



- Peter Jackson** Hi this is Peter here, great to talk to all of you. It is a rainy Sun morning down here in NZ, hopefully there is sun shining where you are. Over in London we have Guillermo on the other end of his computer, and he'll be coming on to say hi. A quick note, we will deal with the 20 most popular questions that have arrived over the last 2 weeks during the course of the hour, but would love to answer as many as we can from as many of you on this chat and who want to fire additional questions. So let us get underway. Hi Guillermo, are you ready?
- Guillermo del Toro** Hi! Guillermo here- Its a b it cloudy in London but people are already drinking out on the streets- God Bless the pubs-
- WetaHost** Here's the first question: 20 - Will you be doing less location shooting this time because your set builders, digital effects teams etc have become so proficient?
- Peter Jackson** We have them in a super exciting count down form and will start with Q20. We have chosen 1 questino but in the case of these 20 they represent many 100s of similar questins.
- WetaHost** 20 - Will you be doing less location shooting this time because your set builders, digital effects teams etc have become so proficient?
- Peter Jackson** Middle-earth is location, with very few structures really. It's a natural countryside and that's where a lot of shooting will take place.
- Guillermo del Toro** Location will be favored and real set construction.
- Guillermo del Toro** I love REAL set construction and think that sets are very important part of the storytelling and scope of a film...
- bmeade** Are we starting?
- Peter Jackson** Hi bmead - we are underway, great for you to join us!
- Guillermo del Toro** We are,. Welcome-
- AnthonyPearson** What are your plans with the casting of Bilbo Baggins? Is Ian Holm still an option?
- Guillermo del Toro** The fact that Ian Holm is SO memorable means that PJ, Fran and PB did their job right. We will utilize him in some fashion for sure but the difficulty of th erole will be better assesed after we do the script (s).
- DavidPlaice** Will there be any locations outside New Zealand, e.g. the Welsh Marches for The Shire?
- Peter Jackson** Hi David - It is unlikely we will need any locations outside of NZ which has always been the perfect Middle Earth. there is nothing yet that tolkien has described that we haven't managed to find in this amazing little country and I expect the Hobbit to be no different.
- Guillermo del Toro** NOne being considered at the moment.

aust Will Howard Shore be returning to do the score?

Guillermo del Toro Yes- absolutely, Shore is teh VOICE of these films and we will absolutely be invited back. Peter and Fran have talked to him a couple of times already and Ive exchanged emails about the subject. He will return.

nolcai Hello. Are you planning to use some location in italy?

Peter Jackson Hi nolcai it is unlikely we will shoot any of the Hobbit of Italy, but I would love come to Italy for a vacation, you should tell me the best places to visit.

Guillermo del Toro Not really- But I love Italy...

Peter Jackson Lets go to Q19 now

WetaHost 19 - May i congratulate on your new appointment as director of The Hobbit, Guillermo. My question is to Guillermo, what can we expect from your vision and approach with this picture and I'm guessing there will be alot of dark elements to this film, but how far will you go in terms of horror and violence?

Guillermo del Toro I hope that Mirkwood can be pretty scary but not graphic, I hope Riddles in the dark has an element of fear and suspense and to be deeply atmospheric but still allow the ingenious, engaging contest to take place. And Smaug should be all shock and awe when he unleashes his anger so, it will be pretty intense but not gorey.

icaro Will the Ring trilogy get a blu-ray release around the time of Hobbit? or sooner?

Peter Jackson Hi Icaroz - We are working on a blu ray version of the LOTR trilogy with Warner Bros at the moment, not sure when it is due for release. It certainly won't be this year.

KenshinIV What are the chances Ron Perlman will be voicing Smog?

Guillermo del Toro At this time the voice of Smaug is down to a very few choices in my head and I have a completely specific one, Ron has a good chance but I have other plans for RP... we will see...

Galdor_Felagund Will you use the Hobbit holes used in LotR?

Peter Jackson Hi Galdor-Falagund - yes we hope with the permission of the land owner that we will rebuild Hobbiton bigger and even better than what it was for LOTR in exactly the same location

Peter Jackson Here is Q18

WetaHost 18 - Peter & Guillermo: What do you envision Gandalf's role will be in this film? He seems to go off on his own and disappear in several sections of the book. Do you want to stay faithful to that or give him a more active role? How do you think you'll ingratiate his character into an effective, cinematic storyline?

Guillermo del Toro I believe that Gandalf is meant to be used in that way- coming and going in and out of the narrative. If anything, this creates the perfect setting for those "gaps" to be bridged by the second film...

Peter Jackson Those gaps are great! There's a lot of stuff going on, which is distracting him. I'm just pleased to be getting Gandalf the Grey back for two more movies. Ian and I loved him best. We were a little sad

when the Gandy the White took over.

mwilcox Will you be filming the Hobbit in 3D?

Guillermo del Toro At this stage it is too early to tell, but no plans are being made for that at the moment...

