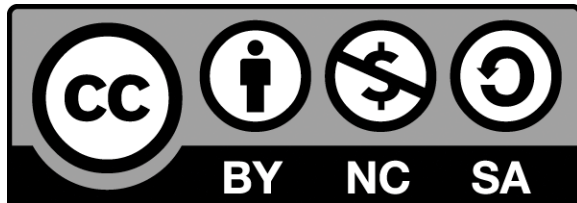


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ADAM JURY



I'm Adam Jury; I co-own and work for Posthuman Studios. We make roleplaying games, and soon, board and card games. Tonight I'm going to talk to you a little bit about how we publish and why we do what we do.

Our model is openness: we publish in open formats whenever possible with material under a Creative Commons license; we disclose our sales figures to our fanbase; and internally, our company is a direct horizontal democracy.

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POSTHUMAN OVERVIEW

- We publish in the most open formats possible (PDF, ePub) whenever possible.
- Our electronic books are priced inexpensively.
- We sell “Hack Packs” for each book, full of files that hardcore fans may be interested in.
- Our releases are all Creative Commons (Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike)

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OPEN FORMATS

- Our primary sales are of print books (6,000 copies of the Eclipse Phase core rulebook in the first 18 months of release), but our electronic unit sales are high, with over 1,500 sales of the Eclipse Phase PDF in those 18 months.

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OPEN FORMATS

- Our sales of fiction via ePub vastly outnumber our sales of the same fiction via the Kindle store. Some of this difference can be accounted for by our stated preference as a company towards open formats. Further differences can be accounted by the availability of our eBooks on the same services that sell our PDFs. The remainder of the difference we will chalk up to our customer's good tastes.
- Our Kindle titles contain this disclaimer—*If you ever receive this file encumbered by Digital Rights Management (DRM), please email us at info@posthumanstudios.com to request a version without.*—Just in case Amazon decides that all KDP-based publishers are suddenly forced to use DRM. Our sales of fiction (ePub/PDF/Mobi bundles) on sites that cater to our gaming fanbase outsell Amazon by a wide margin.

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ELECTRONIC PRICING

The worth of electronic books is highly-debatable. We attack the public's varied opinions on the worth of electronic books in several ways:

- Due to the Creative Commons license, our titles are available for free to anyone who wants to download them. We seed them to bittorrent services ourselves.
- PDF releases of printed books are priced very competitively, at \$10 or \$15, which is below average for our industry.
- PDF releases that are not available in print (often short material, 16-20 pages) are priced at \$5. This is above average for our industry, but the higher price allows us to break-even sooner and pay contributors the same rates they would get for a printed publication.

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HACK PACKS

“Hack” is a good word. Hackers create, make, and break things; computer criminals commit crimes.

- In addition to our books, we sell Hack Packs, which are collections of files that relate to the book—150DPI artwork, planning documents, alternate versions of some graphics/artwork, etc. The Hack Pack content adds another \$5 to the PDF purchase price, and they sell quantities roughly equal to the lone PDF download. In other words, half of our fans are willing to pony up an additional \$5 to support us, in exchange for content that we have already created or paid for—just in a different format than how we usually sell it.
- I’m loathe to call anything “free money,” but curating these Hack Packs takes roughly an hour per release.

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CREATIVE COMMONS

All of our books are released under a Creative Commons (Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike) license. The only way to pirate our material is to deny someone else their rights to access it! We think this is extremely powerful for several reasons:

- We aren't afraid of piracy to begin with, and by *allowing* people to distribute our stuff, those who would normally pirate it like us, instead of seeing us as “the man” or “the enemy.” Three sample downloader comments:

“Posthuman Studios, you are the best people. Keep being awesome like this.”

“Interesting, very interesting. I cannot but want to give this a shot; I keep seeing it on the shelf in my friendly local game store, but haven't had the spare cash to check it out. After this, I'll know for sure if I want to buy it. Thank you!”

“Posthuman Studios has infinite wisdom of falcon!”

