions before Empyrean Age launches.

Finally, click 'Enlist Me' and you'll be given a lowly rank and new stats.



FEELING RANXIOUS

CCP developers explain the new ranking system…

Ranks are tied to the standing you have to the 'Militia Corp', not the faction, and this is important because everyone starts at a zero standing point when they first join the game. It's also important because Militia Corp standings, and all changes to them, are not affected by relevant skills as per normal with standings – i.e. you cannot sweet talk, bribe or sleep with your commander to get him to give you a fancy rank… you have to earn it, soldier!

As you gain in standing towards your Militia Corp, so you gain in rank. You start at the game's lowest rank and then gain a rank for every full point of standing gain. So you would next get promoted and advance in rank to standing one, and then standing two and so on, all the way up to standing nine. It's also worth remembering that you can also lose standing and get demoted in the same way.

In addition, for every rank gained your overall faction standing gets an incremental increase.

Ranks are displayed on your character sheet in a new tab entitled 'Decorations', where you can view your current rank. If you leave the faction and later rejoin it, you retain your previous rank.



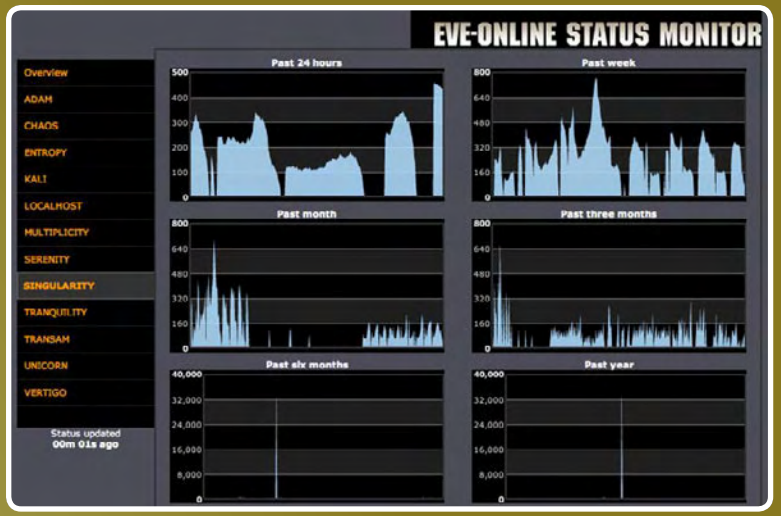
"You can't sleep with your commander to get him to give you a good rank!"

WHILE YOU WAIT...

In advance of the release of this awesome free expansion, here are a few ways to bide your time and prepare for factional war!

TEST IT **READ IT** **JOIN IT**

You can (at the time of writing) test out certain aspects of the upcoming Empyrean Age expansion now by logging on to the Singularity server. Find out more about how to log on at www.eve-online.com today and get stuck in.



WIN!

EVE ONLINE GOODIES, GAME TIME AND A GRAPHICS CARD!

Get ready for the Empyrean Age with this awesome giveaway…

To be in with a chance of winning one of these great EVE packages, simply answer the question below. CCP will be sending the prizes direct to the winners from overseas (Iceland and the US) and warn recipients to be aware that it's possible they may have to pay local import tax on the gifts.



CCP has scoured space to secure a bountiful package of great EVE Online goodies for us to give away. We've got a stunning NVIDIA GeForce 8600 GTS graphics card that will really get the best out of EVE's revamped visuals, one dazzling 'The Art of EVE' book, four custom mouse mats, one for each EVE faction (Amarr, Caldari, Gallente and Minmatar), two 1GB EVE USB flash drives, one black EVE cap and three 50-day gametime cards. We're going to divide up the spoils as follows…



FIRST PRIZE
NVIDIA GeForce 8600 GTS graphics card
50-day gametime card
1GB EVE USB flash drive
Two EVE mouse mats

SECOND PRIZE
The Art of EVE book
50-day gametime card
1GB USB flash drive
EVE mouse mat

THIRD PRIZE
Black EVE cap
50-day gametime card
EVE mouse mat

Competition closes 7th August 2008. See website for full T&Cs.

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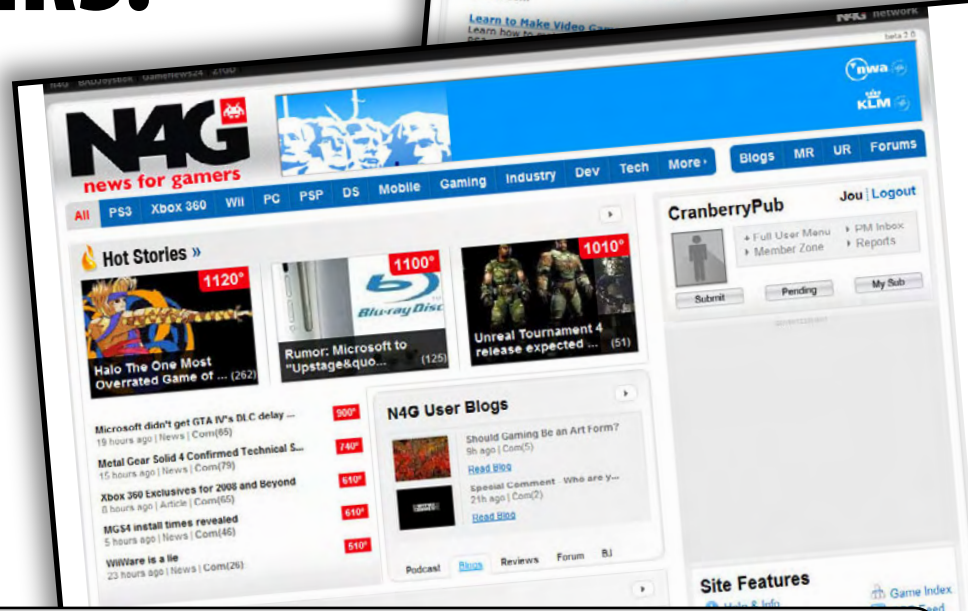
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