RSG1050 Mr. del Toro, have you started keeping a notebook of sketches on this film yet?

Guillermo del Toro I have started already and shared some of the design a=ideas with Alan Lee and John Howe during a very excited lunch in London.

RobbieM Will Ian McKellen return as Gandalf?

Guillermo del Toro Absolutely!!

Peter Jackson Hi Robbie - absolutely

Peter Jackson Here comes Q17

WetaHost 17 - Dear Peter Jackson, I enjoyed your cameos in the LOTR movies, Will you have a cameo in this Hobbit, and what character would you like to play?

Peter Jackson I actually haven't thought about it. My convention is to do cameos in films I direct. I don't know if that extends to films I produce. I guess we'll find out. I love Hobbits! I am a Hobbit, in very many respects, as were my parents. Tolkien wrote about a type of people he knew, in pre-war England, and somewhere along the line, he must have bumped into my relatives!

Guillermo del Toro Unlike Peter, I'm a Dwarf (a coarse creature I am)- but I studiously avoid cameos...

Jessalyn When do you expect filming to begin?

Peter Jackson Dear Jesslyn - at this point in time the plan is to write for the rest of this year and start early conceptual designs. 2009 will be dedicated to pre-production on both movies and 2010 will be the year we shoot both films back to back. Post production follows one film at a time with The Hobbit being released Dec 2011, and F2 release Dec 2012. That is the schedule in about as much detail as we have ourselves at the moment.

Peter Jackson And Q16 ...

WetaHost 16- Peter: What was it about Guillermo that made you feel he was the right guy to continue on the saga of Middle-earth? Are the two of you on the same page for the vision, direction, and style that these movies will have? If the two of you disagree on a point, who wins out?

Peter Jackson I'll talk more about this in a later question, but watching his films, he has respect for fantasy. He understands it, he's not frightened by it. Guillermo also understands character, and how the power of any movie is almost always linked to how closely we empathize with characters within the story. His work shows great care and love for the main characters he creates. He also has supreme confidence with design, and visual effects. So many film makers are scared of visual effects - which is no crime, but tough if you're doing one of these movies!

If we disagree, the director has to win, because you should never force a director to shoot something they don't believe in. But we're both reasonably practical and ego-free, and I believe that if we disagree, we both have the ability to express our differing theories - state our case, like lawyers - and between us, work out what's best for the movie.

- Eriol** So what age rating are you aiming at?
- Peter Jackson** Hi Eriol - the rating will be the same as the Trilogy, PG13 on both movies
- Guillermo del Toro** An intense PG-13...
- Reguba** Will the Hobbit get an extended edition like LOTR?
- Peter Jackson** Dear Reguba - interesting Q. The truth (and this is the truth) is that you don't plan for extended editions up front an extended edition is the result of left over scenes that have been deleted out of theatrical cut. In an ideal world the script is written lean and tight and therefore there are no scenes left on the cutting room floor and therefore no extended edition. However when writing 3 epic LOTR films there was no way we could keep the writing process as lean, so the extended edition was a result of seeing our thought process during the writing and shooting play itself out on screen with scenes we no longer needed when we finally cut the films together. Whether there will be an extended edition of the Hobbit will depend entirely on the final theatrical cut and what we have left over.
- Guillermo del Toro** That one is REALLY too early to answer... but being a DVD freak (now a B-Ray freak) I think that if you have enough alternative material you can make it accesible on DVD (or B-R) format... Is not a priori that one decides this.
- Peter Jackson** Now for Q15
- WetaHost** 15 - Will you be using the same production team ie. Special effects, art directors, cinematographers, composer etc..
- Guillermo del Toro** Many of them will be back. I will supplement the FX departments, the design departments (with very interesting names), but the crew will utilize as many of the original elements as possible.
- elffan9** Will we be seeing Legolas in Mirkwood?
- Guillermo del Toro** We all think that this is a very interesting idea but the scripts are in process so- sorry,.. too early to tell.
- Peter Jackson** And now Q14
- WetaHost** 14 - In the Hobbit book, we have talking trolls and the Eagles and Smaug talks as well, however in the LOTR Trilogy, trolls did no more than grunt, Fellbeasts screamed, and the Eagles, who were meant to talk, just stayed silent. How much will the portayle of such animals change in the Hobbit?
- Guillermo del Toro** I think it should be done exactly as in the book- the "talking beast" motif has to exist already to allow for that great character that is Smaug. It is far more jarring to have a linear movie and then – out of the blue – a talking Dragon.
- Yetzi** did you start casting for the 13 dwarves?

Guillermo del Toro Nope- no catsing has started yet.

Guillermo del Toro Casting- I mean... BUt some people have thrown their helmet in the ring.

Peter Jackson Hi Yetzi - no casting has commenced and won't until the scripts are written. We have had chats with one or two ofthe LOTR actors however but the casting will be driven largely by the writing and it is impossible to cast 13 dwarves without knowing their personality and characters. We anticipate we won't be in serious casting mode for these movies until well into next year.