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CREATIVE COMMONS

- It is the ultimate “try-before-you-buy” availability. We don’t require people to register to download it, we allow them to pass it along organically.
- Our game and book’s availability is perpetual: if we stop publishing for any reason, we can’t stop people from distributing our stuff.

Tangent: The only people that, in the end, care about anything, are the people that consume it. The company—as an entity, not the individuals involved—that owns it only cares as long as they can make money.

Culture is not preserved by corporations, but by individuals.

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WHY OPEN IS IMPORTANT

- The first thing I do when I buy a Kindle book is download it to my Mac, use the DeDRM AppleScript to break it down to a plain MOBI file, and then use Calibre to convert it to ePub. Then I dunk the ePub into iBooks, because I like keeping all my purchased and freely-available books in the same virtual bookshelf. I want to control what I buy and consume.

DeDRM AppleScript:

<http://apprenticealf.wordpress.com/2010/11/18/dedrm-applescript-for-mac-os-x-10-5-10-6/>

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AN OPEN EXAMPLE: EPUB STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

A fine example of this is Liz Castro's ePub Straight to the Point, which if you buy directly from her, comes in ePub format. This is awesome for several reasons, including the following:

- You can open it up and look at how she created particular effects.
- You can manually apply corrections to the file itself, or even delete portions of the document that are irrelevant to you.

ePub Straight to the Point:
<http://www.elizabethcastro.com/epub/>

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NOBODY WANTS DRM

Does *anyone* like buying something with copy-protection or encumbered with DRM? Does anyone like having to activate Creative Suite, and deactivate it, or spend time on the phone with Adobe tech support so we can access the things we paid for?

Of course not. No rational human being wants their rights restricted. We all understand that for reasons of safety, each and every one of us has our rights restricted in some way every day—but none of us want to pay money for something that cannot harm others and be told how and when we can use it.

Cory Doctorow's DRM Talk:
<http://craphound.com/msftdrm.txt>

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DRM FAILINGS

All DRM systems fail. The only copy-protection that currently works is scheduled back-and-forth authentication with central servers, and even these systems can be thwarted, especially as they relate to consumable content and productivity software—the only place they are close to bulletproof is with console games and other subscription services (Netflix!), but even this isn't 100% true.

Of course, even in our almost-always-on society, software and content creators can't assume that customers are online 100% of the time. Sometimes technical shortcomings render us offline, and sometimes, rumour has it, people head offline by choice. All DRM and CP schemes must work around this offline-ness, which gives them an additional area of attack.

Money spent fighting piracy is money that any company could instead spend on making better content and offering that content in wider formats and venues to more people.

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POSTHUMAN STUDIOS AS AN ORGANIZATION

- Three founders and co-owners. Geographically distributed—
Alberta, Canada; Chicago; and Orange County.
- Legally, we are an LLC. Hooray for Delaware!
- However, we operate more like a collective.

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OUR ORGANIZATION CHART IS HORIZONTAL

- We have no hierarchy. Everyone is equally responsible for managing themselves and providing oversight to others.
- You may find it ironic, but anarchists really seem to love meetings.

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HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

- Major company decisions are handled via discussion and consensus, falling back to a simple vote if we can't reach consensus after two rounds of discussion.
- Minor company decisions are handled via ad-hoc discussion. Escalated if necessary.

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BEYOND THE OWNERS

- Outsourcing: we contract with a company to handle the physical fulfillment of our books, as well as accounts receivable, and other boring office/shipping tasks that none of the founders personally want to do.
- Freelancing: Much of our art, writing, and editing is from a pool of stable and growing freelancers. Our pay rates are competitive within our industry, and unlike many publishers we pay contributors when projects go to press—or sooner—as opposed to after the project is released.

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RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR FANS

- Availability: our general info email address (info@posthumanstudios.com) sends email to all three co-owners. We answer emails ourselves, delegating between us as appropriate.

I like saying: “I hate doing customer service, but I love having done it.”

- Disclosure: Yearly, we disclose sales figures, important milestones, successes, and failures to our fanbase.

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