

# NEWS CLIPPING

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## Welcome to Hello Kitty's online world

### Fans look forward to roleplaying game featuring Sanrio character's universe

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**H**ELLO Kitty fans and gamers here will be among the first in the world to enter the virtual universe of Hello Kitty, when Sanrio's official massively multiplayer online roleplaying game (MMORPG) is launched here next month.

Singapore-based games publisher Oriented Games will release the commercial version of Hello Kitty Online (HKO) here and in Malaysia, ahead of countries such as Indonesia and Brazil.

Gamers need not pay to play HKO when it is commercially released, but may purchase virtual items like clothes with cash.

Oriented Games executive director Lau Kin Wai told *my paper* that he expects 300,000 sign-ups from fans of both countries for the commercial version.

Avid fan and bunker trader Serena Loh, 30, said: "I'm very excited to see the game played here! It'll be a dream come true for fans."

Even those who are not fans are willing to give it a shot. IT analyst Tay Wei Long, 26, said: "I'm open to all genres of RPG, even the 'cute-cute' ones."

Mr Lau said that the compa-



**DREAM COME TRUE:** Ms Serena Loh is thrilled about interacting with other fans from around the world through the game. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

ny had received "very positive feedback" about the game.

"They like the game because it is cute and colourful. It is also non-violent, which makes it different from most of the other online games available here."

Developed by Sanrio Digital, HKO features social-networking services such as in-game blogs and an e-mail system, which are a hit with fans such as Ms Loh.

She said: "The best thing about the game is that you get to interact with Sanrio fans from all over the world."

In the game, users create unique avatars and go on various quests set by Sanrio

characters, such as Hello Kitty and My Melody. In addition, users can build houses and farms with other players.

This feature seems to be a favourite with fans, such as auditor Teo Jia Hui, 24.

She said: "I prefer building things to doing violent stuff like killing monsters."

In 2000, the fast-food chain sparked a Hello Kitty craze when it launched a promotion offering Hello Kitty soft toys with its meals.

Fans queued for hours and got into scuffles in a bid to get their hands on the toys.

Here, popular MMORPG World Of Warcraft counts over

30,000 players, while another MMORPG, Maple Story, has one million registered players here.

HKO has different areas named after major cities in the world, including Paris and London.

Mr Lau said: "We may want to create a Singapore in the game. Soon, users may be able to see Singaporean icons such as the Merlion in HKO."

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#### HELPDESK 我的字典

**Commercial:** 商业的  
shāng yè de

**Positive:** 正面的  
zhèng miàn de

**Scuffles:** 混战 hùn zhàn

**Registered:** 登记过的  
dēng jì guò de

