

# One Thousand and One Nights and One Night

a role-playing game campaign design 'zine Vol.: 1, Special Issue, November 1, 2007



## Free "How To" Guide

This is a special edition of 1001+1 Nights that has nothing to do with RPG campaign design. It's all about the 'zine. That's only fair, I think, because the delivery method can also be important to you, the Kind and Gently Forgiving Reader.

## How I Make a 2 Pg 'zine

I'm all for others giving this 'zine-making a try. It's very rewarding to do. It provides an avenue to get my thoughts down on paper for future games and even forwards the hobby a bit. If I even inspire one person to start a 2 page 'zine, I figure I'm doing a pretty good job.

## How Do You Get To Carnegie Hall?

First, and I know this sounds preachy and is fairly self-evident to the majority, you have to start writing. Write a few things about what you are interested in. In my case, that's pretty much every game I pick up.

Second, write some more. You need to build some content and that means word count. Each issue of my 'zine is about 1200 words. To some people that may be a lot, but I find that I actually have to trim what I write for it to fit. I've only had two 2-parter issues (#5, 6 and #14, 15) and I know I'll do more in the future.

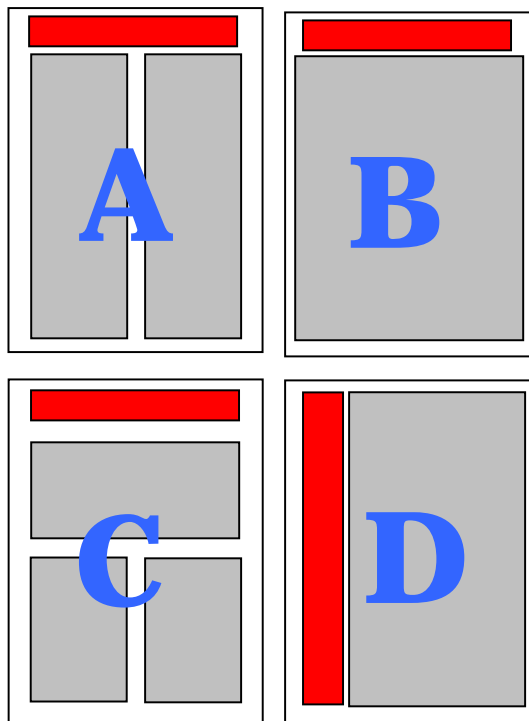
## He's Got Style, He's Got Flash

In the process of writing, you will find your own "voice," your own style. My style is very personal. I write about what I'm going to do. I use "I" statements and rarely talk in the third person. This may not be the style for everyone, nor is it the only style, so I would strongly suggest that you give different writing styles a try and, as you continue publishing, your skills will develop and improve. I believe that my writing is better since starting this 'zine but I still check spelling and grammar. Having a gf who's an editor and graphics designer helps.

Another thing to think about is the actual style of the layout. There are many books out that give good information, such as *The Elements of Style* by W. Strunk, E.B. White and R. Angell (Allyn & Bacon), as well as *The Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press). Both books are very good to peruse for novice and experienced writers alike.

## It's Got To Look Good

After you have some starting articles, you need a layout for your sheet. This is very important for customer readability as well as aesthetic value. It took me a little bit to get this down, and I went through several revisions before my first issue. You need a header (and sometimes a footer) for your sheet (red bar in Figures A–D). It can be at the top or side. Then you have to decide how you want the text to display. You can have a two-column newspaper look (Figure A) like I did or a full sheet look (Figure B and D) or a full sheet for the first section then two columns (Figure C) like Christian Walker does at Iridia 'zine.



## Look at the Pretty Pictures

Everybody likes graphics interspersed with text. It gives a good break for the eye. Be sure to use either your own art, freeware or get your own personal artist. Make sure that when you use other people's art you use it through "fair use" – and that's something you're going to have to look up to become familiar with it. Choose your art carefully and to enhance your text. I usually have 2–3 pieces of art per page and often it is freeware clipart or book covers for specific games. I use Black and White Prints clipart [www.harvestfields.ca/clipart](http://www.harvestfields.ca/clipart) quite frequently. They've got lots of good fantasy or medieval art.



## Get your Program here!

I use Open Office, because it's free and it also comes with an automatic PDF maker. That's very useful if you don't have Adobe Acrobat Professional (Adobe). However, there are work arounds. Create your project in Word and then go to the Adobe site, where they have an online PDF maker. Tres cool.



## Getting People to See You

Next, I suggest that you build a website. If you

know HTML, great. If not, there are lots of free website builders available. They provide good examples of different sites in template fashion, you have to choose colors and layouts and whether you want to use graphics or not. I don't remember the one I used for my site, but you can find tons with a simple Google search. I

also added a bunch of stuff to mine by using raw HTML. And I added a free site counter. I use ShinyStat.com, the free one. It works pretty good, doesn't have too many bells and whistles and I can check it anywhere. It's good to know how many people actually look at your site. Hosting is also available online for free. I use 110MB.com. It works pretty good but be sure to read the rules. I didn't and lost my site for a few days because of login requirements.

## Putting it All Together

So, you've got a couple of issues, all layed-out, spellchecked and checked for grammar, with cool graphics and good content, a website, a website host, and a site counter. It's all up on the web for everyone to see. That's great! But who do you tell? You need to tell people about your great 'zine. You need to advertise. Since you are doing this for free (or maybe not, but here's hoping you are), you don't want to spend any cash on ads. So I suggest you do as I do. There are a large number of gaming related sites, RPG.net, The Giant in the Playground ([www.giantitp.com](http://www.giantitp.com)), Steve Jackson Games, ENWorld.org, Green Ronin, Wizards of the Coast, The Forge, and many, many more (too many to effectively list). I don't have a lot of time, so I checked most of these sites forum rules and found out where to advertise. Every new issue I produce, I advertise to at least 3 of these forums the same day. Since I post at most of these (off and on for some), I also update my .sig file with links to my site and what issue is available.

## Starting Small

I suggest that you start your 'zine small. Give yourself plenty of time to produce issues – I take about 2 weeks between publishings. During that time, I write a few articles and don't really stress over it. Since I am in graduate school, too, and I have a gf, it's a realistic time commitment. Trying to do too much too soon usually ends in failure and frustration. Don't let the "it's got to be perfect" bug prevent you from writing, just do it!