

Resources / Advice for Noob GMs

Posted by Arcarius2001 - 2011/08/20 13:55

Since Monkplayer is going all out for his future players (they are a lucky bunch), and yet he says he has never DM'd, I thought we could offer him some advice in that area.

I started DMing back in '81 or so and ran games for a few years then quit playing for over 20 years. DnD 3.5 was the game of choice when I returned and it was very very different from what I was used to in Advanced DnD. I started reading everything I could in an effort to refresh and update my DM / GM skills and found the following site to be of incredible help.

<http://www.roleplayingtips.com/>

I still subscribe to the free email newsletter and find it helpful.

Additionally, John Four has the following blog that is also quite good.

<http://www.campaignmastery.com/blog/>

Other sites that give great advice or are otherwise useful:

<http://www.gnomestew.com/> Another GM advice site.

<http://www.dragonsfoot.org/> A great resource for maps, adventure ideas and just because I still love original DnD

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Re:Resources / Advice for Noob GMs

Posted by Arcarius2001 - 2011/08/20 14:14

For more personal advice, I would suggest finding a module that you like, thoroughly become familiar with it, and run your first game session from that. That way you won't have to worry about stating out monsters and treasure, setting the difficulty for traps, etc. However, I would also add that you should not be afraid to improv it a bit and change it should that help the flow of the game.

The one thing that I notice is that in the new games of 3.5 and Pathfinder, the designers have really tightened up on rules. I tend to run my games using these rulesets but make DM rulings that often don't always jive with the rules as written. Again, the improv / old school thing. That may not work for everyone but it alleviates my workload as I don't have to know every single rule and it prevents slowing the game while everyone searches through books.

Another cool tip if you have an iPad, there are apps that basically give you the 3.5 and Pathfinder rules at your fingertips. So if you do need to look stuff up, it is faster than the books.

Another excellent rules resource is SORD. Find it at Drivethrough RPG. Amazing reference tool.

Any other ideas?

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Re:Resources / Advice for Noob GMs

Posted by dndgamer - 2011/08/20 17:05

I use this program to keep track of initiative order, combat effects, turns, health/damage, just about everything having to do with my DnD Adventures. You can create encounters quite quickly, save them, and pick back up where you left off.

It's a great alternative to having to write things down.

Here's the info from FaceBook.

Here's a link to the programmer's details page for the Program.

Good Luck!

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Re:Resources / Advice for Noob GMs

Posted by monkplayer - 2011/08/20 19:16

Wow! I'm really appreciative of all the fantastic advice I'm getting! I'm going to a lot of work to make the room a great experience. But when it comes down to it all the DF, MBA, minis, and other items aren't as important as the adventure. I have to be at least a good DM to make the players want to return over and over.

@Arcarius THANK YOU for your desire that I get great advice about how to be a great DM! I REALLY appreciate your help in crating this topic! Thank you!

I will be using Pathfinder rules. I think it's the best system out there. I do have an Ipad2, Macbook Pro and wireless Internet will be available for everyone. I've added all your websites in a "DM" folder, and man there is some fantastic info on these sites! I will use your excellent advice and I will be starting with a Pathfinder module. I want to get familiar with DMing by using a more structured adventure. If I started by creating my own adventure than I risk trying to do too much and I think that will affect game play. I've already downloaded some apps on my Ipad2. What app are you referring to Arcarius? I don't believe I own it.

@dndgamer Thank you for this suggestion. I looked up this info. However, I don't think this program is Pathfinder capable? It seems to be only 4.0? Is there a program like this one that has Pathfinder? I really want a program like you described. I REALLY want to streamline the work with getting all the NPC's, stats, and other stuff done in minutes and not taking hours figuring by hand!

Please keep the suggestions and advice coming! I'm a "sponge" and will gladly "soak" it all in!

I really want over time to be one of the best DM's in my region, and you all can certainly guide me in the right direction with all your advice and suggestions!

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Re:Resources / Advice for Noob GMs
Posted by Arcarius2001 - 2011/08/21 03:15

It is called PFRD or Pathfinder Reference Document. I swear I use that more than my books, and I have all of them except for Ultimate Combat. Great app! You can just get the core rules and bestiary or add the GM Guide, Advanced Players Guide, Ultimate Magic, and Bestiary 2 as in app purchases. Plus, it is inexpensive.

This plus a printout of SORD are all you need for quick reference.

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Re:Resources / Advice for Noob GMs
Posted by monkplayer - 2011/08/21 13:33

Thank you Arcarius!

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Re:Resources / Advice for Noob GMs
Posted by Arcarius2001 - 2011/08/21 14:02

Be sure to peruse the archives of Roleplating Tips. You can search by topic there too. He used to have it available for an inexpensive download as well, that could be cool for your iPad (and reminds me that I should transfer those files to my iPad).

Do you ever listen to podcasts? There is another app called Stitcher that is like an organizer for podcasts. There are a couple under the "rpg" category that I recommend. Happy Jack's RPG Podcast (heavy parental discretion on that one and actually I would go on iTunes and start at the first episode as the earlier episodes are more DnD type game specific) and Fear the Boot (an excellent podcast). Others not on Stitcher are Postcards From the Dungeon, The Dungeonmaster Guys, 3.5 Private Sanctuary, and Roleplaying Public Radio (aka RPPR). All of these offer very useful advice. I like to listen to these while painting minis or working on my gameroom.

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