Peter Jackson Now for Q13

WetaHost 13 - Hi. Do you intend to play this one by the Book (The Hobbit that is) and make it a very light childrens tale on film, or do you plan to stick with the much darker treatment- in keeping with the LotR films - particularly the latter ones. My personal preference would be for the latter - cannot see how eg. the Rivendell Elves could regress from their nobility in LotR to those "...Tra-la-la-la...." singing versions which wer in teh Hobbit Book. Thank you. "Tra-la-la-la" singing

Guillermo del Toro We'll see about the "Tra-la-la-" later- but the book, I believe, in echoing the "loss of innocence" England experienced after WWI, is a passage form innocence to a darker, more somber state- The visual / thematic progression should reflect that in the camera style, color palette, textural choices, etc.

Peter Jackson As I said earlier, I personally feel that The Hobbit can, and should have a different tone. The "tone" of these stories shouldn't be defined by the pressure our characters were under in LOTR. The world is a different place at the time of the Hobbit. The shadow is not so dark. However, what should stay the same is the reality of Middle-earth, and the integrity we bring to it as film makers.

Shane Will the two movies be shot at the same time?

Guillermo del Toro The idea is to shoot them "back to bacK" with a small break to breathe and to reconstruct certain sets and have time to reasses... But a schedule of a year is expecvted.

Peter Jackson Hi Shane - Yes the movies will be shot back to back and the shooting of the movie will be driven by which actors are working with us at a given time and what locations we are in. For instance, if we are shooting hObbiton scenes for Hobbit movies we would also shoot Hobbiton scenes for F2. So during our year of filming we will be shooting both movies at the same time out of sequence.

reel1 Hi, Guys. Was it intentional to release the first Hobbit film on the 10 year anniversary of FOTR?

Peter Jackson Dear Razor - No this is the first time I have actually thought about it ... that is nice I will claim credit for the idea from this day forward

Peter Jackson Q12

WetaHost 12 - Peter: During production of the trilogy, there were days where there were several filming crews working simultaneously, with different people directing. Would you ever want to head up a crew and direct the shooting of a scene for a day?

Peter Jackson Most directors prefer to direct everything themselves. I thought I could on LOTR, but very quickly found out that the sheer scale prevented it. Instead of a 15 month shoot, we would have shot for 3 years! Guillermo always shoots his own material, so we'll do our best to construct a schedule that allows him to do that. It will depend a lot on how the scripts break down.

I'd happily shot some second unit stuff, anytime Guillermo asked me to. But let's see what happens.

Mr.Movie Are you already go to New Zealand, Mr.Del Toro ?

Guillermo del Toro Yes- Ive been actually been there already -secretly- shh- and will be there shortly after HELLBOY II opens and will be getting a LOT of frequent flyer miles in the next few months-

Peter Jackson Hi Greg - F2 is referring to Film 2

Peter Jackson Here comes Q11

WetaHost 11 - Guillermo del Toro is an accomplished director. I just wondered whether ok not, he will bring more prosthetics, animatronics and physical effects to the film, as he does with such films as Hellboy and Pan's Labyrinth (which are great films by the way)? Or will Weta Digital still have their work cut out for them with VFX?

Guillermo del Toro I plan to mix CGI and PHYSICAL in such a way that your eye wonders which is which- keep you mind busy but NEVER allowing for the weaknesses of either tool to take over. Yes, I have, by trial and error, learned that both tools need to be mixed and how much they must be mixed to succeed in creating environments and living creatures. WETA is the lead house, absolutely but we will expand the creature team and beef up the prosthetics team. Imagine a physical creature with a radio controlled muscle / facial system but with partial CGI replacement on the head or mouth, etc and you'll start to get the idea...

Guillermo del Toro And now for the question...

Vampireta So how was your first meeting with each other?

Peter Jackson Hi Vampiarta - The first time I remember meeting Guillermo was at Bob Shay's hosue during a LOTR party. Obviously at that time we had no concept of what the future held!!

Guillermo del Toro We finished a tray of shrimps together and agreed that NEW LINE should keep hiring round, bearded directors with funny accents...

Peter Jackson Q10

WetaHost 10- Hi there, thanks for giving this opportunity. my question: will Alan Lee and John Howe be on board again? I really admire their work. good luck for this project and have a lot of fun.

Guillermo del Toro As aI said, I had a marvelous lunch with John and Alan in London a few days ago and we all got very excited as we discussed my ideas on Smaug, Mirkwood, etc They are most definetly back!

Peter Jackson Impossible to imagine it without them!

Trotter_the_Ranger What will be the title for the second movie?

Guillermo del Toro Too early- but not "H2 Electric Boogaloo" that has been discarded.

Peter Jackson Hi Trots - the second movie doesn't have a title yet and probably won't until we write the script. As you will see we have the incredibly boring name Film Two which I assure you will not last for very long. Just bear with us.

tigerlily Hello Beren, as no bugger is going to answer our questions we may as well talk to each other! I guess we should have submitted questions earlier on as it seems they are being answered!!!

