

5 DnD ChatGPT Prompts to Make Your Game Better

April 21, 2024



Using AI chatbots like ChatGPT to enhance your #DnD game, their limitations & alternative solutions #TTRPG

DriveThruRPG CCP Partners Prohibit TTRPG Ableism

April 21, 2024



In May 2023, I asked @drivethrurpg to add “ableism” to the nondiscrimination template for their CCP content agreements. What happened?

Meet Us at Gamehole Con!

April 21, 2024



Meet us Friday at Gamehole Con 2023 in Madison, WI!

Reddit IPO: Reddit banishes the disabled community

April 21, 2024



reddit is killing 3rd-party Apps and API Access infographicdd
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Impact on the TTRPG Community

The TTRPG community thrives on collaboration, creativity, and diverse perspectives. Reddit has been a vital platform for building real-world adventuring parties of every kind. With the API pricing changes, the TTRPG community faces significant challenges:

- **Limited Customization:** Third-party apps, like Apollo and Dystopia, have allowed TTRPG fans to personalize their Reddit experience like a homebrew fantasy world. These tools have facilitated streamlined access to TTRPG-specific subreddits, making it easier to find relevant discussions, game advice, and homebrew content.
- **Community Engagement:** Third-party apps offer advanced features for interacting with Reddit, including real-time notifications, improved search functions, and intuitive interfaces. This gives TTRPG fans [Advantage](#) to engage in discussions, seek advice, and collaborate on projects.
- **Accessibility Barriers:** Many TTRPG players with disabilities rely on third-party apps to overcome the accessibility [Wall of Force](#) in the official Reddit apps and interfaces. The loss of these apps will limit their ability to participate fully in TTRPG communities and access valuable resources.

Broader Impact on Disabled Individuals

While the TTRPG community is directly affected, it is essential to recognize that the API changes have an even greater impact on various disabled individuals:

- **Visually Impaired Community:** [Blind and visually impaired individuals](#) heavily rely on third-party apps to access Reddit content through assistive technologies. These apps provide the necessary features for screen readers, alternative text, and other accessibility enhancements that enable equal participation.
- **Transcribers and Describers:** Reddit is home to numerous volunteer groups dedicated to transcribing and describing images for alt text, making visual content accessible to individuals with visual impairments. The loss of third-party apps may hinder the crucial work of these groups, resulting in a significant loss of accessibility for the broader Reddit community.
- **Other Disability Communities:** The API changes resonate beyond the visually impaired community. Individuals with motor disabilities, cognitive impairments, or other disabilities may also rely on third-party apps (or hope for new ones that give them better access) to navigate Reddit more efficiently and effectively. The loss of these apps would create additional barriers to access and participation for these individuals.

Unifying for Accessibility and Inclusion

To ensure that the TTRPG community and disabled individuals continue to thrive on Reddit, collective action is vital. By joining forces and advocating for accessibility, we can make a difference:

- **Amplify Voices:** Share the stories and experiences of TTRPG players and disabled individuals affected by these API changes. Spread the word through your social circles like

[chain lightning](#).

- **Join the Blackout:** Join and follow [r/Save3rdPartyApps](#) to learn more, or, if you moderate a subreddit, its sister sub [r/ModCoord](#). [Read about the upcoming Blackout](#) on June 12–14, and plan to participate. (And [find more suggestions](#))
- **Message Your Mods:** Encourage the mods of your favorite subreddits to join the Blackout.
- **Seek Media Attention:** This change comes on the heels of Reddit's IPO announcement like a sycophantic imp chasing an arch-devil. Will potential stockholders want to support a company that has received media attention for knowingly making recent discriminatory choices?

It's time to stand together to ensure that Reddit remains an inclusive platform for all, fostering creativity, collaboration, and accessibility within the TTRPG community and beyond.

Social Spell Schools: Welcome the Isolated to your Dungeons & Dragons Game

April 21, 2024



Disabilities and chronic conditions are isolating. For us, any kind of social life is a unicorn. As Briana describes at [The Daily Disability](#),

The more my health problems grew, the harder it was to find a community that I felt like I fit in to. I joined group after group in hopes of finding a few that would help how I was feeling. I ended up not even being able to join discussions in one of the groups, because I didn't have close relationships with anyone in the group. It was very disheartening.

Even when we have a free block of time that could be spent with friends,


- My ADHD and hearing loss make parties, conventions, crowded restaurants, and anywhere else with a lot of noise nearly impossible to navigate, as I can't filter one voice from another.
- Other neurodivergent traits and mental illness in my family lead to disdainful looks and disparaging comments from the public.
- Potential friends ghost us when they get a taste of the chaos that is our life, unable to handle the stress.
- Neighbors avoid us.

You might be experiencing stress just reading this list.

But aside from our church, the one environment I've found

welcoming is the tabletop roleplaying game community, at least the ones I've facilitated. Here's how that magic works:

Enchanting Communities

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- Consider diverse mobility needs. Do people have space to move?
- How does your environment affect those with sensory needs, such as sensitivity to noise?
- Do you allow electronic character sheets and other assistive technology?
- Do you meet in a place that's financially prohibitive to people on limited budgets, like a restaurant or a FLGS with a cover charge?
- Do you exclude people like us from your game world? (Check out [Limitless Champions](#) as a way to add that representation.)

Evoking Trust



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- We may ask for less than we need, worried about how willing you are to coexist with us and being used to settling for less.
- We want to be treated like any other member of the party, but don't ignore our traits and degrees of ability, either. That is, we want to be accepted as we are, neither expecting us to be someone else nor treating us as inspirations.
- When things get inconvenient for you, but you roll with it like you would any other friend's needs, then we start to trust, but we all move at a different rate on that scale.

Conjuring Community

So you have a welcoming and inclusive environment, but we're still sitting at home, reluctant to put ourselves out there. We may never know about you, and we're probably not looking, because you're a unicorn.

- Join local online communities, and mention inclusion and representation. Demonstrate that you're an ally.
- If you play at an FLGS, put a copy of [Limitless Heroics](#) on the corner of the table.
- Post flyers on LFG boards at your FLGS. Include a note that you're accessible.

