

How to Succeed in Tabletop Roleplaying Game Publishing

May 1, 2023



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)

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)

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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rgPhoto by Madison Inouye on [Pexels.com](#)

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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

May 1, 2023



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

May 1, 2023



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](#)
- [Verallynn'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

May 1, 2023



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

May 1, 2023



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/oglfqa/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 Gripnr, 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.

How to Fix a Broken Relationship #OpenDnD

May 1, 2023



Last week, I wrote letters to Chris Cocks, CEO of Hasbro, Dan Rawson, VP of D&D at Wizards of the Coast, and via the Wizards of the Coast support form.

After taking some time to process and listen to others about their announcement Friday, I wrote this follow-up message via the support form.

Hello. Please send this message to the extent of your ability to those in charge of making decisions regarding the future of the OGL, and thank-you for the extra work you have to do because of all this:

Hi, I'm a dad and a commercial OGL content creator dedicated to using TTRPGs (usually 5e so far) to help you make lives better.

This weekend, I spent a lot of time thinking about the future of the OGL and our company's ability to continue our work to improve disability inclusion and accessibility at the tabletop and the rest of the world. And I worried about what it meant for my ability to continue to feed my disabled children.

As our family was cleaning the house over the weekend, I was having trouble keeping my kids on task, and the combined stress eventually led to me yelling at my kids. Especially given my wife's sensitivity to loud noises, yelling only made things worse.

So I sat down, had a cup of tea and a cookie, and apologized to my family. I could've made excuses and claimed I wasn't really yelling or justified my behavior, but none of those would make things better. My family already knew how I was acting and that it was hurting our relationship. The only way to reconcile was for me to apologize.

I've been happily married for 28 years, so I can assure you that a sincere apology goes a lot further than excuses to restore relationships, especially when I demonstrate sincere contrition and change my behavior.

You have hurt the D&D community worse than any past action in its history.

Lies won't fix things. Don't say you were looking for community feedback by sending OGL 1.1 to 20 people under NDA. Don't say you're concerned about D&D NFTs when the OGL already prohibited that, but you've announced Power Rangers NFTs. Don't say you're trying to keep people from producing harmful D&D content after the Hadozee incident and an updated OGL that forbids producing content with accessibility technology. Don't say we all won when truly, we all lost. The whole world, including your company's future, is worse off due to your actions.

But speaking of the Hadozee incident, pay attention to what happened. You apologized sincerely. You changed the offensive content. You implemented policies to keep it from happening again. And while you broke our trust, we're quick to forgive when we believe that you realize the harm you've caused. Forgiveness isn't saying you didn't do anything wrong. It's specifically acknowledging that harm was done but allowing the relationship to continue in spite of that harm.

While this is worse, if you follow the same pattern you did last time, while thousands are understandably too hurt to come back, many of us will. But you need to admit the harm you caused if you want that to happen, nothing like Friday's announcement.

You need to keep the promise you made in the OGL FAQ that was on your website and leave it alone or improve it to show you care about your fan base – add to the SRD, but the only change added to the OGL should be the word, "Irrevocable," to show us you mean it and learned from this. That would be the policy change to keep this from happening again.

That would show that you care about our relationship even if

only as customer and creator.

We as a community have a deep connection to our relationship with D&D, and we hope you want to be a part of that. But you need to show us that you actually care about D&D if you expect to be part of this relationship. We're trying to make it the best it can be. We hope you will too.

Hopefully but skeptically,

Dale Critchley

Wyrmmworks Publishing

If you're willing to communicate your concerns to Hasbro/WotC, you can use the same feedback form.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to [sign the OpenDnD Petition](#). While you're at it, Ryan Dancey, the crafter of the original OGL, has written a petition of his own that's worthy of consideration. [You can read and sign it here.](#)

**It takes more than Wizards for
a successful D&D Party
#OpenDnD**

May 1, 2023



DM: As you open the door, a thick green gas billows out but does not dissipate.

Wizard: I cast Gust of Wind to dissipate the gas.