Peter Jackson Hi Tiger Lily - the buggers in Wgtn and London are wading through 6000 Q as best we can. Every Q answered represents a number of similar questions.

Guillermo del Toro As they say in Family feud: "Survey Says:"

Peter Jackson Q 9 ...

WetaHost 9 - Peter, perhaps you could clarify what your role will be in the production of these films: What exactly does an executive producer do? Will you follow that model or "forge your own path?" How will Guillermo's role and your role be different? Do you plan on writing the script again with Fran and Phillipa?

Peter Jackson Truth is "Executive Producers" do a range of things on movies from a lot to virtually nothing! I see myself being one of a production team. My interest is helping Guillermo make the very best films he can. I love writing and I'm looking forward to that. Guillermo will be writing, along with Fran, Phillipa and myself. As a director, I could never direct something I didn't have a hand in writing, and we're not expecting Guillermo to do that either. If the director is part of the writing, it means he was there when the discussions took place, story decisions were made ... he knows why things are the way they are, and what they need to achieve. Everything is in a script for a reason, and only by being part of a writing team (or writing it yourself), do you really understand the intention of every beat.

I see my role as being part of that writing team, which will create the blueprint, and then helping Guillermo construct the movie. I want Guillermo to make his movies, and I want to make sure we end up with a 5 movie series that's as good as it can possibly be.

Merlkir any ideas about the talking wargs? the wargs in hobbit are remarkably different from the "hyena" ones in the LOTR movies..

Guillermo del Toro Absolutely: they will be different from the Hyena ones established in the Trilogy- they will be faithful to the creatures in the book and will be redesigned accordingly.

lordlinton Loved the video diaries for King Kong, will you guys be doing something similar for the Hobbit?

Peter Jackson There is a lot of questions about production diaries for the internet - the truth is that Guillermo and I haven't even discussed this topic yet, now do we have a real plan in place for the internet and DVD side of the film. You have to realise that although this was announced and is all round the world we are at the very beginning of the process just

starting to think about the scripts. We are not trying to fob anyone off but we simply haven't got that far in the process yet and it is a plan we will put into place during the course of 2009.

Peter Jackson
WetaHost

Q 8 coming ...

8 - I always thought creating Gollum would pose a great artistic challenge to the artists whose job it would be to adapt the Lord of the Rings. With the Hobbit I believe Smaug will pose one of the great challenges. Now we have all seen dragons in movies. But for the Hobbit I personally am expecting nothing less than unbelievable . Were will you go for inspiration? What styles will the art dirction look at? Personally I can see a lot being done with the setting from Pan's Labyrinth. Thank you and good luck to you all.

Guillermo del Toro

This is a big one-- Allow me to quote form my random responses at Onering.net...

I am a big Dragon fan. I've said it before- And I was fortunate enough to be born a Dragon in the Chinese Horocope...

And although its always impossible to agree on the "greatest" of anything, I bring forth these two as the main film contenders for that title: Eyvind Earle / Disney's Maleficent dragon (a triumph of elegance of color and design) and Vermitrax Pejorative from Dragonslayer.

In my opinion, every other design has borrowed heavily from these two. I plan to create something new and groundbreaking.

Smaug should not be "the Dragon in the Hobbit movie" as if it was just "another" creature in a Bestiary. Smaug should be "The DRAGON" for all movies past and present. The shadow he cast and the greed he comes to embody- the "need to own" casts its long shadow and creates a thematic / dramatic continuity of sorts that articulates the story throughout-

In that respect, Smaug the CHARACTER is as important, if not more important, than the design. The character will emerge form the writing- and in that the Magnificent arrogance, intelligence, sophistication and greed of Smaug shine through-

In fact, Thorin's greed is a thematic extension of this and Bilbo's "Letting go" and his noble switching of sides when the dwarves prove to be in the wrong is its conceptual counterpart (that is a hard one to get through, Bilbo's heroism is a quiet, moral one) and the thematic thread reaches its climax in the Bilbo / Thorin death bed scene.

Anyway, back to Smaug: One of the main mistakes with talking dragons is to shape the mouth like a snub Simian one in order to achieve a dubious lip-synch. .. A point which eluded me particularly in Eragon, since their link is a psychic one.

To me, Smaug is the perfect example of a great creature defined by its look and design, yes, but also, very importantly, by his movement and -One little hint- its environment - Think about it... the way he is scaled, moves and is lit, limited or enhanced by his location, weather conditions, light conditions, time of the year, etc. That's all I can say without spoilers but, if you keep this curious little summary you'll realize several years from now that those things I had in my mind ever since doodling the character as a kid had solidified waaaay before starting the shoot of the film.

A big tool is also how and when he is fully revealed. I could give you specifics- beat-by-beat in fact (I'm geeking out to do it), but...