Friendship Necromancy

We may believe that the idea of social connections or even friendships is dead, that it would truly take some magic to change that. But by creating inclusive and welcoming spaces, we can create environments that truly communicate that D&D is for everyone.



How to Succeed in Tabletop Roleplaying Game Publishing

April 21, 2024



In September 2020, I left my 22-year career with no prospects. I picked up a temporary day job to pay the bills and provide health insurance, but in July 2021, I left that job to [focus on roleplaying game development full-time](#). I didn't have much to lose, since my day job wasn't paying enough to sustain my family, but it was still a risk – something is better than nothing. I stepped into uncharted territory with a plan to [launch a Kickstarter](#) to get the business off the ground, but as an Enneagram Type 3 personality, I'm terrified of failure, so I was plagued by the question, "Will I succeed?" And not only do I

consider myself already successful, but I believe I've learned how to do that, and in an industry where every challenge seems to be mythic, where the monster, once slain, rises again stronger than ever, it might be helpful to share my insights, as my road has been unlike most in this field.

Note: I'm presenting these observations and tips as a publisher, not a freelancer. It's important that you decide which you want to be as you start out. If you start as a freelancer and don't start building an audience right away, you'll have some makeup work to do if you decide you want more control over your work. But publishing requires a lot of work that's not just creating.

Choose Your Class

The three pillars of any RPGs are exploration, social, and combat. In TTRPG publishing, the tiers follow a similar pattern.

Exploration. Search yourself. What are your passions? What is your niche? What do you love creating? What mark do you want to leave on the hobby? What niche would you love to spend the next few years learning about, exploring, and working on?

Social. Find your audience. What niche is underserved? What are people requesting that isn't available? It could be a topic, a unique combination of topics, or a new product. Maybe people want jellyfish-themed subclasses or feather dusters that look like phoenixes or cockatrices.

Combat. Where's your proficiency? When you get to work, what are you good at? What do you have a knack for? Are you a wordsmith, an artist, a crafter, a speaker...what rolls do you have bonuses on?

Now find where all three of those overlap. You need the skill to make something valuable, or you won't get compensated for your

work. You need an audience that wants what you're creating, even if they don't know it yet, but it's definitely easier if they know and are looking for it already. And you need passion, or it'll get boring fast, and you don't want to turn your hobby into a business only to get bored.



Photo by Evgenia Basyrova on [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com/photo/evgenia-basyrova/)

Find Your Allies

Thanks to recent events, my belief about this industry has been solidly confirmed that, just as TTRPGs are cooperative games, not competitive, the same is true of the TTRPG publishing industry. "A rising tide raises all ships." Consequently, **the most effective form of marketing in the TTRPG industry is cross-promotion.**


So make friends. Find people who share your passions and your niche. But don't stop there. Gamers often have eclectic tastes, so don't limit your social circles. At the same time, by making friends whose lives and interests are different, you'll expand your awareness, empathy, and creativity.

As you expand your social circle, start talking to your friends about cross-promotion. Or just promote their stuff without expectation of reciprocation. Just be a good friend. Over time, each of you will help each other, you'll expose your audience to new products, and your audience will grow at the same time.



Photo by William Fortunato on [Pexels.com](https://www.pexels.com/photo/william-fortunato/)

Start Your Quest

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- **Learn the Craft.** Publishing a supplement is more detailed than creating an adventure or homebrew for your home game. Each game system requires certain standard syntax. Learn those phrases. Get involved in an online community like [/r/UearthedArcana/](#). Take the Write Your First Encounter course from the [Storytelling Collective](#) – it's worth the cost.
- **Put some small free creations on [DriveThruRPG](#).** This is the easiest way to build an audience. If you start with free, people will try your work, and you'll be able to email about half of them with future announcements. If writing is your specialty, not layout, find a template for Word or use [GM Binder](#) or [Homebrewery](#) for design, and use public domain art.
- **Create some slightly larger projects, and charge for them.** (Don't make them Pay What You Want. There's no benefit to that.)
- Meanwhile, start thinking about a **Kickstarter**, a project big enough to make it worth the platform, but it doesn't need to be huge. A 30-page adventure, collection, or other supplement using stock art will get you started, and a low price tier for the digital format will encourage people to

try your work with minimal risk. The goal of this project is less about income and more about number of backers. Use [DriveThruRPG](#) to fulfill at least the digital product, and they will allow you two emails to your customer list. And then when your backers get their finished product, they'll be added to your email list there. Meanwhile, when you send out surveys at the end of your project, offer the opportunity to join an external email list, like [Mailchimp's free email tier](#). (Note: Mailchimp recently drastically reduced their free tier subscriber limit. You can start there, but you'll need to move to something else quickly, so shop around.)

- By the time you finish your first Kickstarter, you'll have **three ways to contact your audience**: DriveThruRPG, Kickstarter backer updates, and your email list. Each has a different focus, so be careful how you use each one, and respect each group.
 - Repeat the process, **adding collaborators** to build larger products (or keep doing small ones if you want!), and you're well on your way.

Keep Leveling Up

Part of the benefit of collaborating means learning. Use editors and sensitivity readers. They will help you learn how to make a better product. Hire extra writers, and learn from their styles. Get on [Discords](#) with other creators to improve your craft. Ask your peers to look at your works in progress, and invite feedback.

Don't Forget Downtime

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Find another hobby. I set goals to read a certain number of comic books via my Marvel Unlimited subscription each week. It allows me to relax and feed my creativity with a different medium and genre than high fantasy TTRPG.

Invest in your values. Think about what's most important to you. For me, it's my Christian faith and my family. If I want both of those to grow stronger, I need to invest time in them. For me, that means blocking out time on my calendar for those priorities and sticking with them. Thankfully, my wife loves me dearly and won't let me neglect those values. If your time use doesn't reflect your values, consider asking someone to hold you accountable to your own goals. I use [RescueTime](#) to set productivity goals, but it also helps me limit my work.

It's a Game. If it's not fun, you're doing it wrong.

