



“Halo 3” Multiplayer Beta hits Xbox LIVE worldwide on May 16

Microsoft Game Studios and Bungie Studios offer gamers exclusive first experience of one of 2007’s most anticipated entertainment releases

SYDNEY 11 April 2007 – Microsoft Game Studios and Bungie Studios today confirmed the multiplayer beta of “Halo® 3” will debut to audiences worldwide via Xbox LIVE® on May 16 at 10pm EST and run through to June 7 at 4:59pm EST. Made possible through the Xbox LIVE gaming and entertainment network, the multiplayer beta for “Halo 3” will allow Xbox 360™ gamers to get their hands on the new levels, weapons, vehicles and game types, as well as a chance to provide valuable data that Bungie will use in continued development.

Starting May 16, gamers who secured their admission to the multiplayer beta either through registration on Xbox.com.au or by purchasing a specially marked copy of “Crackdown™” for Xbox 360 will be able to don their Spartan armor, download the beta on Xbox LIVE, and jump online using their Xbox LIVE Gold account* to battle other gamers from around the world.

Coming exclusively to the Xbox 360™ console this spring, “Halo 3” is the highly anticipated third chapter in the groundbreaking “Halo” trilogy from legendary developers Bungie. “Halo 3” lets gamers experience Master Chief’s greatest battle as he launches an epic mission to stop the Covenant, destroy the impending Flood threat and ultimately save mankind.

The “Halo 3” multiplayer beta showcases three richly detailed, action-oriented maps: Snowbound, High Ground and Valhalla, which represent a mixture of large- and medium-scale combat environments and are brand-new to “Halo 3.” Each map will test gamers’ mettle as they are placed behind the controls of new vehicles such as the agile Mongoose all-terrain vehicle, and armed with deadly weapons such as the new and improved Assault Rifle, the ferocious Brute Spiker, the devastating Spartan Laser and the treacherous new Spike Grenades. This is just a taste of what gamers will experience later this year when “Halo 3” goes on sale.

Nick Segger, Group Marketing Manager, Xbox Australia and New Zealand, says, "The 'Halo 3' multiplayer beta is a rare opportunity for Xbox LIVE gamers to participate in the development of one of this year's most significant releases. We're proud to be able to offer fans the chance to sample some of the new content to appear in the next installment of their favourite series and we'll use their feedback to fine-tune the final game to perfection."

Gamers worldwide can still participate in the multiplayer beta of "Halo 3" through the purchase of the critically acclaimed Xbox 360 title "Crackdown," which was launched in February. From Realtime Worlds, "Crackdown" pushes the action-driving hybrid genre into the next generation with a vast, free-roaming and truly 3-D playground. Each copy of "Crackdown" has been specially marked with a "Halo 3" beta sticker prior to the beta period, and starting May 16 the game will act as a key for gamers to download and participate in the "Halo 3" multiplayer beta.

In addition, gamers who can't wait for the multiplayer beta this May can get an even earlier look at "Halo 3" with a new, behind-the-scenes video feature available at <http://www.bungie.net> and in high definition over Xbox LIVE Marketplace. Starting today, viewers can go behind the scenes at Bungie Studios to learn about the people, technology and process that are making "Halo 3" an unforgettable multiplayer experience, and to get a taste of what to expect from the upcoming "Halo 3" multiplayer beta. The latest multiplayer video documentary, titled "Is Quisnam Protero Damno!," will offer a glimpse at how "Halo 3" multiplayer maps are being designed, built and architected, and how these amazing spaces are converted into fun places in which to play. Gamers can also catch the first-ever glimpse of brand-new "Halo 3" multiplayer levels in their early stages of evolution and construction.

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About Bungie Studios

Bungie Studios was founded in 1991 with two goals: to develop games that combine brilliant technology, beautiful art, intelligent stories and deep gameplay, and then sell enough of those games to achieve its real goal of total world

domination. Over the past 10 years it has produced games such as the "Marathon Trilogy" and the first two "Myth" games, hailed as classics by critics and gamers around the world. Bungie's "Halo" franchise is an international award-winning action title that has grown into a global entertainment phenomenon, selling more than 14.7 million units worldwide, logging over 800 million hours of multiplayer action on Xbox LIVE and spawning action figures, books, a graphic novel, apparel and more. Bungie is currently at work on "Halo 3," which represents the third chapter in this "Halo" trilogy and is slated for release in 2007. More information on Bungie can be found at <http://www.bungie.net>.

About Microsoft Game Studios

Microsoft Game Studios is a leading worldwide publisher and developer of games for the Xbox® and Xbox 360 video game systems, the Windows® operating system and online platforms. Comprising a network of top developers, Microsoft Game Studios is committed to creating innovative and diverse games for Windows (<http://www.microsoft.com/games>), including such franchises as "Age of Empires®", "Flight Simulator" and "Zoo Tycoon®", for Xbox and Xbox 360 (<http://www.xbox.com>), including such games as "Gears of War" and franchises such as "Halo®", "Fable", "Project Gotham Racing®" and "Forza Motorsport®"; and MSN® Games (<http://www.games.msn.com>), the official games channel for the MSN network and home to such hits as "Bejeweled" and "Hexic®".

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

* The "Halo 3" multiplayer beta will require gamers to have access to an Xbox 360 console equipped with a hard drive as well as an Xbox LIVE Gold Membership.**

** Subscription charges apply for Xbox Live Gold membership.

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