I will say no more in order to save you from ruthless spoilerage (we have a few years to go, you now...?) and increased anxiety.

Let me, however, say that this is actually one of the points I feel most enthusiastic about.

As to his voice- well, each reader has a Smaug voice in his / her head, just like you always do when "hearing" a great character in a book.

I have mine... and it will be revealed in time...

manuthevif

Guillermo, Will Peter be directing Hellboy 3 at some point?

Guillermo del Toro

Offers have been made but he remains elusive- we will be in talks soon.

swjedi18

Will be seeing The White Council in The Hobbit?

Peter Jackson

Hi swjedi18 - To early to say before the scripts are written but it is definitely an idea we are discussing.

Peter Jackson

Now for Q7

Guillermo del Toro

There's a very good chance if the "gaps" are filled in some form in either narrative. Too early...

WetaHost

7 - how important is it to you to create overall consistency between Peter's LOTR films and Guillermo's? in terms of the actors, look and feel, scenery, score, fx -- is your aim to have them stand on their own or sync up with the trilogy?

Guillermo del Toro

I believe that it's a little bit of both- the world must feel like the same world. The aspect ratio, music, essential established costume and production design trademarks but I would love to bring a lot of new flavours to the table. THE HOBBIT is, in essence, an overture to a massive Symphonic work so main themes are reprised but new modulations and new colors are introduced, thematically and texturally.

Peter Jackson

I love Guillermo's symphonic allusion. The "overture" can have a different flavour, a different texture, yet be a carefully crafted introduction to what's to follow. Film Two is perfect to dramatise the shift in Middle-earth that propells us into the dark days of LOTR. If

LOTR is World War One, then the Hobbit is like an Edwardian adventure tale, set in the days before world notices the looming storm clouds.

Junaid Is The Hobbit harder or easier than LOTR to adapt as a script?

Peter Jackson Hi Junaid - Both are equally difficult to be completely honest. The Hobbit has its own unique problems, different to those of LOTR.

Guillermo del Toro Not easy- I tell you that-

Peter Jackson Here comes Q6 ...

WetaHost 6 - Will Weta be releasing figures for this film like it did with Kong and Narnia?

Guillermo del Toro I would hope so!! I want them all!!

Galdor_Felagund How does Christopher Tolkien feel about the two new films?

Peter Jackson Hi Galdor - Christopher Tolkien did not wish to be involved in the LOTR movies and I would assume his feelings are the same with these two films. I totally respect him for that since he is looking after the legacy of his father's books and does not wish to be involved in someone else's interpretation of those stories.

Peter Jackson Here comes Q5

WetaHost 5 - Having recently reread the Hobbit with my children, it strikes me that the Hobbit contains a fairly linear story that doesn't necessarily follow the "three act" formula typical of movies. What do you see as the biggest challenge adapting the story to the big screen?

Guillermo del Toro There are so many- I am all for trying to preserve every idiosyncrasy the novel has- the very things that seem "unfilmable" and that – in my mind- will make it thrilling as a film. The novel is much, much more inventive and dislocated in its narrative (Bilbo being hit by a rock during the Battle) than you may think at first. I think that you can treat a classic like a museum piece –stuffed and mounted- or you can make it a living, breathing narrative that is unfolding right then and there.

Peter Jackson Structure is important in film, but as Guillermo says, there's often structure to be found in the most unlikely of places! It's quite possible to build a structured story and retain idiosyncrasy. It's going to be part of the joy of writing this.

Lukas-Eldarion Will you do another chat later on in the process?

Guillermo del Toro Gladly- gladly- Im in!!

Peter Jackson Hi Lukas - we would love to this has been a lot of fun. Let us just get the last of the official questions out because we are working down to the most popular ones in the final few

Peter Jackson Now for Q4

WetaHost 4 - Will Gollum play a role in the second film? If not, any plans to find a different role for Andy Serkis? Because, and I think most will agree with me, everything is better with more Serkis.

Guillermo del Toro Yes! As all of you know, Gollum has a rather fascinating arch to go through and his alliance to Shelob or his period of imprisonment in Thranduil's, etc but it is early still- so early in fact that to reveal more

would tie our hands and be counterproductive.

Guillermo del Toro There can never be "too much Andy"

Peter Jackson Now for Q 3

WetaHost 3 - Hello from New Orleans! What production challenges do you feel will be different for The Hobbit and the sequel compared to the experience of making The LOTR?

Peter Jackson Yikes! Every film is a challenge. I always say that making a movie is like film school - you're always learning. But unlike most schools, you never get done with it. You never learn everything. Over time, you get to anticipate problems a little better - but new ones hit you. You get to figure out solutions, but there are always extreme problems you could never guess.

One of the things I'm going to enjoy in this experience, is that I'll be better placed to help anticipate the problems and fix them. When you're directing, you're right at the coal face, always exhausted, often emotional - and I'll enjoy being a couple of steps back from that and simply helping where I can. Having done it 3 times as director, there's a lot I know that can help smooth the way for Guillermo.

