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## **Microsoft And Marvel Shake Hands Over Future Online Games**

*Spiderman, the X-men and Hulk, future Microsoft "employees"*

For the comic book fans, almost nothing is more interesting than becoming one of the characters they admire so much, even if this happens only in the virtual world of video games. And as Microsoft knows this only very well, the company has signed an agreement with Marvel Enterprises Inc., the trademark owner for characters such as Spiderman, the X-men and the Hulk, according to which the company from Redmond has the exclusive rights to publish multiplayer online games featuring these superheroes. The deal covers massively multiplayer online (MMO) game titles, those games that allow a large number of players in various locations to compete, and it looks like this is the only deal of this type Marvel Enterprises will ever sign, according to Tim Rothwell, worldwide president of the Consumer Media Group at Marvel Enterprises, as reported by the Reuters agency. This agreement refers only to games developed for the future Xbox 360 gaming console, which is due to be launched this fall, and the first title is expected around 2008. New York-based Marvel Enterprises owns a library of more than 5,000 characters, also including the Fantastic Four and the Avengers. It reaps revenue from licensing its characters for clothes, movies, games, snack foods and toys. It also publishes comic books and sells toys of its own.