

RAWA'S GUIDELINES FOR MO:ULa AGE WRITERS

A FEW DISCLAIMERS:

- These guidelines are a work in progress. While attempts have been made to have them be as complete and accurate as possible, we reserve the right to alter, amend, change, update, fold, spindle, and/or mutilate them at any time. We also reserve the right to add other verbs to that list at our sole discretion.
- You (collectively) are now part of the creation process, and I have it on good authority that "with great power comes great responsibility." Specifically, in this case, that means that since we're going to be working out these kinds of details as we go along, even more patience, flexibility, and understanding is going to be needed on all levels from everyone involved.
- Past performance is no guarantee of future results.
- Void where prohibited.
- Objects in mirror may be closer than they appear.

[End of Disclaimers]

Without further ado...

The Revised Five Rules of Writing

On February 9th 2023 Chogon posted the following "revised" rules of Writing.

1. When Writers (aka fan developers) are creating linking books they are bound by the D'ni limitations of writing. However, Writers are able to use special items for linking and modifications to linking with the following limitations: Writers should stay away from special Cyan created character items (such as Yeesha and Bahro items) with the exception of Yeesha Pages (bring a piece of your Age into the explorer's Relto!). You can create Save/Journey like cloths (or other material) but must be of your own unique design. They can behave exactly like Save/Jouney cloths but should look different.
Same with linking stones, glyphs, sparkies, crystals, etc. Make them your own unique design. Add your own storyline for why they exist but not required. Creating new trophies and achievement reward items displayed in the player's Relto or Neighborhood or Age? - is encouraged!
 2. Writers must not break continuity with previously released D'ni information.
 3. Writers must not reveal "new" information about characters, places, groups, etc. used by Cyan, including other Cyan titles. (Unless an exception is approved by Cyan)
 4. Writers must not use the intellectual property of others.
 5. This rule intentionally left (nearly) blank. 'Cause RAWA said there had to be 5.
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The Five Rules of Writing, in their most basic form:

1. Writers must live within the D'ni limitations of Writing.
2. Writers must not break continuity with previously released D'ni information.
3. Writers must not reveal "new" information about characters, places, groups, etc. used by Cyan.
4. Writers must limit "new" information about D'ni society to specific, smaller groups within D'ni.
5. Writers must not use the intellectual property of others.

Notes

1. Except for Rule #5, these rules mainly focus on attempting to minimize continuity issues, so, when an Age is submitted for approval, enforcing these rules will primarily be the responsibility of the Guild of Archivists. You can think of these duties of the Guild of Archivists as providing "information quality control" for the Ages.
2. Duties for the other Guilds will be spelled out as we move forward.
3. These rules are specifically intended to be guidelines for Ages and/or Storylines which are intended to be considered "official" (i.e. "canon"), where continuity is a prime concern. We also intend to provide separate guidelines for Ages and/or Storylines that which are intended to be considered "fictional" within the context of the Cavern. Those guidelines will be much less restrictive because continuity in those cases will be less of a concern. So if you want to tell a story that these rules do not allow (e.g. the story of Ti'ana between the Book of Ti'ana and the Book of Atrus), you'll need to abide by those guidelines when they become available.

The Five Rules of Writing, further details

1. The Writers do not have Yeesha's special, innate abilities. They have to live within the limitations of the traditional D'ni Writers.
2. The members of the Guild of Archivists need to have a decent grasp of released D'ni information, so that they can have working knowledge of what will contradict established D'ni information.
 - *Note:* Also included under "contradictions" are issues that have been intentionally left open for debate by Cyan. A Writer's storyline must not attempt to definitively confirm one side or the other of those issues.
3. Characters, places, groups, etc. that have appeared in Cyan's games, novels, etc. can be mentioned or used, but Writers must not reveal any new information about those characters, places, groups, etc., where "new information" is defined as information that would in some way change what is known about the character, place, or group.