Peter Jackson And we will now do 2

WetaHost 2 - Hello Mr. Jackson and Mr. Del Toro! Thank you very much for this time. My question is one that I think you will hear a lot of from many of us...from what material will you be pulling the second movie from? I know it'll be great with you two on board, but I am mighty curious. I am a huge fan of both of you and I look forward to more Tolkien films!

Guillermo del Toro The idea is to find a compelling way to join THE HOBBIT and FELLOWSHIP and enhance the 5 films both visually and in their cosmology. There's a lot of material available, licensed material to attempt this. The agreement is, however, that the second film must be relevant and emotionally strong enough to be brought to life but that we must try and contain the HOBBIT in a single film.

Peter Jackson I'm really looking forward to developing Film Two. It gives us a freedom that we haven't really had on our Tolkien journey. Some of you may well say that's a good thing of course! The Hobbit is interesting in how Tolkien created a feeling of dangerous events unfolding, which preoccupy Gandalf. There's an awful lot of incident that happens during that 60 year gap. At this stage, we're not imagining a film that literally covers 60 years, like a bio-pic or documentary. We would figure out what happens during that 60 years, and choose one short section of time to drop in and dramatise for the screen. I'm really interested in how it affects The Hobbit - do we show what happens to Gandalf during his trips away? We'll see. We may well have seeds for Film Two that we'll subtly sow during The Hobbit.

Peter Jackson Let's do a few more random questions before the final grand question.

WetaHost Hi Guys my question comes in two parts. Firstly will we notice a

- significant shift in visual style from LOTR to the Hobbit due to Guillermo's unique aesthetic? And if so will there be a complete re-imagining in the design of places seen in both books (ie Bag End and Rivendell) due to this differing style?
- Guillermo del Toro** GDT The basic designs, the preestablished designs will be only “updated” insofar as the epoch difference. Half a century more or less which in Middle Earth terms is not that much but- think about how much our world has changed from – say 2001 to now... The new settings and designs should blend in enough not to feel like a completely different world but yes, the movies are bound to have some distinctive stylistic imprint.
- WetaHost** Gentlemen, a two part question. 1st, shooting on film or HD? 2nd, scope or flat?
- Guillermo del Toro** I normally use 1:85 but I thoroughly plan to respect Peter’s choice of format used in the Trilogy (2:35:1) but it is my intention, for now, to shoot this on film, not HD.
- WetaHost** How will the new Gollum differ from the Gollum of the LOTR trilogy, if at all?
- Guillermo del Toro** Once again, only in the passage of time (he’s half a century “younger”) but it will be Andy and the established design will be our Template
- WetaHost** Will the Mirkwood Elves be different from the Rivendell Elves of the LOTR trilogy?
- Guillermo del Toro** That is definitely my intention but I cannot reveal anymore at the moment.
- WetaHost** Considering that you're stretching The Hobbit into 2 movies can we assume that Beorn will be featured and will not be given the Tom Bombadil treatment?
- Guillermo del Toro** I may be in the minority, but I absolutely LOVE Beorn and I intend to feature him in the films. BTW I also like TB quite a bit...
- WetaHost** I would love to know how you are going to deal with goblins in the movie. Will they look like the smaller orcs in the LOTR movies or are you going to make a completely new design? Also will everything look like it did in the LOTR movies or will you be redesigning it to fit your vision?
- Guillermo del Toro** This is an area in which I hope we can expand and enhance a LOT from the established designs in the Trilogy. I plan to come up with a very strong, new treatment for the Goblins. I also think the Wargs should be readdressed for their role in The HOBBIT.
- WetaHost** One thing I love about watching movies from different film makers is seeing their own visions put on screen. But since these HOBBIT movies are being made to tie in with the LOTR series, does this mean Mr. Del Toro's wonderfully imaginative vision will be limited to follow the rules set up by Mr. Jackson?
- Guillermo del Toro** It is my privilege to roam through roads previously traced but I definitely intend to take you to new and exciting places that the Trilogy did not explore. Nevertheless it is our intention that, once

done, the 5 films will play like a symphonic work that seamlessly transports you through this world.

WetaHost

Hi there, i'm Beren from Romania and i'd like to ask Mr. GDT if he plans to use (as PJ did) extensive matte paintings and "big-atures" to portray the vast panoramas and cities of Middle-earth or the more simpler CG effects? Thanks and cheers.

Guillermo del Toro

Peter and I both love "old school" techniques. I adore physical miniatures and try to use them as much as I can and have a bit of a fetish about that. Matte Paintings and "Big-atures" will definitely be in these.

WetaHost

Question for Guillermo, assuming they are all returning to write the screenplay, will you be writing alongside Peter, Philippa and Fran also?

Guillermo del Toro

I intend to. Their input in the literary creation of the screenplay is a must. I depend on them and expect to spend many delightful months wandering through Middle Earth.

