

'League of Legends' maker Riot Games has new legends in the works

October 17 2019, by Mike Snider, Usa Today

Riot Games, publishers of "League of Legends," is looking to expand its lore.

For starters, there are some [new features](#) coming to the super-popular online video game, which turns 10 this month.

Beyond that, Riot Games announced Tuesday it is working on several other projects including new shooter and strategy games, as well as a trio of new video games set in the "League of Legends" universe. The game publisher announced these developments as part of its 10th anniversary livestream Tuesday night.

"We think that we have got some really cool things to be excited about so we are excited to see people's reaction," said Riot Games co-founder Marc Merrill in an interview with U.S. TODAY.

He and fellow co-founder Brandon Beck—who created the company in 2006 and co-created "League of Legends," which launched in 2009—stepped away from day-to-day leadership of the company in December 2017 to work on projects beyond the core game.

Their goal over that nearly two years, he said, was to help "unlock more value in this company around relating to our culture, and the our future and products and where things are going."

'League of Legends' lore

Players will see a change to the free-to-play game in coming days. When players kill a dragon on the Summoner's Rift map, the environment "is going to be even more impacted than previously by one of these elemental rifts for the duration of the match," Merrill said. The damage will depend on the type of elemental power attached to the dragon (such as ocean, cloud, etc.)

This new gameplay feature, Rise of the Elements, hits the game's [public beta](#) on Oct. 22 and the live servers on Nov. 20.

Also, the game will get a new champion character named Senna, who had been in the game's storyline previously. Arriving on the beta Oct. 29 and the live servers Nov. 10, Senna is a character who's origin was touched on five years ago.

"One of our characters, Lucian, his wife was killed and trapped in this lantern of this demonic undead creature from the Shadow Isles, Thresh," Merrill said. "She is coming back to 'League' and there's this whole story around her escaping."

These and other gameplay changes "are meant to really open up the map to fresh new strategies," he said.

Going mobile

"Teamfight Tactics," an eight-versus-eight strategy game mode already available in the "League of Legends" PC game will become playable on [mobile devices](#) in the first quarter of 2020. (Players can pre-register now in the Google Play store.)

Also coming next year is "League of Legends: Wild Rift," a new version of the original game, which is similar to the PC game but built from scratch for mobile and consoles.

"Legends of Runeterra," a free-to-play card game set in the "League of Legends" universe, is coming to PC and mobile next year, too. Current characters will be joined by new ones in the strategy card game.

The game is being created "with great art and great care and attention to the universe and our lore," Merrill said. "The champions that our players know and love are going to come to life in a different medium in a way that is going to feel incredibly familiar to them."

And like "League of Legends," players won't have to break the bank to play, he says. "The cost of acquiring the decks you want to play is going to be much lower (than other games) and in many cases you don't have to spend any money at all. You can unlock the cards you want by playing," Merrill said.

Also in development: A fighting game, codenamed "Project L," that features the "LoL" characters; "Project F," a game in very early development that will let players explore Runeterra; and a League of Legends Esports Manager game that lets you pick your own "dream team" from pro players.

Moving beyond games

The [game publisher](#) has an animated series, "Arcane," coming in 2020. The story follows two "League of Legends" champions and is set in two connected cities, Piltover and Zaun.

And due next month is "Realms of Runeterra," a hard-cover companion book to the video game that collects its lore, with maps, illustrations.

Shooting beyond 'Legends'

Riot Games also previewed a new PC shooter game in the works, codenamed "Project A," with more details to come next year. This "tactical shooter" has a futuristic Earth setting—not Runeterra, where "League of Legends" is based.

"It is a game that is all about very tight gunplay," Merrill said. "Accuracy matters. Split-second reactions, milliseconds really matter in this type of game. Super-coordinated team strategies really matter. And the skill curve, kind of like 'League of Legends' is infinite and exponential."

Riot Games is not only looking forward to letting players and fans experience these new projects, but also excited to fulfill its development destiny.

"We are the biggest game company ever to only have one [game](#)," Merrill said. "We like to joke it's one in a row. But we are excited where the 's' in Riot Games will no longer simply be aspirational."

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Citation: 'League of Legends' maker Riot Games has new legends in the works (2019, October 17) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2019-10-league-legends-maker-riot-games.html>

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