Tying back to the first point, TTRPGs are amazing, but publishing has major challenges. It won't always be fun, but

check with yourself – when it's time to start your work, are you excited or dreading it? That can change depending on the day's plans, but how do you feel about it overall? If you start to dread it, you may want to consider a different field or at least a different approach. Maybe you need to hire people to take some of the drudgery from you. As I often tell my children, "Make choices that give you what you want."

What I wish I knew before I started

Finally, here's a few tips I learned along the way that might be helpful to someone:

- **VAT:** If you use DriveThruRPG for fulfillment, they handle VAT and other international details. If you don't live in the EU, it's almost impossible to ship physical products there due to VAT unless you work through a distributor. Especially when you're just starting out, using their Print on Demand service is invaluable.
- **Proofread your updates:** You can edit updates for up to 30 minutes after you post them, but most backers read it in their email, so they won't see the typos you fixed. I sent out 2 updates with subject lines that said our pre-order store was open when it wasn't yet, because I thought it would be when I started the message, but then plans changed, and I forgot to edit the subject.
- **Figure out how you're going to handle pledge management in advance.** Contact the company you're planning to use. Get it set up and ready to launch as soon as possible, preferably shortly after you launch your campaign. Know how to import your backers into it. I tried importing my backers into Gamefound, and while adding people was easy, I gave up trying to import their pledges in a form that worked with our campaign.

- **Marketing isn't evil.** It's just letting people know about the cool stuff you're making so they don't miss it. Even though Limitless Heroics had 2300 backers, more people keep finding it. Our website continues to get significant traffic from Kickstarter, even though the campaign ended a year ago. The more we get the word out, the more people who want this will know it exists. Just be honest.
- **Twitter is lousy for marketing.** I can count on one hand the number of people in this industry who have built a publishing business using Twitter as their primary marketing platform, and they all spent thousands of hours there interacting, and even then, the number of paying customers to followers is minuscule. Twitter is useful for freelancers, because it's about building relationships, not topics, and the algorithm demotes offsite links. But no matter what social media platforms you use, email is still king and the most effective way to connect with those interested in your work..
- **DriveThruRPG's 2 PoD options have significant pros and cons.** When I launched the Limitless Heroics Kickstarter, I had no idea how it would be received, whether anyone would want it, so I chose their voucher system that didn't include the print cost in the backer tier. It was the lowest risk, but it led to a lot of confusion. I still get frustrated backer comments and messages about it. If you're not sure about your project's popularity or plan to allow for a lot of backer-submitted content or stretch goals that could increase the page count, this insures that print costs don't outweigh backer tier amounts, but be prepared to answer a lot of questions after the campaign when it's time for fulfillment, and be very clear about how this works in advance, repeating it frequently. Also, the boilerplate messaging that OneBookShelf offers for this process is confusing. Here's my suggestion to

reword it, but IANAL.

This campaign offers a digital copy as the main reward. However, backers can also pay extra after the campaign to get a discounted physical printed version of the book or cards through OneBookShelf's Print-On-Demand (POD) service. The POD version will become available to order after the digital version has been completed. Backers will receive a link to purchase the discounted POD version from OneBookShelf.

So, what's your TTRPG publishing journey like? Share your thoughts in the comments below!

What the New Barbie With Down Syndrome Can Teach Us About Inclusivity in TTRPGs

April 21, 2024



The new Barbie with Down syndrome and her impact

Mattel, the toy company behind Barbie, recently announced a [new doll in their Barbie line with Down syndrome](#), added to a line that includes [dolls with wheelchairs](#) and [one with a hearing aid](#).

As we see this gradual shift in representation in toys, we normalize disabilities in the lives of children. That way, we transform a “plastic” toy into a subtle tool to normalize people with disabilities in their lives, preventing othering and expanding their awareness and acceptance.

This new doll allows children with Down syndrome to play with toys that look like them and represent their experience, just as toys have added more racial and cultural representation in recent decades.

But this toy is for other kids, too, so the fantasy worlds they create in their pretend play includes disabled people as much as any others. And the more we get accurate and respectful portrayals in multiple forms of media, the more understanding, empathy, and acceptance will be mirrored in children’s play and their subsequent real-world interactions and relationships.

I’ve seen this impact in my own children. Because my work and passion lead to many conversations at home about disabilities and inclusion, and they love the service animals in [Limitless Heroics](#), when we met a student at their school with a service dog, they reacted as they would to someone’s cool new backpack—they thought it was cool but not strange. When they encounter people in their lives with disabilities, they notice the differences and are sensitive to them, but they don’t think of them as “those people.” They are “my friends.”

What can we learn from Barbie about inclusivity in TTRPGs?



Ollie, the halfling/dragonborn bard with Down syndrome from [Limitless Champions](#)

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- How can featuring characters with disabilities, such as Down syndrome, in a respectful and dignified manner enhance inclusivity in TTRPGs?

- What steps can game developers take to accurately reflect people with disabilities in stories and characters in TTRPGs?
- How can TTRPG players create diverse and inclusive gaming environments that accommodate everyone, including those with disabilities?
- How can we better listen to and consider feedback from players with disabilities in order to ensure inclusivity in all aspects of the game?

By learning from Barbie and paying attention to the importance of including diverse and accurate representations of disabilities, we can help create and foster more inclusive and respectful TTRPG communities.

3. ~~Steps~~ Ramps to Improvements in Representation in TTRPGs

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- Creating characters with disabilities that are complex and multi-dimensional.
- Making sure characters' disabilities do not define them

and limit them in any negative way.

- Ongoing conversations with willing players who have disabilities to help shape that representation in game rules and worldbuilding.
- Consider what accessibility looks like in your game world.
- Making sure players with disabilities have the resources and support they need, both physical and social.
- Considering how any special features, skills, equipment, or backstory related to a character's disability impacts both the game and the players.
- Use [artwork](#), props, and [miniatures with disability representation](#).

What does a better future look like?

“You’re playing D&D? Who’s winning?” Has anyone ever asked you that? TTRPGs are uniquely cooperative. Properly played, everyone wins, because the success is more than loot or levels—it’s a welcoming environment and enjoyment for everyone. So imagine this box text describing the real world:

As you enter the room, you see a diverse group of adventurers gathered around a table, each with their own unique character sheets. One player, with a character that has a physical disability, shares their backstory with the group. The other players listen attentively and ask questions to better understand the character’s experience.

