Disney puts together 'Pirates' online game

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Disney has a long history of taking popular films and extending their long-term value by creating rides and theme-park attractions based on the films.

They hope to take that approach in a new technological direction with the "Pirates of the Caribbean Online" game.

The game, expected to come out some time before the third installment of the "Pirates" movie series premieres next summer, will use the story from the films to create an entire online world for players to compete in.

"The game gives players the opportunity to live in this world as a pirate," said Mike Goslin, vice president of Disney Online Virtual Reality Studio.

Goslin said the game will stay true to not only the plot but the tone of the film series.

"It's about being a movie pirate," he said. "The same sense of adventure and sense of humor from the movie is in the game."

The latest film in the series, "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," set several box-office records during it's opening this past weekend, including biggest single-day box-office gross with $55 million Friday and biggest weekend gross with more than $135 million.

The game is an MMOG or massive multi-player online game, a category

that means players log in and compete with each other online, in real time. Goslin says Disney hopes the game will not only catch on from the popularity of the films but that users will become engrossed and stay with it.

"It's absolutely a long-term thing," he said. "We are approaching it like theme park attractions. We want to keep the brand name alive beyond the duration of the films."

He added that Disney will be frequently adding new content to the game to keep it fresh for users.

Goslin said a lot of the idea of the game actually came from a "Pirates" theme ride at Disney World.

"It's stylistically borrowing from the ride," he said. "It's different from other pirate games, having the supernatural woven in in a realistic way."

Goslin said that rather than aim for hardcore gamers who already play MMOGs, Disney is going to try to market the game toward fans of the "Pirates" films who may not be used to this kind of game.

"It goes a lot broader than (hardcore gamers)," he said. "We want to get all fans of the film."

To that end, the game is going to be multi-faceted, offering traditional MMOG action as well as lighter types of gaming.

"We want to make it friendly to new players but also challenging to gamers," he said. "Players can go head to head in parlor games like cards and dice. There's also story-driven adventuring."

The game is also offering multiple ways for players to succeed, Goslin

said.

"The goal as a player is to become the most notorious pirate in the Caribbean," he said. "You can become notorious in various ways. The goal is not 'destroy all enemies.'"

Goslin said that Disney is also counting on the non-competitive appeal of the game.

"It's ultimately an MMOG, so it's really about community and making friends and playing with friends," he said.

The pricing model will probably be subscription-based, Goslin said.

"Right now we're leaning toward that, but we are considering our options," he said.

Goslin added that they want to offer a choice of pricing options to attract casual gamers who might not be used to paying a subscription fee for a game.

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