- For example, one can "find" an old D'ni Age that was once visited by Veovis (the fact that Veovis may have visited that Age doesn't constitute any significant "new" information about Veovis, since it is very likely that he visited countless Ages, but they can't "find" an Age that was owned by Veovis or Written by Veovis (those kinds of things would be releasing new information about Veovis.)
 - The main City in the Cavern is also included in this. Areas that have been in Cyan's games or novels can not be changed. If one wants to reveal ("restore") a new area in the Cavern, it must be self-contained and only accessible via the Nexus (e.g. the Great Tree Pub) or via another Age (e.g. the Uran Silo linked to from Er'cana).
 - An exception of a place that was used by Cyan but can have "new" information revealed: specific D'ni neighborhoods. They can be considered as self-contained places. New information can be revealed about a Writer's neighborhood as long as it doesn't affect other neighborhoods or the main Cavern as a whole.
 - In short, the rule of thumb for determining what should be allowed is, "How likely is it that this new information will cause a contradiction with information released by Cyan or other Writers in the future?" If it's likely to cause a contradiction, then it is not allowed.
4. The Writers should come at this with the mindset that they're expanding knowledge of the D'ni Universe by revealing new facets of a multi-faceted civilization, rather than revealing new information about the D'ni society as a whole. That is to say that any new information one reveals about the D'ni or its history should be specific to a particular (previously unknown) group within D'ni, so that the likelihood of future contradictions by Cyan (or other Writers for that matter) is minimized as much as possible.

For example, one could reveal that there was a group within D'ni that only ate a certain broccoli-like vegetable found in one of their Ages. Since this "revelation" is limited to one group, it doesn't affect the whole of D'ni society and is therefore unlikely to be contradicted by other stories in the future. Saying that all of the D'ni only ate certain broccoli-like vegetables is not allowed, as it is something that is very likely to be contradicted (in this specific example, of course, it already has been).

5. This includes references to trademarks, copyrights, etc. Writers cannot write an Age where their character meets Captain Kirk, their Age cannot contain a Coca-Cola machine, etc. Everything in their Age or mentioned in their storyline must be their own work.

Examples

- **Writer wants to create a storyline where Gehn escaped his prison.**
Verdict: Denied. This would violate Rule #2 (continuity issue: as far as has been revealed by Cyan, Gehn never escaped his prison) and Rule #3 (attempts to reveal "new" information about a character used in Cyan games and novels.)
- **Writer wants to "find" an Age that Gehn had visited prior to the events of Riven.**
Verdict: Approved. Does not reveal "new" information about Gehn, or contradict previously released information about Gehn.
- **Writer wants to "Write" a link to a specific instance of Myst Island.**
Verdict: Denied. This would violate Rule #1 (player Writers do not have Yeesha's special abilities to be able to write to specific instances of an Age.)
- **Writer wants to "find" a link to another instance of Myst Island.**
Verdict: Denied. This would violate Rule #2 (continuity issue: there are no known links to other instances of Myst Island) and Rule #3 (by revealing "new" information about a place used in Cyan games and novels).
- **Writer wants to "find" more information about the Guild of Illusionists.**
Verdict: Denied. This would violate Rule #3 (by revealing "new" information about a group used in Cyan games and novels).
- **Writer wants to "find" information about the Guild of Reptile Trainers.**
Verdict: Approved. This does not reveal new information about a group used in the Cyan games and novels.
Note: only "minor" guilds are allowed. It cannot be claimed that the Guild of Reptile Trainers was one of the 18 Major Guilds at any point in D'ni history, as the 18 Major Guilds are covered under the groups that have been used in Cyan games and novels. It is also something that would likely be contradicted in the future.
- **Writer wants to "restore" a new area in the D'ni city itself.**
Verdict: Denied. This would violate Rule #3 (by revealing "new" information about a place used in Cyan games and novels).
- **Writer wants to "restore" a new area in the D'ni city, but it is self-contained and only available via the Nexus.**
Verdict: Approved. The key to this being "self-contained," so it doesn't cause any continuity problems with the City, neighborhoods, etc. as it has been shown in Uru.