As they start to create their characters, the players encourage each other to consider incorporating diverse backgrounds and experiences. They work together to ensure that each character is balanced and equal in strength and credibility, regardless of any disabilities they may have.

As the quest unfolds, the players encounter a wide variety of NPCs, and some have disabilities as part of their larger descriptions and interactions.

Throughout their game, the players celebrate each other's successes and work together to create solutions that benefit everyone. They make sure that all players, including those with disabilities, feel included and supported both in and out of the game.

As you watch, you realize that this group of adventurers has truly embraced the importance of inclusivity and diversity in TTRPGs. They have created a safe and welcoming environment where everyone can enjoy their adventures together.

The Cost of a D&D Wheelchair

April 21, 2024



By its use as a universal symbol of disability in the real world and its use throughout literature as the definitive representation of disability, it's no wonder that, when people think of disability representation in TTRPG, wheelchairs roll into our minds immediately, so today (March 1) being [International Wheelchair Day](#), let's examine the role of

wheelchairs in tabletop roleplaying games like Dungeons & Dragons.

Wheelchairs first appeared in Wizards of the Coast products with Banak Brawnnavil in the 2010 novel, [Gauntlgrym](#) and in fifth edition sources in [Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft](#) (2021) with Alanik Ray, though none have yet included usage rules, but the most well known is Sarah Thompson's [Combat Wheelchair](#) (2020). Meanwhile, Pathfinder 2e's [Pathfinder Lost Omens: The Grand Bazaar](#) (2021) includes [wheelchair options](#), and more creators continue to add them to their supplements such as [this current 5e Kickstarter](#). And of course, we've included several options in [Limitless Heroics](#), listed below.

But what does a wheelchair cost in-game, both in gold and other expenses?

What is its purpose?

Some wish to include wheelchairs to make their game worlds more interesting or to give a real world minority representation in the game world. Following the lead of [Tasha's Cauldron of Everything](#), which added prosthetic limbs as a magic item that perfectly replicates a missing limb without requiring attunement, a wheelchair, magic or not, may be gifted to players with only narrative mechanics. Pathfinder 2e likewise offers a basic wheelchair free as part of a character's backstory or 5 sp or 5 gp, depending on the model, plus upgrades.

The Combat Wheelchair offers its most basic model for 20 gp with multiple upgrade options and associated costs and no mechanical penalties associated with the corresponding disabilities.

The cost, both in gold and other associated effects such as attunement or mechanics may be higher in your game. While

understandable to want to give easy access to players, some groups may want to reflect the real world challenge of acquiring proper mobility aids, both in equipment and maintenance costs. You may want to reflect the difficulty of acquiring an expensive specialized device in a world with little or no medical insurance (which is the real world for many). The standard [wheelchair in Limitless Heroics](#) is 50 gp.

Do you require attunement slots for magic wheelchairs? How well can they navigate difficult terrain? Do they have limited levitation to more easily navigate obstacles like stairs? Do they follow the cost guidelines in chapter two of [Xanathar's Guide to Everything](#), or do assistive items get a discount?

Ultimately, these decisions depend on the nature of your game, but even more, the desires of your group. While many dismiss any kind of disability or assistive representation in the name of verisimilitude (even though wheelchairs predate rapiers in the real world), **it's just as easy to explain why the wheelchair is there as why not.**

But remember: **you don't owe the game anything.** TTRPGs are all about the players. If including wheelchairs in your game, either PC's, NPC's, or other creatures (like the [Goblin Wheelchair Cavalry](#)!) communicates a more welcoming, "We're open to all," environment to your players, include them. If your players struggle to get the assistive care they need and want to forget about red tape for a few hours, let the local temple or artificer give them out for free. Maybe some gnomes like making them with minor added features that aren't always reliable. Or maybe you want to represent the challenges of acquiring accessibility in the real world and explore ways in the game world that will spark ideas for the real world.

Magic Mobility

In your game world, the type of wheelchairs, especially magic wheelchairs, can vary according to the level of magic and technology.

In a magical steampunk world like Eberron, it may be powered by a bound elemental or clockwork. A dark fantasy world may have chairs made from arcane metals and spikes; in other worlds, a fiendish chair resembling a torture rack or a fey chair of braided crystal or wrapped in vines. And again, the costs would be dictated first by their role among your players and second by your world's economy.

- [Animated Wheelchair](#)
- [Rohna Ginnsley](#)
- [Wheelchair Cavalry Goblin](#)
- [Yeroc's Summoning Spiderwalk](#)
- [Webber's Water Wheels](#)
- [Waterlow's Instant Chariot](#)
- [Veralynn's Countryside Conveyance](#)
- [Tockelberry's Chair of Speed](#)
- [Rohna's Manipulative Mobility](#)
- [Howard's Handy Howdah](#)
- [Donna Nason's Wheelchair Ram](#)
- [Chaos's Orca Chair](#)
- [Anjol Hillfollower's Recumbent Carpet of Flying](#)
- [Aaron's Axles of Agility](#)

The Final Cost

Ultimately, the cost of wheelchairs comes not in their expense, but in their value, partly to in-game characters, but mostly to your players.

However you incorporate them, you communicate the value of disabled people. It communicates acceptance instead of begrudging toleration. It makes your game accessible. It invites more people into the hobby.

It makes the real world a little more fantastic.

What Have We Learned from #OpenDnD

April 21, 2024



January 2023 was a rough year for the TTRPG industry. 5e developers found ourselves dividing our time between protesting and planning for a nebulous future. When [WotC finally waved the CC-BY white flag](#), we [celebrated like the end of Return of the Jedi](#). But **experience doesn't make you wiser. It makes you older. *Learning* from experience makes you wiser.** So how can we gain XP from this experience to level up?

