THE ADEPT PRESS FORUM
What to do and how to do it, where to go and how to get off
By Ron Edwards, July 2012, ron@adept-press.com

Welcome to the Adept Press forum. This document is all about how you can do that too. It's the mission statement and netiquette rules.

Definitions
Role-playing game is a legacy term without a good definition. Here, it's used in the limited sense of group activities, or games, composed of people speaking while in one another's presence, generating an imagined series of fictional events. Sometimes it's called "table-top," but we talk about versions in which people get up and move around too. Typically it doesn't use much pre-play scripting for events and dialogue, if any.

Independence, at this site, means creator-owned and self-published. It doesn't mean anything else.

Stay on topic
You can start new threads and reply to existing threads.

For new threads, by definition, if you can't see how your topic meets the permitted topics described in a forum's sticky post, then that probably means you should be posting it at another site. Feel free to email me if you're not sure. Also, I'll move threads if they would be better placed in another forum, so don't get confused if you end up somewhere else.

Please do not post polls or surveys, or frame discussions as "Thing X! Good or bad?"

Staying on topic also applies to replies. If the discussion starts ranging into too many sub-topics, I'll also split threads, pulling posts out of them into a thread of their own. This is no big deal. However, help me out by thinking about it yourself first, so you can go ahead and start a new thread when you want, linking back to the one which spawned it.

I'll also split when someone posts to an old thread. So for your information, please don't post to threads whose latest post is over three weeks old.

Factual, intellectual, emotional, and social honesty
I expect you to distinguish between ideas and people. *Ideas* are subject to fierce critique and dissection, according to high standards of intellectual engagement (which doesn't mean pompous, but rather, sharp, relevant, and rigorous). *People* are to be treated with courtesy, according to high standards of conduct which exceed anything you've probably encountered on the internet.

However. See all those kinds of honesty I listed? Anything violating one of those, as I see it, is a flame. It can be hiding under fake courtesy, it can be passive-aggressive, it can be a snotty tantrum, it can be over-intellectualized and defensive ... here, all that is the same and flat-out not permitted. So what people often *call* courteous, I call ass-hat – like sneering "Sir" or otherwise channeling that unspeakable douchebag William F. Buckley Jr. The best bet is to go minimal: merely treat one another with as few implications or status-gaming as you possibly can; be genuinely decent.

Moderation
I'm the moderator for all the stuff discussed in this post. I also expect everyone to be on their best behavior regarding everything in it, so that my moderating role is to correct or adjust minor hassles rather than being a perpetual den-daddy.

Toward that end, refute or support ideas all you like, but do not defend yourself in the forum itself; if you do, I'll treat it like a brawl regardless of "who started it." Instead, use the Notify button when you think anyone is breaking any of the rules outlined here. It sends an email to me. When you report someone's post, it's not finking. I don't keep a record of either who's been reported or who's done the reporting.

When I weigh in with my moderator hat on and provide explicit instructions, do what I say. If you don't like it, or think I'm being unfair, or just want to vent, then send me your blistering email or light up your blog, but don't respond defiantly in the thread in question.

If I'm not wearing the moderator hat, then I'm just another poster here, not the teacher and not the boss. You can even report me-the-poster to me-the-moderator.

Other details
1. You can edit your own posts for one minute after you've submitted them, to correct typos for instance, but not after that. You have to live with what you present here. I recommend composing your posts in a word-processing program and paste them in when you think the post says what it should.

I do retain the editing function, to do things like eliminate images or other structural stuff. If I do, then you'll see the "edited" message in the post, usually with a phrase to explain what I did. I'll edit some content in your posts only at your request, like messed-up formats or similar.

I do not amend conceptual content, ever, for myself or anyone else. If you really want to amend what you said, then go ahead and post a new post to say so. This actually wins a lot of respect when people can see that you examined your own writing, found it to be inadequate, and were grown-up enough to say so.

2. Please images sparingly and in clear, necessary connections to your text; an image's size should not exceed the limits of the reading-window in any direction. Also, please ignore various formatting options in the text box such as tiny-tiny type, humungous type, funky colors, blinky text display, or any number of similar things. I grudgingly tolerate the occasional smiley – for now. Basic formatting for emphasis like italics and similar is fine.

3. When a discussion becomes socially and/or intellectually stalled, for whatever reason, I close it, by saying, "This thread is closed," or a close paraphrase. I might say that for a thread which hits a clear climax too. At that point, no one should post to it again, on sheer social contract alone. I may or may not give reasons depending on the time I have, but I usually do.

The software does permit me to lock threads, which I regard as a debased option, necessary only in the face of debased acts. I do it when someone defies moderation.

I'm currently deciding what to do with totally ass-hat posting. I can do what I did at the Forge, which was transfer them to an Inactive File so they could still be read in all their moronic glory; I might do what they do at Exiled Online which is to edit their content freely for my own amusement; or I might just delete them.

4. I encourage using your real name for your username. You can change the display of your name through your site profile. However, it's not required, and certainly there's no obligation to include your full name if you don't want to. If you'd prefer to keep the handle you registered under, then you can, but at least please consider at least signing your posts with your first name or initial.

5. Profanity and vulgarity are permitted here, mainly because I am myself a profane and vulgar person. However, all the rules about honesty and courtesy still apply. That means you can't direct profanity (or non-profane insulting language either) at a person, or at their ideas in a way which reflects upon them as a person. It also means that using profanity to posture and show off is no good either.

Background
A brief history of the Forge is available through one of the global links there. To summarize even more briefly, Ed Healy and I founded a site called Hephaestus' Forge in 1999, with the goal of finding, promoting, and generating reviews for independently-published role-playing. Clinton Nixon and I re-launched it as a forum in 2000 as The Forge, with him as primarily the manager and site organizer, and me primarily as content moderator. In 2008, Vincent Baker took over the site-management role. Some associated activities include the Forge Booth at GenCon every year since 2002, several regular and semi-regular conventions based on "let's get together and play," and group-endeavors like contests.

The Forge was always intended to be a finite project, and by 2007 I could see the end of the tunnel. 2011-2012 were the "Winter phase," and the site was closed to posting in June 2012.

OK, that's it! Go ye forth and post. Please don't reply directly to this sticky. If you have questions about how to post at this site, or moderation, or anything else, start a thread in this forum or send me an email.