(CNN) -- An upcoming game for Nintendo's handheld devices will let players enter a virtual world in which they make friends, flirt and can even get married and have kids.

But those romantic relationships can't be with characters of the same gender -- a fact a growing online movement hopes to change.

Tye Marini, 23, is a self-described Nintendo fanatic. The Mesa, Arizona, man was excited to learn that "Tomodachi Life," a version of a "life simulation" game previously only available in Japan, would be released in North America for the Nintendo 3DS next month.

He was less excited, however, when he learned that his in-game avatar -- or "Mii," in Nintendo-speak -- could only be romantically involved with a female character, as opposed to one representing his real-life fiancé.

And, thus, was #Miiquality born.

Launched last month, Marini's social-media campaign has begun picking up steam on Facebook and Twitter, where like-minded gamers are asking Nintendo to reconsider.

"By excluding same-sex relationships in a game that's focused around relationships like this one, they're really excluding a lot of people," Marini told CNN affiliate KTVK.

In the game, players create or import their Mii (pronounced "me"), which then can interact with characters that represent other real-world friends in their network.

"The situation wouldn't be as big of a deal if it weren't for the fact that relationships and marriage are a huge part of the game," Marini said in the video he created to announce his campaign. "The relationships and interactions between the Mii characters in the game, coupled with their relationships to you in real life, are what makes this game so appealing. ... Not being able to date and marry the gender that I'm attracted to in real life really takes all of the immersion and fun out of it for me."

Nintendo appears to be unswayed.

"Nintendo never intended to make any form of social commentary with the launch of 'Tomodachi Life,'" the company said in a written statement.
"The relationship options in the game represent a playful alternate world rather than a real-life simulation. We hope that all of our fans will see that 'Tomodachi Life' was intended to be a whimsical and quirky game, and that we were absolutely not trying to provide social commentary."

At a time when barriers to same-sex marriage are falling across the United States, Nintendo's stance could be a public relations problem for a company already facing slumping revenue amid weak sales for its Wii U console.

Marini acknowledged to KTVK that "there are far greater concerns out there" than relationship options in a video game. But he noted that popular games like "The Sims," a life-simulation franchise launched by Electronic Arts in 2000, have allowed same-sex relationships for years.

He said he realizes that even if Nintendo wanted to make a change, it's too late to do so before the game is released in America. But he hopes they will release an update once the game is already out, or allow same-sex relationships in future titles.

Marini also specifically said he's not calling for a boycott of the game, saying it would do more harm than good.