D&D is HUGE

If this had happened fifteen years ago, nobody would have noticed, and nobody would have cared. In fact, *it did* when WotC released D&D 4th Edition with a GSL instead of an OGL in 2008. That led to the release of Pathfinder. But nobody outside the TTRPG community had any idea. But thanks to the success of Fifth Edition, D&D has firmly entrenched itself in the mainstream consciousness. As a result, [mainstream news](#) and [financial analysts](#) took notice, and the final nail in the OGL 1.2 coffin may have [come from Alta Fox Capital](#), Hasbro's largest investors, who recognize the size and value of the fanbase. The upcoming movie and TV show could never have had their big budgets without the size of the 5e fanbase. **We are legion.**

D&D ≠ WotC

I've said it often. [Mike Shae](#) says it so often, he should trademark it. And it's 100% true. WotC isn't D&D. WotC owns the D&D trademark, but they don't own the game. **D&D is more than a fancy ampersand – it's a global community** of 50 million TTRPG players who play 5e more than anything else, but we also play [many other systems](#). But even in the 5e community, we don't need WotC. We can either start with the free [Basic Rules](#) or [another 5e-based game](#) and develop our own content for it or [purchase high quality content from over 8500 options](#).

But even at the height of these shenanigans, we knew that they couldn't take our books away, and no matter what changes they make in the future, we'll just keep on playing what we want to play. And if they intend to [replace book releases with microtransaction-based digital content](#) and slap the ampersand on it, they can do that, but they don't get to define what D&D is. **Every table, whether stone, formica, or VTT, decides what D&D is**

for them, even if there's no ampersand to be found on any of your resources. And you don't have to buy their latest products or update to new editions if you don't want to!

The players are heroes too, not just the characters

When the community learned of the [plot](#) to wipe out other 5e creators, [we rolled initiative](#). In 8 hours, a [Discord assembling to defend the OGL](#) had 500 members, and at its peak, it had about 1700 sharing information, writing letters to Hasbro, WotC, the EFF, the FTC, and more. [77,407 people signed a petition](#). YouTube and every social media platform came alive with reports and shared information so powerful, it [crashed D&D Beyond with a flood of 40,000 unsubscriptions](#). OSR and 5e fans set aside their edition preferences to take up arms together. We fought. We fought hard. It was exhausting. But we won. **You don't just play a hero. You are a hero. Don't ever think you're not.**

Trust the action economy

According to the cliché, it's always darkest right before the dawn, and in this case, that was true. Many [believed the battle was lost](#), and we all planned our contingencies, when WotC suddenly dropped their treasure and fled. They made the mistake of trying to slip legal shenanigans past Rules Lawyers, a group of **people who scrutinize word usage as a hobby**. They presented a seemingly unstoppable force to **people who strategize ways to overcome impossible odds for a living**.

We challenge the schemes of dragons and archdevils for fun! WotC, did you really think you were more powerful than that?!

No single player had the power to defeat this BBEG ourselves.

But the most powerful among us, bards like Linda Codega, Ginny Di, and Indestructoboy, were only as powerful as those they inspired. The true power came from the action economy, the 5e principle that multiple weaker actors can defeat a more powerful being based on the number of actions each can take in a given round, which is why [multiple monsters multiply the XP in an encounter](#). We continued to act while they struggled to move.

5e is the final version of D&D

OneD&D was [already touted](#) as the final unifying version of D&D, which seems like a bold claim, but this event may have solidified that, yet not in the way WotC intended. Instead of unifying around WotC products, including their online strategy, by releasing [SRD 5.1 into Creative Commons](#), an entire industry of creators can keep making 5e content forever, modifying, tweaking, expanding, or pantomiming, and while system overhauls are inevitable, the 5e flywheel's momentum is seemingly unstoppable.

Unless we have a reason to unite against it.

Responding to the OGL 1.2v1 Survey #opendnd

April 21, 2024



You have heard, “Everyone’s entitled to their opinion.” I disagree, at least if you’re going to be making decisions with it that affect others. I contend that, “Everyone’s entitled to an **informed** opinion.” So having read the [proposed OGL 1.2v1](#) I offer my answers to the questions in the [OGL 1.2 Survey](#) with suggested reading so you can express your own informed opinions. I hope this will also help others understand why the entire community is upset about these changes. Special thanks to Justin Alexander for [posting these \(with his informed responses\)](#) and to all those who offered their informed opinions to help inform mine.

Note that the responses are necessarily plain text in the form, but I’ve added formatting for reference and readability here.

2. Now that you’ve read the proposed OGL 1.2, what concerns or questions come to mind for you?

I feel betrayed. From January 2004 to the end of 2021, **18 years**, you had these words on your website <<https://web.archive.org/web/20060106175610/http://www.wizards.com:80/default.asp?x=d20/oglfaq/20040123f>>.

7. Can’t Wizards of the Coast change the License in a way that I wouldn’t like?

Yes, it could. However, the License already defines what will

happen to content that has been previously distributed using an earlier version, in Section 9. As a result, even if Wizards made a change you disagreed with, you could continue to use an earlier, acceptable version at your option. In other words, there's no reason for Wizards to ever make a change that the community of people using the Open Gaming License would object to, because the community would just ignore the change anyway.

Ever since you removed those words, your communication with your passionate loyal customers has been a string of lies. Since you sent NDAs to some of the small companies that you portrayed as “big corporations” (most less than 10 employees!), literally every public communication has intentionally contained multiple deceptions, and this document and its associated FAQ are no exception.

My concern is that I can't do business, nor can I in good conscience give my verbal or financial support, to a company that lies to its fans and, when called out for it, doubles down on the lies. I have been a hardcore fan and Dungeon Master since 1982. I fought against the Satanic Panic at age 10 and have extolled the game's virtues and fun for forty years.

Just a few weeks before this became public, I encouraged my 2500 loyal customers to buy OneD&D when it launched, and we would support it with revised and optimized content. Now, I have to tell them that if they want to use our unique disability-representative and accessible content, they'll have to follow us to another system like Black Flag and stop buying WotC materials. I don't want to do that.

3. After reading the proposed OGL

1.2, how has your perception of the future of Dungeons & Dragons changed compared to before reading OGL 1.2?

