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DIABLO II NEARS COMPLETION AS BLIZZARD PREPARES FOR FINAL PHASE OF BETA TESTING

IRVINE, Calif. – May 11, 2000 – Blizzard today announced that it is preparing to enter the final phase of *Diablo II* beta testing with a *Battle.net*[®] stress test. The company has selected 100,000 players to participate in the company's largest public beta test to date to help stress test *Battle.net* servers prior to the launch of *Diablo II*.

Selected testers will be receiving an access code and a ZDNet GameSpot download location via an additional email when testing begins. Users *must* have an access code to log onto *Battle.net* and play the beta. These emails will be sent over a period of days so as to ramp up the number of users participating in the test over *Battle.net*. The 100MB beta is being exclusively offered for download through ZDNet GameSpot in alliance with Mirror Image, a leading provider of online content distribution and streaming solutions.

The beta, which will only be playable over *Battle.net*, will include the Barbarian character class and portions of the game's first act. The purpose of the beta test is to ensure the stability of *Battle.net* servers worldwide. In preparation for this final phase of beta testing, Blizzard will end the current on-going closed beta test a few days prior to the start of the *Battle.net* stress test. Participants in the closed beta will automatically be included in the group that is selected to participate in the stress test.

Key features in the full version of the game will include:

- Five all-new character classes -- the Amazon, Paladin, Barbarian, Sorceress and Necromancer -- each with unique skills and abilities. In all, *Diablo II* offers 150 special abilities as each character can develop 30 unique, class specific skills and spells throughout the game.
- Four different, fully populated towns complete with wilderness areas.
- Multiple dungeons, monasteries, tombs, caverns and crypts for players to explore in every act.

(more)

- Perspective Scaling and Parallax, which is a new innovation within Diablo II's suite of 3D-accelerator features that adds near-perfect perspective, including scaling and parallax effects, to the game play experience.
- Expanded world filled with all-new quests, weapons, spells, armor, monsters, unique items, mercenaries for hire and non-playing characters.
- Advanced combat system that incorporates class-specific fighting techniques and spells.

In *Diablo II*, players return to a dark world plagued by evil forces. After possessing the body of the hero who defeated him, Diablo resumes his nefarious scheme to shackle humanity into unholy slavery by joining forces with the other Prime Evils, Mephisto and Baal. Players face a new series of quests to rid the world of Diablo and his vile brethren forever.

When *Diablo* released in 1997, it was an instant hit among gamers and debuted as the number-one selling game its first month in stores. The game has sold about 2 million copies worldwide and was the number-one selling computer role-playing game in 1997.

Diablo II is being developed by the Blizzard North design team and is expected to release during the first half of this year in Windows®95/98/2000/NT format. A Macintosh version of the game will be available during the third quarter 2000. The game will be available at most computer and software retail chains worldwide. The game will also be offered directly from Blizzard at (800) 953-SNOW and www.blizzard.com.

Best known for blockbuster hits including the *Warcraft*® series, *StarCraft*™ and *Diablo*™, Blizzard Entertainment® (www.blizzard.com) is a premier publisher of entertainment software renowned for creating many of the industry's most critically acclaimed games. Blizzard's track record includes three consecutive number-one selling games and multiple Game of the Year awards. The company's free Internet gaming service Battle.net®™ reigns as the largest in the world with millions of unique users.

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