

Stuffing: How to Make Sure the Game you Wrote is the Game they Get

Or, how did the policeman end up with the cultist
bluesheet?

Stephen Kohler
Lime Shirt LARPing
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What is Stuffing?

- The act of turning the digital into the analog
- Not just as easy as hitting print, although that's a start
- Can ruin a good game if done poorly

Aside: What style of game?

- Very generic games, not written in any specific method or style
- Some groups use programs that would invalidate parts of this talk
- Think in terms of a new, naïve, innocent writer

Writing: The Early Pitfalls

- Two important elements: Stuffing List and Organization
- What is a stuffing list?
- What is this organ-ization?

Stuffing Lists

- A list that tells you what you stuff
- More seriously, a checklist for every packet of what goes into said packet
- Also remember to document the things that *don't* go into packets

File Organization

- Easy to lose things in poorly organized file structures
- Some things easily slot into folders, some don't
- Make sure to keep printed and non-printed documents separate as much as possible

Other Tips

- Divider cards are amazing
- Don't put contingencies in the same document as character sheets
- Please have sheets and cards print in the same order!

Stuffing Day/Weekend/Week

- We're going to cover the five(ish) W's and one H of stuffing
- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- ~~Why~~
- How

Who?

- Who is coming to stuffing? Who can?
- Try for 3 GMs for a 4-hour(varies wildly), 5 for a weekend (varies less wildly)
- GMing tip: Remember that when stuffing a game isn't a bad time to discuss it

What?

- What needs to be at stuffing?
- Review your game so you know what kinds of supplies are needed
- Easy to forget: Ink/Toner, stapler, Sharpie
- Also, index card boxes are a gift of the gods

Where?

- Who has space you can stuff in?
- Recommended: Large open area like two tables or good floorspace
- Also, outlets. All the outlets. Bring power strips

When?

- If you're not writing the game, shoot for at least two weeks before the game for a weekend, at least a week for 4-hour
- If you're writing, you *should* use the same deadlines

How?

-and therein, as the Bard would tell us, lies the rub

Stephen's Fundamental Law of Stuffing

The LAST thing you do is put ANYTHING into a manila envelope

Laying out Packets

- Lay down packets FACE UP, with character names already written on them
- Next, lay out things that everyone gets (rules, whitesheets, etc)
- Then probably sheets, then bluesheets underneath, then cards/other on top

Assigning Jobs

- At any given time:
- Have someone on the printer
- Have a stapler-type person
- Have someone laying out things on packets
- (For a weekend) Two other floaters who can help when/where needed

More Specific Jobs

- Make sure someone has decent handwriting for packet names, contingencies, etc
- Have someone manning the scissors for things like money
- Nested contingencies are a pain

The Joy of Printing

- The printer should always be doing something, hopefully printing
- Index Cards: HP Laserjet 1100 Series. From Walmart: \$29.99. Shop Smart. Shop LARP-Smart
- When a printer dies, do not mourn

What do I Print?

- Try to print everything in one paper color at the same time
- My recommended order(For one printer):
Rules/Whitesheets, Character Sheets
Bluesheets, Items/Abilities, other as needed
- For the love of God, check your collating settings

Printing Tips

- Print out a couple extra whitesheets (esp. rules for briefing)
- Maybe a couple extra bluesheets as well
- Don't print characters you're not going to need*
- Print all the ability/item cards*

Badges

- Badges are either semi-unimportant, or the most important thing in your game
- If important, do them early, if not, they're a classic Wednesday-night print job

Minding the Details

- What does your game have that other games don't?
- Odds are it should be one of the later things you do, so you can focus on it

Sanity Checking

- After everything is out, pull out that handy-dandy stuffing list and check every packet
- Don't forget to check the GM-held stuff, too!
Use GM packets and index card boxes
- THEN, you can stuff the sheaf into a packet(But don't seal them)

Runtime Issues: If they crop up

- DON'T PANIC
- Figure out what got messed up and who it should go do
- Talk to the player and see if they read things they shouldn't have read

The End!

- Questions? Comments? Pitchforks?