DM: Nothing happens. The feeling you normally experience when you cast a spell is gone. As you reach out to manipulate the Weave, you sense its complete absence, like a magical vacuum. As the gas swirls around you, you notice four bipedal silhouettes approaching quickly. In a moment, their long pointed ears, furry bodies, and grins brimming with confidence and menace take shape as they raise their morning stars to attack. Roll initiative...

Barbarian: I rage and draw their attention. Let's see how well those morning stars match my ax!

Bard: I give Bardic Inspiration to the rogue

Rogue: I use the cover of the mist to hide and prepare for a sneak attack.

Wizard: I...use my dagger, I guess.

The executives at Hasbro have taken the unconscionable initiative to [attempt to eliminate their perceived competition](#), believing that they can play the Dungeons & Dragons game and everything it entails by themselves. [It's not going well](#). But why are standard corporate monetization strategies failing so catastrophically?

Hasbro sees D&D primarily for its intellectual property, as if people will pay just as much for the D&D ampersand on anything as the Nike Swoosh®. But D&D was never about the brand. Yes, its recognition holds substantial power *in the industry*, but its power is ultimately rooted in its core concept. From the free [Basic Rules](#):

There's no winning and losing in the Dungeons & Dragons game—at least, not the way those terms are usually understood. Together, the DM and the players create an exciting story of bold adventurers who confront deadly perils. Sometimes an adventurer might come to a grisly end, torn apart by ferocious monsters or done in by a nefarious villain. Even so, the other adventurers can search for powerful magic to revive their fallen comrade, or the player might choose to create a new character to carry on. The group might fail to complete an adventure successfully, but if everyone had a good time and created a memorable story, they all win.

Basic Rules, p. 3

The TTRPG industry is unlike any I've ever experienced in a commercial industry, because it functions under this same principle. We work together. We don't compete with each other. Cross-promotion is the single most effective form of marketing, as we show others the cool things our "competition" makes, help each other, share tips, and buy and enjoy each other's products. We recognize that we are all one big adventuring party.

Because Hasbro doesn't understand its own product, its executives also don't understand how to market it. They set themselves up as competition in a non-competitive space, thus establishing themselves as the Big Bad Evil Guy (BBEG), at which point an entire industry and their fans who spend their whole lives developing creative solutions to every insurmountable

problem imaginable all roll initiative. We use our diverse skills from every direction and with unique approaches. **The third party publishing community fills in the gaps of unique products for niche needs that a large company like Wizards can't meet due to the difference in scale.** It takes an entire diverse party to succeed at this game, and the action economy, the power of multiple smaller actions against one larger action, will be their undoing.

But more than that, by setting themselves up as our adversaries, they're missing the point that this game is all about fun. It's about community. It's about helping each other out of jams (or oozes...). It's about taking those lessons and applying them to real life, where we don't just find friends, but staunch allies. And it's that fulfillment that keeps bringing us back for more.

What a miserable life to sit alone in your castle as a decaying lich, desperately trying to protect an ampersand-shaped soul cage, while allies fight together and celebrate their victories with songs, drinks, and experience points! Even as they destroy themselves and attempt to destroy everyone around them, I can't help but pity whatever motivates that kind of desperation. As angry as I am that they've chosen to [deliberately remove the promises associated with the OGL from their website](#) so they could [lie about its purpose](#) to betray us, I wish they would go down to their closest FLGS, join in a few games, and experience the true magic of D&D. Maybe the oathbreaker could be redeemed. But until then, we reluctantly raise arms, use memes of Bardic Inspiration to build each other up, and call for the healers to restore those with exhaustion, not until they [declare a winner to try to call off the fight](#), but until the battle is truly won.

How to add disability inclusion into Inkarnate maps

May 1, 2023



Inclusive Design makes everything better. Adding disability inclusion to your maps not only makes them more accessible to all players, but it also adds realism and depth to the world you're creating.

