

Rebooted Starcraft aims to draw new gamers

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South Koreans test a new version of "StarCraft 2" in 2008. Twelve years after Starcraft, one of the highest grossing videogames in history, its makers released a sequel Tuesday in hopes of drawing new fans to its intergalactic adventure.

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Much-awaited "Starcaft II: Wings of Liberty" picks up where the 1998 game ended, set in the 26th century in a distant part of the Milky Way, where the Terrans, human exiles from Earth, are at war with the Zerg and the Protoss.

Developed by US studio Blizzard, makers of the world's most popular online videogame "World of Warcraft", the new chapter in the adventures of Terran rebel leader Jim Raynor is to be followed by two



extensions.

Players are given 30-odd missions in the game, positioning units to overcome enemy armies through troop transport, construction and engineering or armoured attack.

"By keeping the three races from the first Starcraft we enable players to find their bearings and continue the adventure where they left off," lead designer Dustin Browder told AFP.

"But we have added new units to force them to think up new tactics."

And to draw in new players, Blizzard has adopted a system allowing fans to progress stage by stage.

"They can play alone on the main campaign then take on challenges before going on to play against other gamers on the Internet," Browder said. "We have set up a mechanism allowing players of similar level to play against each other online so the game never loses interest."

The first episode was a standard bearer for electronic games, particularly in South Korea where championships are held. Half of the first episode's 10 million sales were in <u>South Korea</u>.

Analyst Mike Hiuckey of Janco Partners expects seven million copies of Starcraft II to be sold by the end of the year.

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