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Why We Haven't Reverted

Some Answers To The Big Question

Daniel Myers

The most important part of my duties over the past two weeks has been to keep up with what everyone in the community is posting to the message boards. (Yes, that includes every page in the downtime thread.) Sometimes it takes sheer force of will to avoid responding to some of the posts--whether because I think something's been misconstrued or because someone's decided that when I'm not working at Wizards, I'm selling snake oil and bridges.

However, as I said in my announcement yesterday, I definitely understand the frustration and anger that leads to those posts. None of us on the *Magic Online* Team is happy with how things have been since the launch of 2.0 and we'd like to have someone to lash out at, too. Unfortunately, we have no one to blame but ourselves.

I was originally going to address several recurring questions in this article, but then I got some information on the most burning one you've had. So, instead of me talking about several topics, I'm going to give you some insight on why we haven't reverted to the old version of *Magic Online*.

The bottom line, as some of you've guessed, is the *Eighth Edition* set.

Part of the changes to 2.0 involved making *Eighth Edition* cards work in *Magic Online*. Because we were pushing hard to get it out the door, there was only time to code the Core Set changes into the new version of the game. While there were many parts of adding the *Eighth Edition* set that required changes, there are two that I've heard talked about the most.

Land Types

With the advent of the *Eighth Edition* set, lands now all have subtypes and basic lands have a new type (Basic Land). Any card that interacts with land cards now has to deal with two possible land types and the new land subtypes. That's a subtle and complex rules change that has to exist within the game servers.

So, while normally a card set only requires coding the specific cards in the set, the *Eighth Edition* set actually required a change to the way *Magic Online* works. Those changes had to fit in with all older cards in the game, also. Evidently, subtle tweaks to the *Magic* rules become major headaches within *Magic Online*.

Core Game

On the product side, both the store and the game had to be able to handle people getting accounts from the Core Game. The major difference is that Core Game codes give new players an account and digital copies of the 81 cards that come in the box. That's different from both the *Magic Online* box and from accounts purchased directly at the *Magic Online* store.

I'm not saying this is everything that went into adding the new set; they're just a couple items I've heard talked about repeatedly by the team.

Once we released *Eighth Edition* cards online, reverting to version 1.0 became a monumental task. While we can still do it in case of catastrophic failure (in other words, we can't get the servers up **at all** under 2.0), chances are we'd end up with another week or two like last week. The system would be even buggier with *Eighth Edition* changes grafted onto the old code and we'd lose all the patches we've already added to the new version.

So, should we have reverted before releasing *Eighth Edition* online? Looking back, the answer is yes. At the time, however, we didn't believe it would take as long as it has to get *Magic Online* back to any level of stability. Once we released the new core set, the point became moot.

In short: We made some bad decisions. We're stuck with the results now and we're trying to fix everything as quickly as possible. We're just sorry that we ended up bringing you along on the roller-coaster ride.

Coming Up

Next week we begin delving into what happened leading up to and after the launch. You'll also be hearing from at least one person much higher on the totem pole than little old me.

Hopefully I'll be able to start moving this from the message boards to the website on a more constant basis. As always, thanks for sticking with us, and keep posting.

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