Peter Jackson

Writing a screen play with a group of collaborators is like the Lennon McCartney collaboration sometimes one or two people do more than others on certain parts of the process and vice versa, it all comes out in the wash and we share equal credit in what everyone has done, with 4 of us we will be able to divide the work up in interesting ways and everyone will be able to help craft these films.

WetaHost

I'd comment on the awesomeness of director choice, but I'm sure that gets old. Concerning The Hobbit and the numerous Dwarves, I was wondering if all of them are going to find their way into the film. In Lord of the Rings, you had 9 in the Fellowship, but you had three movies to flesh them out. In the Hobbit, you have 13 Dwarves and one film to throw them all in. I'm definitely hoping to see all 13 make their way in, but what are you doing about this?

Guillermo del Toro

Tolkien wrote 13 dwarves and I intend to use 13 dwarves. I am, in fact, thrilled to keep them all and have them be distinguishable and affecting as characters. Much of the drama and emotion in the last third of the book and film will come from them.

WetaHost

Guillermo, I have always thought of you as a visionary director, and I love your work- could you please tell me what was the deciding factor that made you agree to direct The Hobbit?

Guillermo del Toro

Of all of Tolkien literary work I was only familiar with THE HOBBIT. I purchased it at age 11 and it struck a chord with me but, back then, I failed to connect with the Trilogy and the Silmarillion (Which now I find delectable) eluded me. I found them -unlike the HOBBIT- to be "too dense" for my young mind. I dreamt of Mirkwood and Smaug for ages (in fact, a Smaug-like dragon was scripted as part of the "fairy tale" Ophelia narrates to her brother in PANS LABYRINTH and was sculpted but was cut for budget reasons) but when I saw Peter undertake the Trilogy I thought that the HOBBIT would never come to be for me. The proposition of spending half a decade crafting these films received- as Peter will attest- a 5 second "YES" from me. To people in my industry I'm

usually a guy that tries to generate his own projects and I remain very elusive when people try and attach me to big projects. For decades I have passed on films of enormous scope but this is a fantastic privilege and I immediately said "Yes".

WetaHost

My question is, when Del Toro has acknowledged his disdain for Hobbits and "sword and sandals" fantasy, how can he do justice to the movie? Why can't Peter direct it himself after The Lovely Bones? He can direct these 2 movies and then direct the 3rd Tintin movie.

Guillermo del Toro

Okay- If by "Sword and Sandal" you mean "Sword and Sorcery" I stand by the general lines of my statement in 2006. But allow me to reproduce the following paragraph from ONERING.net and expand it-

Since the age of 4 I became an avid reader and collector of books; manuscripts, pamphlets, first editions, small press or worn-down paperbacks... they all find a home at my library which has grown so cumbersome and obtrusive that I had to move to a separate home from the family one...

For many decades my main area of interest has been horror fiction: Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Machen, MR James, LeFanu, etc and classic Fairy tales and literature about the engines of Myth: unabridged Grimm, Andersen, Wilde, Bettelheim, Tatar, etc

Now and then I indulge in Science Fiction (not hardware oriented but more humanistic things) and thus I count Bradbury, Ellison, Sturgeon and Matheson amongst my favorites.

My area of interest gets much narrower when we deal with another genre... the genre that is shelved under Fantasy.

As a youngster I read Moorcock, Clark Ashton Smith, Lord Dunsany, Lloyd Alexander, Fritz Leiber, Marcel Schwob, RE Howard and a few others.

Nevertheless I was never propelled into an aleatory addiction to sub-genres like Sword & Sorcery or indiscriminate fantasies about magical this or that- Like any other genre or subgenre there's a great abundance that makes it hard to discern when a new "trilogy" or "chronicle" comes from as genuine a place as Tolkien's or derives from genuine fervor -religious or otherwise- like C.S. Lewis' did. But here I am now: reading like a madman to catch up with a whole new land, a continent of sorts- a Cosmology created by brilliant philologist turned Shaman.

As if he grasped an existing universe outside our Platonic cave, Tolkien channels an entire world, weaving expertly from myth and lore. The outstanding virtue is that all this scholarly erudition doesn't reduce his tales to mere Taxidermy. He achieves an Alchemy all of

his own: he writes new life in the freshly sculpted clay of his creatures.

I have, through the years become familiar with the very roots of Tolkien's myths and the roots of Fafhrd or Elric or Hyperborea and many a time I have relished the intricate ways in which demonic wolves, shape-shifter and spindly-limbed pale warriors can be woven into those many tales that become, at the end, the single tale, the single saga- that of what is immortal in us all.

In creating Pan's Labyrinth I drank deep of the most rigid form of Fairy Lore and tried to contextualize the main recurrent motifs in an instinctive rhyme between the world of fantasy and the delusions of War and Politics (the grown man's way of playing make-believe) and in re-reading THE HOBBIT just recently I was quite moved by discovering, through Bilbo's eyes the illusory nature of possession, the sins of hoarding and the banality of war- whether in the Western Front or at a Valley in Middle Earth. Lonely is the mountain indeed.