Ramp

If you're including ramps in your buildings ([Why?](#)), the **Long Table** asset makes it easy. Add a **Trap Door** to the top at 50% transparency, and you get the effect of coming up through a hole in the floor.



Elevator

An elevator may seem anachronistic, but they've existed in various forms for 2200 years! An enlarged **Empty Crate** with a **Door** gives you an instant enclosed elevator, and you can add a **Lever** to serve as a manual crank on a block and tackle system, or make it magical with a **Magic Orb**!



Wheelchair

Use the **Steampunk Tool** for wheels and a **Chair**. You can make the wheel assembly brown/tan to make it look like wood if you want.



Rollator

Use the **Small Metal Ladder** (Transform: Adjust the width to get the right proportions) and **Metal Valve Wheel**. Connect the two ladders with **Handrails** or any wall piece stretched to the right proportion, and adjust the saturation and contrast to match the metal color. Or skip the connecting piece by overlapping that section. I put a connecting piece in the example image here, but it got covered up when I adjusted the scale.



What devices would you like to see represented? Have you created accessibility devices for your maps? Leave a comment!

10 Steps to Adventuring in a Wheelchair

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How can a character in a wheelchair be an adventurer in Dungeons & Dragons or other fantasy roleplaying games? While I recently noted that [ramps should be more common than expected](#), no matter how accessible your world is, you'll eventually encounter rough terrain of some kind. Does this make adventuring in a wheelchair impossible?

1. Rough terrain is hard for everyone, thus the name.

Probably the most common question I get: "How can a person in a wheelchair navigate [some kind of terrain]?" This seems to assume everyone else has no problem. It's called rough terrain for a reason. It's difficult for nearly *everyone* to cross. It's like a merfolk asking how you could navigate the ocean with those finless legs. You'd use an assistive device like a boat.

Different environments present different challenges for different people, disabled or not, but it's easy to think from an able-bodied perspective and make assumptions based on our own experiences, calling the difficult "impossible" instead of making it "accessible".

2. Ambulatory wheelchair users exist.

Many people think that anyone in a wheelchair must be paraplegic, but many wheelchair users can walk – it's difficult, painful, or exhausting, but they may well be able to traverse a 10 foot staircase, possibly needing to take a short rest after and find a different means of retrieving their wheelchair from below.

Real-world ambulatory wheelchair users frequently face scorn from people who see them stand up to get something off a shelf or for some other purpose and criticize them for “faking it”. Don't do that, and don't make assumptions about fictional characters' capabilities, either.

3. Are you adventuring alone?

While certain encounters may be difficult for any given individual to navigate, most adventuring parties consist of multiple characters working together. The caster levitates the rogue over the pit. The barbarian protects the caster. The walking party member assists the wheelchair user up the steps. That's the whole point of a balanced party.

I need some LARPerS to demonstrate these. If you do, [contact me](#), and I'll feature you here.

4. Wheelchair users can traverse steps alone.

See for yourself.

5. I present to you the [Ramp](#) spell. (or Floating Disk)

If you have a member of the party who can cast [Floating Disk](#), they can put it under your wheelchair, and it will traverse anything an able-bodied person can. (See #3 above.) If not, I offer this alternative so you can do it yourself.

Ramp

1st-level conjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a wood or stone wedge)

Duration: 10 minutes

This spell creates a plane of force, 6 feet wide, 1 inch thick, and up to 30 feet long, that connects 2 solid objects through an unoccupied space of your choice that you can perceive within range. The plane remains for the duration and can hold up to 500 pounds. If more weight is placed on it, if you move more than 30 feet away from it, or if one of the connected objects moves beyond the length of the plane, the spell ends, and everything on the plane falls to the ground.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the plane length increases by 20 feet for each slot level above 1st.

6. Rope exists in D&D.

You can either have a couple party members tow your chair over the steps or use a grappling hook and [Batman](#) the steps by yourself.