Much Worse

4. What would be needed to improve your perception of Dungeons & Dragons' future?

Stop the empty apologies. This is still a critical failure. Every third party publisher encourages their fan base to buy your content, fights against piracy of your materials, and fills niche gaps that you can't. **Look at the comments and replies on all your social media channels over the past month. 99% of the comments are negative, pointing out that you're not fooling anyone.**

And these are your fans, the people who chose to follow your channels! That's not just the publishers that you've alienated!

I work with a lot of teens, including my own children (all D&D fans until now), and I always tell them, **"When you've dug yourself into a hole, the first thing you need to do is put down the shovel."** Until Hasbro puts down the shovel, the hole will only get deeper, and now that the financial trades have started reporting it, everything looks bleak for WotC.

That said, you need to understand that **D&D ≠ WotC. D&D isn't about the ampersand. It's about the community.** And you can't take our community away. We—the fans, not just the 3PP—will find another home, and we will migrate together, and we will support OGL 1.0a developers by buying their old products. We would like

WotC to be part of our community, but that requires mutual respect and trust. You've repeatedly broken our trust, so now you need to do something Herculean to redirect that torrent. Replace 1.0a with 1.0b that adds "irrevocable" without an Orwellian redefinition, and only then will you be able to begin to claw your way out of the pit you've trapped yourself in. **We'll even help you, as we are right now**, collectively putting hundreds of thousands of hours into these surveys and other feedback channels to offer you our ropes out of the pit, but we're all hanging onto the same rope, since we fully expect you to pull us down with you, but together, we're stronger than you.

5. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International?

Understanding: 5; Satisfaction: 2

6. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the content found in the SRD that will be released under Creative Commons?

Understanding: 4; Satisfaction: 2

7. Do you have any other comments about the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International and/or the content that will be released under Creative Commons?

I heard about the Creative Commons license before I even got to read the post. As a longtime fan of the Open Source movement, I was shocked and thrilled.

And then I saw what it actually included.

Those sections are nearly useless as shared content. It describes combat but doesn't tell me definitely whether I can say, "Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage."

90% of what's listed there is uncopyrightable, so by making it Creative Commons, **you actually took away rights** by requiring attribution for something that's nearly all public domain. Another deception to fool your investors. We're not fooled. Put down the shovel.

This would be useful if you also included lists of names of monsters, classes, and spells that we can safely use unless you actually plan to sue someone for saying, "The Wizard can cast Magic Missile," without including the stat blocks. Tell us what feature descriptions we can use for homebrew monsters like the standard breath weapon syntax.

And then there's the legal confusion whether those sections are Creative Commons or OGL. You can't assign 2 different licenses

to the same content, so which is it? Is this some other kind of trap? If we use this Creative Commons content, because the OGL declares it to be Creative Commons, are we thus submitting to the new OGL? If the OGL, which declares this content to be Creative Commons, is terminated, does that also deauthorize the Creative Commons license? You'll have to forgive the questions, given the context of your behavior in recent months.

This raises more questions than it answers, and nobody knows whether we gain anything from this besides being able to say, "hit points," and, "Armor Class," and maybe do skill checks, so can we use that and related standard 5e phrases under Creative Commons? **Give us an SRD of what is CC, how we can use the content on those pages, including a list of representative examples in terms of phrase and term usage.**

And most importantly, **this gives us nothing more than we already had** with 1.0a, like a trip to the Wonderful Wizard of Ogl, where he gives gifts to the quartet that simply tell them what they already have and says, "Oh, no, my dear; I'm really a very good man, but I'm a very bad Wizard, I must admit." (That text is public domain. We know we can use it. See the value of clear licensing?)

8. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the Notice of Deauthorization?

Understanding: 5; Satisfaction: 1

9. Do you have any other comments about the Notice of Deauthorization?

You made a promise for 18 years. **18 years!** And then you claimed you could just deauthorize it without terms in the contract to determine how or under what terms you could do so.

This is straight-up bullying, because you know this is dishonest, and the only way you might get away with it is by pushing us around. But you have to understand that many of us, especially those of us who have supported you for 40 years, spent a lot of our formative years being bullied, often because we liked playing D&D! And now D&D is bullying us! But we're not little kids anymore. **We've spent more decades than the OGL strategizing, coming up with creative solutions against impossible odds, sticking together, standing up for each other, and not giving up.**

I wrote a book of disability mechanics under 1.0a and made those mechanics OGC to allow other publishers to easily add disability representation to their content. Now neither I nor they can use those mechanics unless we both submit to your revision, **a setback to disability rights.**

This raises so many other questions. For those not following industry news or your social media channels but producing content via OGL 1.0a around the world, **how can they agree to a license they've never heard of?** You can solve this with a new SRD 5.2 with updated content, offering something new, but leaving those who are willing to accept the limitations of SRD 5.1, giving your fans a choice instead of forcing thousands of people to walk away from D&D forever. **We love D&D. We're growing the hobby as we have for decades. Work with us instead of against us.**

Be the heroes. Put down the shovel, and pick up the sword. Be the brave swashbuckler who makes the hard call for the benefit of all. If you don't, we will. You've seen how we've banded together. A month ago, we were arguing like siblings over which edition is best, or D&D vs Pathfinder, but **you've united the entire global community by giving us a common enemy – Hasbro.** You rolled initiative first, not us. And we will keep fighting for what's right, but we don't want you as enemies. We want you as allies, even if less than trustworthy allies. Right now, you're still the BBEG. (Since I notice Hasbro executives clearly don't know D&D from what we've seen the past few weeks, that's, "Big Bad Evil Guy," the villain at the final showdown.) When your children and grandchildren talk about you, let it be with pride – "They fought for freedom and stood up against lies!" **It's not too late for each person at Hasbro reading this to do the right thing.**

10. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the types of content covered by the proposed OGL 1.2?

Understanding: 4; Satisfaction: 1

11. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the content

ownership rights outlined in the proposed OGL 1.2?

Understanding: 5; Satisfaction: 1

12. Do you have any other comments about the types of content covered and/or the content ownership rights outlined by the proposed OGL 1.2?

