

## City of Villains Review: City of Heroes -City of Villains Re-Review - Edit

### Why I Solo'd for So Long

When I re-entered the world of Villains, I did bring along a teammate, a villain who would partner with me, but after the third mission, said teammate abandoned me for another shinier MMO. Wandering around, I ran into few people, and while it may be the server, my belief is that the population of Villains exists at the higher levels and has little use for creating newer characters. It's not a game that attracts new entrants, and so while it's user-friendly, once a new player gets in, they may not stay.

This is where I think Villains does itself a disservice.

While a player's goal tends to be to reach higher levels, and the goal of MMOs is not to have groups of players linger below level 20, it's too easy to get bored by the 'sameness' of the content in the lower levels. A little bit more variety here or there in the stories, or the missions, and I'm convinced my

teammate would have stayed with me, and there would be more alts running around... because there's just something fun about leveling new characters, just not in City.

### Invested in the Brute

Since the lower levels tend to drag a bit, creating the correct character was key for me. This is why I spent so much time outfitting the Brute, whose secondary power set I came to rely on. This is the character I plan to take to 50.

### Buttons! or rather, UI

Every game needs a good UI, and Cities has it. From the maps to the 'can't get lost' navigation. The UI fits the mood of Villains, a more urban-feel to the look than a traditional fantasy MMO, yet it was still easy to navigate. UI is one thing I think designers shouldn't get too crazy with - if the standard works, then keep it.

### Enhancements

I like buttons. I like clicking buttons and seeing things happen. It's part of the desire for instant gratification in games for me, and why I wish I could loot.

Leveling up often comes with either an enhancement, or another slot to add an enhancement and the ability to combine similar enhancements to your power. Earlier I mentioned picking a Primary and Secondary power set. My primary power set, electrical melee, has Charged Brawl. Charged Brawl, and any power, can have aspects of it enhanced. For instance, under Charged Brawl, I have the 'enhance damage' and 'enhance accuracy' enhancements added. To buff those enhancements if I had similar or compatible enhancements, I could combine the enhancements for a greater effect. As my Brute goes up in level, lower enhancements should be combined because they can lose their effectiveness or provide little value. Under the power Brawl, I combined two accuracy enhancements to increase its strength. This, I found to be a lot of fun. I enjoyed creating combinations, which added extra bonuses. I also spent some time playing around with the various combinations trying to, well, make my character "badder". Enhancements aren't just granted when training. They can be purchased (and sold) and they can be discovered after defeating an enemy. It would be wise to actually wait until the mission is over before trying to manage your enhancements... it can get somewhat distracting. Not all enhancements work with all powers. I had to sell an entire inventory's worth of range increase enhancements.

### Inspirations

Inspirations are buffs that are usually found when defeating enemies, and can be activated simply by selecting the buff. Inspirations can help you get through a fight and be the difference between being sent to the Hospital or surviving long enough to finish. There's not much to say about them except that they are very useful when you're the type of character who likes to fight to the end rather than run away.

### Infamy

Infamy is what you gain when you complete missions and is what you spend when purchasing enhancements. With enough infamy, you can change parts of your costume, or if you have enough, buy a new costume. It's used to create inventions, and can be used to shop the Black Market (the auction house). Infamy is the economical equivalent of money in some ways, but is also used for other purposes

▼ advertisement ▼

### A Brief Word about Leveling

*It seems to take longer to level in Cities than it does in other MMOs such as EQ or WoW, though I haven't done compared leveling between the two games. It could be perception, but leveling did seem to take... forever.*

in Cities, such as in recipes.

## Badges

As a character, you can achieve badges for a variety of different feats. Badges can be achieved by doing a variety of different things, having a subscription to an account, visiting certain areas, completing missions and more. My Brute managed to gain the Thrillseeker badge by visiting Mission Architecture technology.

Badges that grant benefits are called Accolades. Badges can be worn by the character, and the pursuit of badges could honestly be a game in itself. If you have the collector mentality, and have done everything else, seeking out every possible badge you could achieve is like a mini-game. Supergroups can also earn badges. Badges can also be earned by having a day job.

## Day Job

It might be surprising to think that a villain would need a day job, but someone's got to pay the bills and a life of crime in a crime-ridden city sometimes just doesn't pay. Simply by logging out in certain areas, characters will earn temporary benefits from the related day job. For instance, as a Villain, by logging out near the black helicopters characters will get a temporary travel speed bonus, and by logging out of one location after 30 days, characters will get a badge with an associated bonus. Get two complementary day job badges, and you get an accolade, which give you added powers. A day job can be useful, so be aware of where you are logging out.

## Salvage, as in... There's No Looting

An important part of most MMOs is crafting, Cities is no different. At level four, characters will begin to receive salvage pieces, which can then be taken to either a Superbase, if the character is part of a Supergroup, or to locations in the city if the character is solo. When a character gets a salvage piece, it can be turned into an invention with the use of a recipe and a certain amount of infamy. Recipes can be unlocked through missions or by earning badges. Members of Supergroups must build a workbench in their Superbase before being able to complete inventions. Recipes can be used by Villains to create enhancements, inspirations, and if they have a base, objects such as teleporters.

## The Next Step

I like the Rogue Isles, the darker side of their shiny alter-ego, Paragon City, offers a grittier urban feel that appeals to me. After having found few people in-game to team with, I had to reach outside the world of Cities, and where retired old Villains have retreated to a life of non-evil, civilian mundaneness. I finally pulled a Villain of greater experience and knowledge out of hiding (he complained that being evil just wasn't what it used to be, what with so many of the old guard having retired from the game) who agreed to take me on as his Sidekick.

## Being a Sidekick

The best bad guys have their go-to guy, and in Villains, being the side-kick has advantages... such as playing in the higher-level zones and enjoying PvP-ing with teammates that are normally too high in experience. While no new powers are gained, a whole new playing experience is. The truth about City of Villains is that it is fun when you're grouped with other superheroes. It's not designed for a purely solo experience though if you're determined you can slog your way through solo.

## Final thoughts

Aside from the repetitive feel of the missions and the lack of an active population under 20, Villains is a lot of fun. The ability to wander and fight random mobs combined with the focused and goal-oriented missions helps keep the game interesting, and the ability to custom-create Supervillains has the immediate effect of creating a bond with the character. It's hard to stop playing an Evil Mastermind when you've gone through so much trouble to make him the perfect evil mastermind! The rest of the game will be well-worth exploring, and I look forward to being a sidekick and exploring the rest of the game. It's a solid, stable fun game, and, who knows, perhaps my villain won't be satisfied being a villain, perhaps... she'll go rogue.

