

Tabletop RPG's in a Linux World

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In the modern computer age of pencil and paper role playing games like Advanced Dungeons & Dragons and others out there, the primary resources are imagination and a set of dice. Oh, and lots of table top space to spread out rulebooks and resources.

Surface space is valuable real estate when playing games like this. Modern day RPG-ers have taken to trying to minimize the need for all that space by using computers, especially laptops, netbooks, notebooks, etc...

The uses range from automated dice rolling apps to maintaining character record sheets online. Putting the text of rule books in PDF or even Wiki formats and using online mapping tools and random adventure generators.

Not only that, but apps like OpenOffice/LibreOffice are used increasingly to make use of spreadsheet based tools and forms that once could only be access with MS software.

Tabletop RPG folks aren't really wanting the computer to fully automate the games for them, essentially making them a videogame that are obviously evolved from RPG's like the numerous First Person Shooters that are out there. No, they just want computers and online resources to facilitate the non interaction parts of the game.

There is even disagreement in the RPG world about how much to implement computers in the games. For many, the idea of an automated dice roller is appalling. Yet there are others who keep almost anything that would be pencil and paper related and dice related on the computer

Gamers have made the internet a treasure trove of tools and resources for the games though. You can find dungeon mapping apps and character tracking apps, even character generation/creation apps are available online.

There are extremely active user forums and resource websites to help gamers communicate and share their "homebrewed" games and ideas. They host storage and downloads of files and images useful to those who are looking for new games and resources to play.

One day I decided to search for mention of open source app words in just one of these user forums and "Linux" alone pulled over 700 results.

There are countless RPG websites being hosted on LAMP web-servers out there. The more I investigate how much open source software is involved in some way with a seemingly small interest area like table top role playing games, the more I am pleased to see it is a large and ever-growing presence there.