

# Lego expands its universe with online game

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Japanese children look at their work made by LEGO bricks as part of the Dream City building event produced by LEGO education in Tokyo last year. Danish toy maker Lego is seeking to build a presence in the world of multiplayer online games with the release of a new videogame called Lego Universe.

Danish toy maker Lego is seeking to build a presence in the world of multiplayer online games with the release of a new videogame called Lego Universe.

"Think World of Warcraft, [Second Life](#) and Club Penguin all wrapped into one," said lead producer Chris Sherland of NetDevil, the Colorado-based game development company behind Lego Universe.

The PC-based game will incorporate many of the features of the iconic interlocking, studded plastic bricks that have delighted children -- and

parents -- the world over for years.

Lego Universe, which is to be released in the second half of the year, was unveiled at the annual International [Consumer Electronics Show](#) (CES) in Las Vegas which closes on Sunday.

Like World of Warcraft or Disney's Club Penguin, Lego Universe is what is known as a Massively Multiplayer Online game, or MMO.

"Lego Universe is the first MMO based in the Lego play theme," NetDevil's Sherland told AFP. "So there's a really safe social layer for kids, good parental controls. There's not a lot of predatory stuff going on."

Sherland said Lego Universe takes place in a "wide open 3-D exploratory world."

"The back story is basically that there's this evil force that has corrupted the purest source of imagination in the universe," he said.

"Everybody in Lego Universe gets their own planet, their own shard of the universe, and they're sort of banding together to try to defeat that force.

"You do that through this adventure game that's basically quest-based."

Lego Universe will also allow players to "make your own game play on your own planet, and then your peer group or your friends can come to your planet and you guys can play together," Sherland said.

Bricks, of course, are the foundation of the [game](#).

"You get bricks as loot," Sherland said. "You take those bricks and build

anything you want. Anything you can build in real life you can build inside Lego Universe.

"You can repurpose bricks and turn them into other things."

For example, "you're building vehicles to move around the universe such as race cars. You can take those cars into the shop, remake them, tweak them and race them again," Sherland said.

"You're building one brick at a time with a creative talent that's basically limitless -- that's super Lego," he said.

Lego has previously released Star Wars, Indiana Jones and Batman videogames, but they were just for up to two players while with Lego Universe "thousands of players can play at once," he added.

Sherland also said that anything created in Lego Universe can also be ordered online from Lego.com and "they'll have it sent to your house with building instructions."

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