

Catwoman claws her way into 'DC Universe Online'

LOU KESTEN - Associated Press - Associated Press

Batman, Superman, the Joker, Lex Luthor: Good or evil, they're the biggest names in comics, and they're key to the early success of Sony Corp.'s ambitious "DC Universe Online." But DC has introduced hundreds of heroes and villains over the last 75 years, and Sony intends to shine the spotlight on many of them with regular game updates.

First up: Catwoman. February's update to the massively multiplayer online (MMO) game features a story line in which she tries to rob Egyptian cat artifacts from the Gotham Museum. Gamers will also be able to race against her or assume her identity in player-vs.-player brawls.

February also brings some Valentine's Day-related adventures, with love goddess Aphrodite wreaking havoc across Metropolis. And there will be a new Batcave raid for high-level players.

Game director Chris Cao says the goal is to provide something for everyone. "DCUO" is a rarity in the MMO world because you can play on a PC or on the PlayStation 3, and the two hardware platforms draw different audiences.

"On a console," Cao says, "playtime is typically shorter, but people come back and play more often. So the game's designed to be a lot of fun even in short bursts. The PS3 is competing with cable, with DVR, with Netflix, and you can't hog the TV for 10 hours a day."

Cao also points out that "a lot of people have never played an MMO before," so Sony needs to keep more casual gamers interested while delivering new challenges for veterans who have already built up powerful alter egos.

In the long run, Cao says, Sony set out to create "an awesome superhero game you can play for months." And his team has one simple goal: "Let's make it as fun as possible."

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