When that statement was made- at different times during PANS LABYRINTH's promotion, many a time I made the distinctive call to say that although I had not read Tolkien outside THE HOBBIT I had been fascinated by the Trilogy films. A statement that I already had the chance to make in 2005 when PJ, Fran and I met about HALO.

So, no, generally I am NOT a "Sword and Sorcery" guy or a "Fantasy" guy- By the same token, I'm not a sci-fi guy but I would make a film based on Ellison in a second- or on Sturgeon or Bradbury or Matheson. I'm not into Barbarians with swords but i would kill to tackle Fafhrd and Grey Mouse... and so on and so forth... I'm a believer but not a Dogmatic.

Allow me to put a final, finer point to our discussion. The aesthetics of HELLBOY II are completely Pop and color-saturated, much more comic book / modern than I would ever use in THE HOBBIT but- I spend two years creating a world of Fairies, Elves, Trolls, etc

Two Years. A career / creative decision that precedes any inkling of THE HOBBIT. I wrote the script years before I met with PJ or Fran. In other words I dedicated the last 6 years of my career (between PL and HBII) to create Fantastical world inhabited by Fairies, Fauns, Ogres, Trolls, Elves, etc

In that respect- I guess I am a Fantasy guy when the particular world appeals to me. Back in the Jurassic Period (1992 / 1993) when CRONOS won the Critic's Week at Cannes I was referred to as an "art house guy"- I followed that with a giant cockroach movie that proved successful enough to spawn two sequels and allow me to co-finance THE DEVILS BACKBONE which send me back to being an "art house guy". Then I did BLADE II and people thought of me as

an “Action guy”- PJ went through a similar mercurial career with HEAVENLY CREATURES, BAD TASTE, DEAD ALIVE, etc I squirm away from a tag and I hope I can avoid being just a “Fantasy guy” after PL, HBII and H...

I do the tales I love (regardless of what shelf Barnes & Noble classifies the book under) and I love the HOBBIT.

I love it enough to give it half a decade of my life and move half a world away to do it.

Peter Jackson

Having directed the LOTR Trilogy, I really felt that I put my heart and soul into dramatising this world and story, only a few years ago. The idea of going back in and essentially competing against my own movies, seemed to be an unsatisfying way to spend the next 5 years. However, I love Tolkien and care deeply about the movies we made. I couldn't bear the idea of somebody else making them without our involvement. Being a writer and producer is the perfect way for me to work here. Guillermo has the ultimate responsibility of directing, and for him it's easier to make these movies feel different, simply because he's not me, and he therefore has an original vision, with new ideas to offer.

Believe me, I thought long and hard about this, and what we're doing here will result in better movies, I promise you. And that's all that counts!

Peter Jackson

OK we are almost done here folks and we have our last Q which was the most popular Q from the 1000s of people who sent Qs in advance.

WetaHost

1 - Which of the actors from LOTR will be back to reprise their roles in The Hobbit and its companion film?

Guillermo del Toro

Obviously, at this stage, the second film is still being figured out- so the actors that have been approached may or not have appeared in the HOBBIT as a literary work but still may appear in the second film as it “blends” into the Trilogy and expands. Therefore what can be said is: Unequivocally, every single actor that originated a role in the Trilogy will be asked to participate and reprise it. If Health, availability or willingness become obstacles – and only in that case recasting would be considered.

Peter Jackson

Like Guillermo says, apart from extreme circumstances, we would never recast a character who appeared in the LOTR trilogy. You can read The Hobbit and pretty much see which characters play a part. The unknown factor is Film Two, which we are still developing. If we wished to write one of the LOTR characters into the narrative of Film Two, we would only do that with that actors blessing, and willingness to take part. Otherwise we'd take the writing in another direction.

Guillermo del Toro

Time is up-

But I can proudly say that only a FEW asked "How can I be an extra?" so my heart swell withy pride with the many questions that you were kind enough to submit- More chats and wandering in the

message boards await us- See you soon...

Peter Jackson

So that is it for us for this morning or this evening, or middle of the night wherever you are. We are sorry that is all we could get through but we did try to have each of the Qs represent similar things that many of you have asked. So hopefully it gives you a little bit of info. As I said the truth is there are a lot of unanswered Qs for us as well at this stage of the process. We will know a lot more once the scripts are written which is the next job that we will be doing and it will take most of the rest of this year I imagine. Hope this has been helpful and thank you for all the incredible support now and in years gone by. Best wishes, Peter J.

Guillermo del Toro

May the hair on your toes, etc-

Peter Jackson

The transcript of this chat will be available here on the Weta site in a few hours time. Everyone here at Weta is looking forward to continuing this relationship with you throughout the hobbit experience and there are a lot of fun surprises to come over the next 4 years.

Guillermo del Toro

Viva WETA and the many "toys" they make! And may Cthulhu give me more shelves to put them on...