Hearthstone® Welcomes 100 Million Players to the Virtual Tavern

November 5, 2018

Blizzard Entertainment's free-to-play digital card game has defied the odds and become one of the most popular online games in the world

Special thank-you event for players, running November 7–11, will offer free card packs and more

IRVINE, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 5, 2018-- A little over five years ago,a few Blizzard Entertainment developers were toiling away on a small passion project: *Hearthstone*®, a free-to-play digital collectible card game at a time when such games were not front of mind for most. They based the game on the company's Warcraft ® universe and polished every aspect—from the flash of the animations to the bombastic voice lines of the heroes—and launched it to critical acclaim globally in 2014. Today Blizzard announced that *Hearthstone* has hit the **100-million-player mark.**†

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20181105005609/en/

Hearthstone, Blizzard Entertainment's internationally acclaimed free-to-play digital card game, has reached the 100-million-player milestone. (Graphic: Business Wire)

"Reaching 100 million players is a huge milestone for *Hearthstone,* but what matters to us even more is the fact that so many people around the world have embraced the spirit of the game," said J. Allen Brack, president of Blizzard Entertainment. "Whether at events like BlizzCon ® and Fireside Gatherings or just in tuning in to watch their favorite streamers, it's been so inspiring to see millions of players and fans coming together, online and in real life, to participate in the *Hearthstone* community."

A Different Kind of Mass Appeal

Hearthstone features a deceptively simple format in which players build digital card decks and duel each other head-to-head or play through one of several different card-based Solo Adventures. As a result of its charm and accessibility—as well as the corresponding entertainment and education provided by numerous talented community content creators—*Hearthstone* has consistently been a leading game on media platforms like Twitch and YouTube.

As a card-based game, *Hearthstone* is unlike any of the other games regularly in the top ranks on those platforms. In addition to its highly accessible card-vs.-card gameplay and the colorful personality that comes through its vibrant audio and visual elements, a major difference is that **all player-to-player communication takes place through pre-generated voice lines** tailored for each of the game's playable heroes—all conveying warmth, positivity, and good-natured sportsmanship. This helps create a welcoming setting for all players, from beginners to seasoned veterans, and despite being a skill-based competitive experience, offers a change of pace from other competitive games.

In addition, Blizzard recently **overhauled the "new-player experience"** for the game, putting a bigger buffer between beginners and veterans —making it even easier for anyone to jump in and play. One of the company's core design principles has been, "Easy to learn, hard to master," and *Hearthstone* is a shining example, with an introductory competitive experience that eases players into the fundamentals of the game and amply rewards them along the way.

Fireside Gatherings: *Hearthstone* Everywhere

To accentuate *Hearthstone'*s tavern vibe and encourage players to take the fun of the game **out into the real world,** Blizzard developed the global "Fireside Gathering" program, which enables "Innkeepers" to coordinate gaming get-togethers at their local restaurants, student centers, hobby shops, and actual taverns and pubs. Each month, an **average of 2,655 *Hearthstone* Fireside Gatherings** take place in cities around the world, from Boston to Beijing.†

At these events, players hang out, enjoy the atmosphere and establishment, and battle each other on their mobile devices in a casual competition. Special prizes are often awarded, and friendships often develop. Another highlight is that Fireside Gatherings often feature **pre-release parties for upcoming *Hearthstone* content expansions,** giving attendees a first crack at playing the newest cards being added to the game. This year alone, **more than 23,000 Fireside Gatherings** have taken place,† with many more scheduled in cities everywhere.

A Thank You to the Players

As a way of commemorating *Hearthstone'*s 100-million-player milestone and thanking players everywhere for bringing the game to life, Blizzard is holding a special in-game event from November 7 through 11. During the **100 Million Players Celebration event,** players who log in to the game will receive a one-time reward of **six free packs** from the most recent expansion set, *The Boomsday Project* ™. In addition, players will be able to complete a series of "Celebrate the Players" event quests to **earn up to 500 gold—**which can be used to acquire card packs from any set in the game and participate in the Arena mode, a fun alternative form of competition in *Hearthstone.*

About *Hearthstone*

With more than 100 million players worldwide, *Hearthstone*® is Blizzard Entertainment's internationally acclaimed free-to-play digital card game designed for novice and veteran card-slingers alike. Players can choose from nine powerful hero classes and customize their decks with minions, spells, and weapons based on the unique fantasy of the Warcraft universe. Featuring a variety of game modes ranging from epic head-to-head duels

to story-driven Solo Adventures, *Hearthstone* offers a vibrant and rewarding experience stacked with strategy, personality, and fun. *Hearthstone* is available globally for Windows and Mac PCs; Windows, iOS, and Android tablets; and mobile phones. Learn more at www.playhearthstone.com.

About Blizzard Entertainment, Inc.

Best known for blockbuster hits including *World of Warcraft®, Hearthstone®, Overwatch®,* the Warcraft®, StarCraft®, and Diablo® franchises, and the multifranchise *Heroes of the Storm®,* Blizzard Entertainment, Inc. (www.blizzard.com), a division of Activision Blizzard (NASDAQ: ATVI), is a premier developer and publisher of entertainment software renowned for creating some of the industry's most critically acclaimed games. Blizzard Entertainment's track record includes twenty-two #1 games * and multiple Game of the Year awards. The company's online-gaming service, Blizzard Battle.net®, is one of the largest in the world, with millions of active players.

†*Based on internal company records.*
**Sales and/or downloads; based on internal company records and reports from key distribution partners.*

Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-looking Statements:

Information in this press release that involves Blizzard Entertainment's expectations, plans, intentions or strategies regarding the future, including statements about dates, content, and rewards of the 100 Million Players Celebration event for *Hearthstone* are forward-looking statements that are not facts and involve a number of risks and uncertainties. Factors that could cause Blizzard Entertainment's actual future results to differ materially from those expressed in the forward-looking statements set forth in this release include unanticipated product delays and other factors identified in the risk factors sections of Activision Blizzard's most recent annual report on Form 10-K and any subsequent quarterly reports on Form 10-Q. The forward-looking statements in this release are based upon information available to Blizzard Entertainment and Activision Blizzard as of the date of this release, and neither Blizzard Entertainment nor Activision Blizzard assumes any obligation to update any such forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements believed to be true when made may ultimately prove to be incorrect. These statements are not guarantees of the future performance of Blizzard Entertainment or Activision Blizzard and are subject to risks, uncertainties and other factors, some of which are beyond its control and may cause actual results to differ materially from current expectations.

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