7. Some terrain is easier in a wheelchair.

If you're in a wheelchair, you're not likely to be knocked prone by slippery surfaces, so you're effectively immune to the [Grease](#) spell or other effects that make the ground slippery unless sliding down a ramp, and even then, you probably won't end up prone once you get to the bottom.

8. Heat Metal is a bigger problem for martials than wheelchair users.

I've seen comments that those in wheelchairs are vulnerable to [Heat Metal](#). That assumes the wheelchair is made of metal instead of wood, bone, or some other substance, but even in that case, it probably takes a reaction to push yourself out of a chair until the spell ends. Armor takes 1–5 minutes to doff. The paladin will want help from the wheelchair-using rogue in that case, and is anyone really going to burn a 2nd level spell and their concentration on an escapable wheelchair when they could be turning the fighter into a baked potato?

9. Dodging in a wheelchair.

Can you dodge in a wheelchair? Given that dodging is an action in 5e, there's no reason you couldn't. Paralympians and other wheelchair-using athletes can move with amazing speed and dexterity. Add the superhuman nature of a 5e hero, and players should have no problem imagining this.

10. D&D is a game of creative solutions – that’s what separates it from video games.

I am not disabled, and it took me 20 minutes to compile this list of ideas before researching the details. Were I a disabled adventurer, I’d have a lifetime of ideas how to manage various obstacles. Many people who can’t imagine navigating these obstacles may benefit from honestly attempting to play as a disabled character, to take some time to think and research both accessibility and others’ lived experiences to expand their awareness. Others may choose a magical solution like the hovering capability of the [Combat Wheelchair](#). But it’s D&D – anything is possible, limited only by your imagination and the parameters established at your table.

Castle Curb Cuts: 10 reasons why ramps in D&D dungeons make sense

May 1, 2023



When Jennifer Kretchmer presented the *scandalous* idea of ramps in dungeons in [Candlekeep Mysteries](#), a significant portion of the D&D community couldn't wrap their mental dice bags around such a concept. It seemed incomprehensible to make dungeons more accessible, and I still get *multiple daily* angry or derisive comments to that effect whenever I run Facebook ads promoting our products.

But just as curb cuts, those little ramps in sidewalk curbs, were designed for wheelchairs but benefit strollers, shopping carts, bicyclists, and anyone else who uses wheels, including them in dungeons may be more sensible than stairs, regardless what adventurers may come investigating.

So since I get tired of writing the same responses repeatedly, as do others who fight for accessibility and disability representation, consider these concepts, and feel free to comment below.

1. Are dungeons supposed to be inaccessible?

Dungeons are designed to keep people out!

Are they, though? That depends on the dungeon. It's a generic term that can refer to any number of structures for any number of purposes. Often, a dungeon is a space that has either intentionally or naturally changed purpose over time. Maybe it was once a castle basement used for storage or as a siege shelter. Or a crypt. Or a cave. Or a menagerie. Or a majestic castle. Or a forest in the Feywild. When considering the accessibility of a dungeon (or any other details in its design), the designer must consider its purpose, its owner, its age, its ecology, and many other factors. But while the 10'×10' stone

corridor underground is still a staple, it hardly represents the majority of adventuring environments in D&D.

2. Are dungeons all made from flagstone?

Flagstone, made typically from sandstone or similar materials, is the classic material design for a dungeon, but a dungeon can be packed dirt, a tunnel carved out of a mountain, the alleys in the darker sections of Waterdeep, massive caverns in the Underdark, the City of Brass on the Elemental Plane of Fire, a rickety old wooden mansion, or the rubble of ancient ruins. Each of these presents accessibility challenges to different characters – my tiefling warlock with chronic leg pain will manage a whole lot better than an able-bodied elf druid in the City of Brass, and if the steps in the haunted mansion suddenly become a slide, the walking character will be prone while the wheelchair user holds out a spear and yells, “Charge!”