Content Types

As an advocate for disability rights, specifically within the TTRPG space, this is completely unacceptable. **I have been working with publishers big and small in the past year to improve accessibility throughout the entire industry, and you're trying to stop that, or you at least don't want third party D&D content to be accessible.** While an audiobook version may arguably be a static file, since the only examples you've given are print, PDF, and ePub, and you said other formats cannot be under this license, **you are forbidding disability access.** I'm committed to making audio versions of our books, but under this, I can't unless I make them Fan Content, which would contradict this license and be financially unfeasible. **So much for all the talk about inclusion and preventing discrimination, yet another lie.** Many publishers have wikis, which make their content easier to navigate and more accessible to people with a wide variety of disabilities. People use browser plug-ins to meet a wide range of accessibility needs, and you just forbade us from producing content in formats like dynamic HTML to offer maximum accessibility.

But it's not just a matter of adding a few extra file formats. It's any number of possibilities, most of which don't exist yet. That's why I want to make them. I want to make an audio mouseover plugin for Foundry VTT that tells you what you're pointing at and can even work like a geiger counter to find the closest token. That's just one idea. For ADHD, I have trouble picking out specific items on a screen of too many things. Some kind of animation with a search function would be helpful, and spell effects help everyone see who's doing what. Someone with short term memory loss might benefit from those frequent animations. That's VTT.

And then there's apps, like imagine a wiki-like app that's all voice controlled and has audio capabilities. Could be done as a web app, but would be nice as a standalone mobile app, too. Encounter builders that allow you to adjust color, font size, background, etc. for different sensory needs. "It's your turn" flashy animation could be helpful for multiple attention & sensory needs. And you forbade interactive character sheets, which are helpful for those with learning and sensory differences. And why do you hate random generators? Those are mostly just harmless fun but can help those with executive dysfunction. The number and variety of assistive technology are infinite and will change as other technology or ideas come available. We need to have those options available and not forbid creative problem solving.

Don't claim that this is all about preventing discrimination. That's just hypocrisy when the license itself is inherently discriminatory. Another lie. But if you insist on that path, you'd better check every line of those 4 corners with an ADA lawyer. I already am.

Content Ownership Rights

You included “Irrevocable” but then immediately redefined it. To quote Inigo Montoya, “You keep using that word. I don’t think it means what you think it means.”

irrevocable (meaning that content licensed under this license can never be withdrawn from the license).

This doesn’t prevent the license itself from being revoked, and if the license is revoked, then that inherently revokes our license to use it. Even if our existing content couldn’t be revoked, which this doesn’t guarantee, I can’t sign contracts with creators for projects that could suddenly become impossible to complete due to license termination. The wording in 1.0a was clearer than this, and we all know how you handled that. **This is a bad faith redefinition.**

13. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the “You Control Your Content” section?

Understanding: 5; Satisfaction: 1

14. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the “Warranties And

Disclaimers” section?

Understanding: 5; Satisfaction: 1

15. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the “Modification Or Termination” section?

Understanding: 5; Satisfaction: 1

16. Do you have any other comments about the “You Control Your Content”, “Warranties And Disclaimers”, or “Modification Or Termination” sections?

You Control Your Content

You claim we own our content, but you can at any time terminate this license for some or all of us, thus removing permission to publish it. If you control its distribution, then we don't truly own it. **Another lie.**

Warranties And Disclaimers

(e) No Illegal Conduct. You will not violate the law in any way relating to this license or Your Licensed Works.

Which law? I've published content showing women's knees, which

is illegal in some countries. I've published content depicting LGBTQ+ characters, which is illegal in some countries. This would also prevent using it for political speech in some contexts.

No Hateful Content or Conduct. You will not include content in Your Licensed Works that is harmful, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, or harassing, or engage in conduct that is harmful, discriminatory, illegal, obscene, or harassing. We have the sole right to decide what conduct or content is hateful, and you covenant that you will not contest any such determination via any suit or other legal action.

You reserve the right to define this without any ability to contest it? I have friends whose content has been pulled from the DMs Guild for showing "male nipples." This license itself discriminates against disabled, neurodivergent, and mentally ill people. You still sell *Oriental Adventures* and very recently published hateful content in *Spelljammer*. **We clearly cannot trust you to be sole arbiters to define what is and isn't hateful.** If you want to include this, you need to find an independent third party organization or work with the TTRPG community to establish an independent organization to make these decisions using a process that will not put the financial burden of defense on us. Some examples include We Are Many-United Against Hate, Southern Poverty Law Center, The Leadership Conference Education Fund, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

OGL 1.0a has been available for 18 years, and in that time, the most problematic content has come from WotC, not 3PP. When hateful content surfaces, the community has self-policed the content more effectively than this policy would be. This is a solution to a non-existent problem, an excuse to rescind the

rights promised in 1.0a.

Modification Or Termination

Because this license includes several termination options, the **modification rules are meaningless**, since you could at any time terminate the license and replace it with a new one, as is the case with this one.

And because you can use 7(b)(i) at any time without recourse to terminate anyone's license immediately, given the problems with 6(f), and without an independent third party to determine intellectual property infringement, these termination conditions are unacceptable.

And these words, "Creators using OGL 1.2 waive all right to participate in class, collective, or joint action," **fundamentally misunderstand what the D&D community is all about. We don't split the party.**

17. How would you rate your level of understanding and your level of satisfaction with the Virtual Tabletop Policy?

Understanding: 5; Satisfaction: 1

18. Do you have any other comments about the Virtual Tabletop Policy?

First, in case this content is broken up in your system, my comment from #12:

It's any number of possibilities, most of which don't exist yet. That's why I want to make them. I want to make an audio mouseover plugin for Foundry VTT that tells you what you're pointing at and can even work like a geiger counter to find the closest token. That's just one idea. For ADHD, I have trouble picking out specific items on a screen of too many things. Some kind of animation with a search function would be helpful, and spell effects help everyone see who's doing what. Someone with short term memory loss might benefit from those frequent animations.

