

Amazon forges fellowship for 'Lord of the Rings' online video game

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Amazon has landed a prime franchise on which to build an online game: the Lord of the Rings.

Amazon Game Studios will jointly develop the free [online game](#) with Hong Kong-headquartered Leyou Technology Holdings, which owns several [game](#) studios including Digital Extremes, maker of sci-fi role-playing [action game](#) "Warframe."

There is no release date for the console and PC game, a massively multiplayer online action title ... la "World of Warcraft."

Last year, Athlon Games, an L.A.-based Leyou subsidiary announced it

had reached a deal with Middle-Earth Enterprises to create a game based in J.R.R. Tolkien's Hobbit-laden universe during the time before the events in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Leyou will market and publish the new game in China, while Amazon will handle its release in the rest of the world.

This isn't Amazon's only Lord of the Rings project. It is also developing an unrelated original Prime Video TV series based on The Lord of the Rings, a prequel to "The Fellowship of the Ring," the first of the three Rings books.

Amazon Game Studios already has several games in development including "New World," based in an alternate history 17th century colonization game.

"Tolkien's Middle-earth is one of the richest fictional worlds in history, and it gives our team of experienced MMO developers—from the same studio developing 'New World'—tremendous opportunity to play and create," said Christoph Hartmann, vice president of Amazon Game Studios, in a statement. "We have a strong leadership team in place to helm this new project, and we're actively growing our team to help build this incredible experience."

"Bringing Middle-earth to life necessitates having the very best partners, and Amazon's customer obsession, technology, and talented teams make it the ideal choice for a co-developer and publisher," said Leyou Technologies Holdings CEO Alex Xu in a statement. "We believe our combined resources and expertise will result in a beautiful and compelling game that customers will love and play for years to come."

Amazon's other video game pursuits include the Twitch video game streaming platform and the tech-retailing giant is reportedly developing its own cloud gaming service as well.

BTW, there's already a competitor, "The Lord of the Rings Online," a free-to-play massively multiplayer online game that has been active for 12 years.

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