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Looking Back At *Magic Online*



Daniel Myers · *Inside Magic Online*
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Updates

First, to recap what was announced last Thursday, we've decided what to do about the test server prizes. We have the data on who earned packs and how many each player earned, just not the sets each pack should come from. So, instead of just giving out *Mirrodin* and *Darksteel* boosters, we're giving out coupons for the **Magic Online** Store.

Here's how it works. We take the number of packs you earned, multiply it by the cost of a booster (\$3.69 US), and add 10% of that. For example, the value of 3 boosters is \$11.07. If you earned 3 boosters on the test server, you'll get a coupon for \$12.18 US (11.07 + (11.07 x .1)). That way you can purchase whatever you want from the online store. Our plans are to begin issuing prizes on May 10th barring any issues. Justin will keep you abreast of any issues we encounter.

Next, we've got the Invitational rooms ready and up on the live game. The **Magic** Invitational will take place next week at E3 in Los Angeles. Just like the 2002 Invitational, you'll be able to see live commentary and replays after games finish, although you won't be able to watch the games as they happen.

Changing of the Guard

In my three years working on *Magic Online*, I've seen a lot happen with the game. People have come and gone (and sometimes come back again), seven sets have been released online, and we've even qualified a player for the **Magic** World Championships. I started as an editor before the game was in beta. Heck, my first draft ever was played online. (I lost 0-2. Hey, I bet there aren't many of you who can say *your* first draft was against Randy Buehler.) I even had the opportunity to co-author the original manual.

Almost two years ago, I took on the job of running the *Magic Online* website. Doing writing along with editing was a nice change for me. I got to bring Nate Heiss on with his column "[Building on a Budget](#)" and even got to do [my own version](#) of "Twas The Night Before Christmas". Running the site was fun and I learned a lot from the experience.

Last summer I demoed *Magic Online* at two of the biggest gaming conventions in the world—Origins and GenCon. (I never did get to finish my "World Tour" story.) I had to hop a flight back to Seattle before GenCon closed to be at Wizards in time for the Version 2.0 launch. That day began at about 6:00 AM Sunday and ended about 4:00 PM on Tuesday, as I reported on our attempts to stabilize the game.

With the launch of *Magic Online* 2.0, I moved my desk over to the developers' side of the world to report on our progress. For weeks I got to see the game from the programmer's perspective. It was during this time that I first took on the role of being the "face" of *Magic Online*. While figuring out how to do the job, I learned a lot about the community and about myself. Even when I was getting beat up for bad news or, even worse, a poorly worded message on my part, it felt good to provide an important service to the community.

As we all know, it hasn't been the easiest ride. But I've stuck it out until now because I have a passion for **Magic Online**. No matter what issues the game has, that it still enables players to find a game whenever they have time is an amazing accomplishment. It has been a monolithic task from its inception and I'm proud to have been part of the **Magic Online** Team.

But now it's time for me to leave the pitch and hang up my boots.

As much as I love Wizards, I have an opportunity to work on a cool project with another company that I can't pass up. My co-workers haven't made my decision any easier—I was still waffling one week into my official notice—but I think this is the right time for me to go. **Magic Online** may still have issues, but it's finally turned a corner. There are a lot of talented new people on the team with tons of enthusiasm for the game. Things are going in the right direction.

Where We Go From Here

Justin Ziran, the new Brand Manager, will be here next week to give you the skinny on all the changes coming. Part of that is replacing this column with something much more focused on *playing Magic Online*. Regular updates and news will move over to the Announcements section of the Message Boards. Also, Justin is looking into options to let you talk *directly* to the team on a regular basis. I'm not going to steal his thunder by going into details here, but I think you're going to be pretty happy with the new lineup. Tune in next week for more.

Me? I get to become a **Magic Online** player again—something I haven't had much time for lately. I'll miss being inside **Magic Online**, but it'll be nice to be able to just play the game again. Make sure and catch me online and find out that you *don't* have to be a former Pro Tour player to work on the game. (If they ever add multiplayer to the tour, however, I'm in!)

I'll leave you with the same message I've repeated for the last eight months: Keep voicing your opinions on the Message Boards. I may not be at Wizards anymore, but there are plenty of others on the **Magic Online** Team who pay attention to what's being talked about there.

Many people said **Magic Online** couldn't work in the first place—we proved them wrong. Some folks have doubts about the online game's lifespan—some folks have been thinking the same way about **Magic** for ten years now.

Just sayin'.

See you online.

Dan



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