3. What was the dungeon before it was haunted ruins?

How many people are specifically building dungeons, anyway? They're difficult to make and not particularly practical. Most dungeons used to be something else (or still are). The dragon isn't going to build human-sized steps into its lair. A xorn digging through the Elemental Plane of Earth will create smooth tunnels. Water eroding an ancient cavern won't erode at jagged 90° angles. An ancient dwarven mine would never have stairs (and may even have cart tracks or elevators). And the [inside of a crashed spaceship](#) will have smooth hallways and elevators. That doesn't preclude the possibility of steps, a stone cliff (which is difficult for anyone but the rogue or monk to climb), or

other obstacles, but if you can creatively find a way to cross that pit filled with a gelatinous cube, you can bet that a seasoned adventurer has some tricks up their sleeve to overcome occasional rough terrain.

4. Have you ever tried carrying an occupied coffin down stairs?

Many dungeons were or are still crypts designed either for a wealthy family or to keep an ancient evil contained. If the current occupant came into that crypt in a pine box, you can bet there's a ramp. I've attended and conducted dozens of funerals, and there's a reason modern morticians use carts for coffins – they're heavy, especially with a body in them! (And the bigger the corpse, the heavier.) So if you're carrying that coffin to its (hopefully) final resting place, guiding a cart into an underground crypt on a ramp with a rope will save you a whole lot of effort, even if there's also steps beside the ramp, either permanently or in the form of nearby removable timbers. A party coming to investigate a restless spirit would likely find the accommodations designed by the architect or implemented by a past undertaker.

5. What size creature were your stairs designed for?

Stairs are designed for the people using them, so modern stairs are designed for a human range of heights and foot sizes. But if a dungeon occupied by both a clutch of kobolds and a family of ogres will either require the kobolds to bring climbing gear to scale ogre-sized steps or the ogres to walk sideways up the steps, even then with a lot of foot pain. A ramp easily solves this problem, not to mention making it easier to drag in fresh

meat from a successful hunt or drag out bags of bones of unsuccessful adventurers.

6. How do you feed your monsters?

Speaking of dragging carcasses, you need to feed that hydra that's somehow in a chamber with only 10'x10' corridor access and dispose of its waste. While I recommend an underground river or other sewage drain for the latter (which can be its own security problem when kobolds find it), unless you have a city's worth of *really gullible* bullywugs that are willing to go investigate the noises that you insist are coming from a carnival with [dragonfly ripple ice cream](#), you're going to need to kill something and transport it into those snapping jaws, and you'll have a much easier time pushing it over a ramp than stairs.

7. How did all those stones, trap mechanisms, and monsters get down there?

You know that big treasure chest full of gold and jewels? Yeah, it's probably a mimic. But if it's not, good luck lugging that thing down steps into the deepest chamber. Add tons of flagstone, support timbers, cages filled with monsters, chests of potions bottles, or whatever else you're storing down there. Put those containers on wheels down a ramp, and your building process will be a lot easier.

8. Which lasts longer in treacherous

environments, stairs or ramps?

As noted above, flagstone is usually made from sandstone. Sandstone erodes. That's how sedimentary rock forms. If that ancient staircase is as ancient as you describe, it's probably a ramp by now, albeit irregular, which would be even easier to navigate if it has some landings.

9. Dwarves had specific skills to detect ramps as early as 1st Edition.

In AD&D, dwarves could, "Detect grade or slope in passage: 1-5 on 1d6." In other words, ramps in underground passages aren't some new 5e concept – they're *oldschool*. Some were gradual, thus the check, and some were more obvious, but they had this skill in the first place because when you're digging a mine or underground city and need to move a lot of rock and goods around, slopes make a lot more sense than steps. And elevators, even better. And purple worms don't burrow in straight lines.

10. It's fantasy but makes the real world better.

All this fantasy talk is fun, but real lives are the most important factor. Discussions of "realistic" in a world where a spoken word can transform steps into a ramp or a mudslide or a mimic or a dimensional gateway, what matters most is the effect on our players. Even if a disabled player doesn't want to play a disabled character, including disabled NPCs and the effects of their existence in your world tells your players, "I don't want to imagine a world without you in it."