Norman Lear Center to Partner with Virtual Worlds Design Competition to Develop Design Proposals for Downtown Los Angeles Park

NEW YORK and LOS ANGELES, September 30, 2005 --- To attract the most exciting ideas about public space in the 21st century, the Norman Lear Center, based at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California, has announced its collaboration in the “State of Play Virtual Public Space Design Competition” with the Institute for Information Law and Policy at New York Law School, the Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard Law School, and the Information Society Project at Yale Law School. The State of Play Virtual Public Space Design Competition has solicited civic and public architecture proposals in an effort to stimulate the design of better public spaces in virtual worlds, also known as massively multiplayer online role-playing games.

The Lear Center is cosponsoring this competition for the best virtual designs in an effort to discover new and creative ideas for deepening civic engagement in “real” space. The center plans to apply these ideas within an ongoing project known as the Grand Intervention, which will develop design proposals for a new 16-acre civic park on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles.

The best and most thought-provoking proposals from the State of Play competition will be invited to submit to the Grand Intervention project. For more information about the Grand Intervention, visit http://www.grandintervention.org.

For more information about the State of Play Virtual Public Space Design Competition, please visit http://www.nyls.edu/pages/3818.asp.

About the Norman Lear Center

The Norman Lear Center is a research and public policy center based at the University of Southern California, just south of downtown Los Angeles. In its efforts to explore the convergence of entertainment, commerce and society, the Lear Center has discovered that the boundaries between domains formerly separate—the civic and political area, the realm of entertainment and play, and the marketing and commerce sector—have all blurred, for good and for ill, and that from this convergence comes opportunities. A 16-acre civic park in the heart of the entertainment capital of the world presents us with the chance to reimagine and reinvigorate public space and all it has to offer to citizens and consumers. Visit the Lear Center's Grand Intervention Web site, www.grandintervention.org, for more information, including maps and models, current articles, and background materials. Find out more about the Norman Lear Center at www.learcenter.org.

About the State of Play Design Competition

The State of Play Virtual Public Space Design Competition is part of the annual State of Play: Law and Virtual Worlds conference, which brings together legal scholars and practitioners, computer scientists, game designers, and entrepreneurs to explore the next frontier in cyberspace:
virtual worlds. This year, State of Play III: Social Revolutions, taking place on October 6–8 at New York Law School, will focus on social relationships in the real-time, three-dimensional virtual Internet of massively multiplayer online games. Panels and workshops will explore how to build and evolve vibrant, flourishing, creative spaces for social interaction and collective action. More information is available at www.nyls.edu/stateofplay.

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