This policy, which you claim is about preventing hate and discrimination, is a hateful discriminating policy. You believe you can tell people, including disabled people, how to play D&D and what tools we need to do it, but you don't know everyone's abilities, experiences, and needs. VTTs have allowed many people with social anxiety to play D&D on their own terms, and **you're restricting their experience, punishing them for their mental illness**. I understand that you want to eliminate competition for your upcoming VTT, but by trying to do everything yourselves, you place an impossible burden on your developers, and everyone loses. In D&D, you're supposed to be able to play anything you want any way you want, but for the first time in its history, you're dialing that back and placing restrictions on creative expression. That will not endear you to your fans, and "forbids assistive technology for disabled people" isn't a good look in the headlines.

And then there's the lack of a license. This doesn't just have a kill switch. It's just a policy, which can be changed with a single meeting, which you've shown you're likely to do. I can't afford to invest in assistive development for 5e VTT players with the threat that you could forbid it at any time with a company memo. The entire fanbase won't play 5e anywhere online

with that threat. We'll move to a different system before you ever get your VTT up and running, and even those who come back will miss all the options they had before.

This also raises the question of whether pre-existing 1.0a content can be published as VTT content once 1.2 "deauthorizes" 1.0a. Since I noted elsewhere all the discriminatory elements of 1.2, my disabled customers are depending on me and others to convert our existing content to VTT for accessibility, but you've made that impossible, since accepting 1.2 for VTT conversion prevents creating audiobooks. We literally have to choose between allowed accessibility measures, depending which license we're using.

And then of course, there's the strange NFT reference you shoehorned into this policy. The entire 3PP industry hates NFTs. The one company (besides Hasbro!) that has attempted this is Gripr, and the entire fanbase rejected them when announced.

This takes us back to your own words <<https://web.archive.org/web/20211127200600/http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20/oglfaq/20040123f>>:

Q: I want to distribute computer software using the OGL. Is that possible?

A: Yes, it's certainly possible. The most significant thing that will impact your effort is that you have to give all the recipients the right to extract and use any Open Game Content you've included in your application, and you have to clearly identify what part of the software is Open Game Content.

One way is to design your application so that all the Open Game Content resides in files that are human-readable (that is, in a format that can be opened and understood by a reasonable person). Another is to have all the data used by the program

viewable somehow while the program runs.

Distributing the source code not an acceptable method of compliance. First off, most programming languages are not easy to understand if the user hasn't studied the language. Second, the source code is a separate entity from the executable file. The user must have access to the actual Open Content used.

See the Software FAQ for more information.

Which reads
<<https://web.archive.org/web/20211122085557/http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20%2Foglfaq%2F20040123i>>

Q: So what kinds of programs can I make with the OGL?

A: Anything. Character generators are popular, as are programs that help GMs keep track of their adventure. Random treasure generators are also fun.

Q: So I could make a game?

A: Sure. Remember though, you cannot use any Product Identity with the OGL or claim compatibility with anything. So you can't say your game is a d20 System game or uses D&D rules or call it Elminster's Undermountain Crawl.

You said in the FAQ for this policy:

For over 20 years, thousands of creators have helped grow the TTRPG community using a shared set of game mechanics that are the foundation for their unique worlds and other creations. We don't want that to change, and we've heard loud and clear that neither do you.

You are clearly changing this and restricting it to everyone's detriment. You are telling us how we can and can't play D&D. We call this, "Gatekeeping."

19. Have you used the OGL 1.0a or previous versions of the OGL to create third party content?

Yes

20. Do you want to create third party content for Dungeons & Dragons in the future?

Maybe

21. Would you be comfortable releasing TTRPG content under the proposed OGL 1.2 as written?

No

22. Why do you say that?

Until two weeks ago, I passionately wanted to create under the OGL, to improve representation and accessibility throughout the D&D ecosystem. But with these strongarm tactics, it's getting harder to justify creating content that supports such a company. I wanted to change the industry for the better, but everything about this new OGL makes it worse. **I can't find a single**

improvement that this new license provides, and I refuse to discriminate against gamers by accepting the terms of this license.

If you want us to accept a new license, you need to give us a reason that doesn't feel like extortion.

23. Compared to the OGL 1.0a, do you feel that you would be able to continue developing content the same way under the proposed OGL 1.2?

No

24. Why do you say that?

I've worked with a lot of people in abusive relationships. I have personal experience with them. The way this process has been handled has mirrored the hallmarks of abuse: refusing to take responsibility for your actions (It was just a draft!), gaslighting (We added "irrevocable!"), aggression (Threats toward the "Big 20" to sign with little time to decide), excessive monitoring (financial reporting, scrutinizing our content), attacking our intelligence (If you don't like legal terminology, you can just accept it without reading!), mind games ("claiming you're "giving" us public domain content as Creative Commons), isolation ("Creators using OGL 1.2 waive all right to participate in class, collective, or joint action."), and promising to change and then doing it again (in the same sentence!).

Between this behavior, the built-in termination options, and the ableist discrimination inherent in this license I cannot in good

conscience work under this license.

25. How would you rate your interest in using the Content Creator Badge as part of your third party works?

2

26. Do you have any other comments about Content Creator Badges?

A month ago, I would have given this a 4, proud to have the ampersand on my product (although this one looks amateurish), but now, to have the WotC brand on my product as some kind of endorsement of your company would be hypocritical and a contradiction of our company's stated mission, "Helping you make lives better through TTRPGs." Because this license only makes lives worse.

What other feedback do you have for us (related to the Open Games License or otherwise)?

I was so excited about the future of D&D. Together, we were making the world better, changing lives, and literally saving lives. I haven't been to a movie since before COVID, but I was eager to go see Honor Among Thieves. I was looking forward to a shared media universe, and I was eager to use that media to introduce more people to the game and the domino effect that would cause. But until Hasbro leadership stops the lies and starts showing some vestige of respect for its fans, my only

interactions with WotC products will be words of disappointment and cautionary tales to those who ask for my recommendation.

We just want to play D&D, make cool stuff for it, and be able to support the artists and wordsmiths who dedicate their time and talents to put beautiful wrapping paper on your products without fear of retribution for supporting you.

I truly hope you will rediscover humility and integrity and be the heroes that your media portrays. It's not too late to put down the shovel.