

Community of Heroes to NCSoft: Don't Destroy Our World

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On August 31, 2012, Paragon Studios was abruptly closed to the complete surprise of its employees and management. Its signature product, the still-profitable City of Heroes (a multiplayer online game about super-powered heroes), is scheduled to be permanently shut down on November 30, 2012. Since the announcement, the players of City of Heroes (CoH) have come together in a surprisingly active and vocal movement to try to convince NCSoft, the parent company which owns the rights to CoH and which terminated Paragon Studios without warning (citing a "realignment of focus" as the sole reason), to take action to preserve the extensive and involved community they have grown over the last eight years and have come to love.

Players have held ongoing vigils on the servers wherein their characters hold aloft torches, have held rallies and marches to demonstrate their devotion, and have even bought a "thank you" dinner for the Paragon Studios developers. Players recognize NCSoft's desire to cease supporting CoH as a legitimate choice for a South Korean business to make regarding a product popular primarily in the West. However, they seek to convince NCSoft to allow the virtual world and its development to continue in other hands. They hope to prevent the destruction of this valued source of family togetherness, meeting place for far-distant friends, and unique aid to bridging gaps of generation and understanding. Even such luminaries as Mercedes Lackey - noted science fiction and fantasy authoress and CoH player - have come forward in support of the players' effort.

On October 20th, the players of City of Heroes are holding a charity Game-A-Thon to support Children's Miracle Network hospitals. Also on that date, they are inviting members of the press to come and join them in demonstrations of how characters are made, what the most exciting parts of the game are to them, and to answer questions both in word and in deed about why this community means so much to them. The precedent of heroes and the press working together in metropolitan areas makes the Rolla, Missouri headquarters of this meeting somewhat ironic, but for those who cannot attend in person, the beauty of an online world is that practically full access can be achieved via the internet, and members of the press are invited to join by whatever means most will sate their curiosity best.

Though things look bleak for their City, these players of heroes (and 4-color supervillains) are determined to take on the never-say-die attitude of the genre they love, and offer to share their experiences - poignant and stirring and wholesome - with others before the servers go dark and they can do so no more.