

Introduction

So you are interested in creating your own Epic Supplement? Sometimes hobbyists are so enthusiastic that they move well past playing, past participating in the forums, and even past developing your own Epic Army list. As of the date of this writing (2-29-2012) there are only two fan-built Epic supplements that have been completed (***Epic: Raiders*** and ***Epic: Siege***). With that said, there are about a half dozen other works that are at various stages as they move toward completion.

Of course, the questions continually come up as to who is working on these fan supplements, how to make one, and what is allowed in terms of content.

An easy place to start is with defining what a fan supplement is. These publications we put together are for use in the Games-Workshop ***Epic: Armageddon*** game system. Can you make one for Battlefleet Gothic or Epic 40,000 or even NetEpic? Sure. These are online publications and as such as long as you have the time and interest, and as long as there is an audience for your work, there is room for a fan supplement.

However in an age of digital books, the move in our community still seems to be toward physically printing the supplements. There is something about a tangible book, having something in your hand that appeals to the gamer. Recent studies have shown that readers actually retain information better when reading printed books compared to digital books. Perhaps this is something gamers know intuitively, or perhaps we simply like having real books to go with our real models. Regardless of the reasons, printing a fan supplement tends to be a big goal for many folk.

Printing a fan supplement takes things to a whole new level as –unlike digital publications- there are some high costs involved. When you print a supplement, any mistake you make is out there forever. Did you accidentally make the speed of your Warp Beasts 30cm instead of 15cm? Oops. No taking it back now. And of course there is the biggest problem: is anyone going to buy it?

Dos and Don'ts of Fan Supplements

Regardless of whether or not you intend to print your fan supplement, you need to start with the big topic: Intellectual Property (IP for short). To put it plainly, the ideas that Games-Workshop (GW) came up with are owned by them. Space Marines, Imperial Guard, Black Legion, Eldar, etc.; these are ideas that you need to accept belong to GW. That means you cannot copyright anything you produce that involve these ideas. You might have some very clever ideas; you might think you have a legal leg to stand on when it comes to 'your' work; you might think your own country's laws protect you somehow; you might think GW will never notice what you've published. If this is the direction you are going, I wish you the best! There is no reason to read any further. Now move as far away from me as possible.

Intellectual Property and Games Workshop

IPs, MIPs, and DIPs

For those of you who are still here, your efforts are called Derivative Intellectual Property (DIP). That means that you have come up with concepts based on somebody else's IP and because of that they have certain rights to your efforts. GW gets a lot of bad press because of their staunch protection of their IP, but in all fairness to the company, they do provide a set of guidelines for us to follow. For the purposes of fan supplements, these work relatively well.

To summarize working with DIP, it means we don't own it and we can't profit from it. If you are still not sure, contact me.

So how can I charge for the books? This is the question of the day. While (intentionally?) fuzzy, the IP guidelines that GW provides explain that we cannot profit from our efforts. The intention from the beginning has always been that – if for some reason I take in a profit- I would donate that money to a charity, namely the American Cancer Society. If you have any questions as to where these efforts stand thus far, feel free to contact me. To answer them briefly, however, I am very thinly breaking even.

The rule for me printing supplements is this: DON'T POKE THE TIGER. When ***Epic: Raiders*** originally came out I contacted the GW Legal Department multiple times and they failed to ever correspond back. That doesn't give us carte blanche to do as we wish. It just means that they are not exercising their rights and more than likely they are placing themselves in a position of plausible deniability. That's fine with me. I've never hidden any of my work. I showed copies of the books to GW managers at Games Day and even gave Jarvis Johnson a copy. But I also followed the IP guidelines as closely as possible and explicitly encouraged people to buy GW products in the book. Yeah, it's butt kissing, I know. However, if I can deal with it so can you.

Mixing IP

GW doesn't have a monopoly on IP. Every miniature and game company has IP. It is possible you have some grand idea to use proxies from a line of models from another 6mm manufacturer. You are figuring that since GW doesn't produce the model in 6mm scale you can use whatever is available, right? Wrong. This is called mixed IP and it is a violation of GW's IP terms. It doesn't matter if you are publishing it in a pdf online or printing it in a book – it is a no-go at this station. It also applies to fictional qualities. Don't write a story about Imperial Guardsmen serving onboard the Death Star or fighting against an Andrayada gigantic robot or you're likely to land yourself between two sets of attorneys.

However take note that out-of-print GW models or GW models from other ranges would be okay to include in your efforts, especially when used to proxy a model or kit-bust a model (kit-busting is when you use pieces from one model to make or modify another model).

Defiling IP

You can read GW's website guidelines, but I'll summarize what they are saying for completeness sake. Don't make Space Marines flying around in Eldar skimming vehicles while going on a drunken binge as they travel to womanize their naughty Sisters of Buxom Battling. Your fiction or army list should make sense in the GW Universe.

If you are still not sure about what can go into a supplement, look at Games-Workshop's IP Guidelines.

<http://www.games-workshop.com/gws/content/article.jsp?categoryId=&pIndex=3&aid=3900002&start=4>

Disclaimer and Notations

Fan-made efforts should be prominently labeled as UNOFFICIAL. This is especially true for printed supplements because of their official appearance. There is an abundance of talent in the Epic community and we've been able to put out some amazing books, so don't worry about the word 'unofficial' marring your otherwise professional looking cover. Most Epic players are sophisticated enough to understand what you and your team had to go through to complete it.

In addition to the cover showing the word 'Unofficial' you should also print the terms 'unofficial' and 'fan-made' on the title page or in the introduction.

GW asks fan websites to include a disclaimer on their websites and you would do well to include a disclaimer in your supplement as well. While one may be sufficient, I printed the disclaimer twice in Raiders; once at the beginning and once at the end. Is this overkill? Maybe, but when in doubt remember this phrase: *It is a small price to pay to keep the tiger at bay.*

This link will take you to GW's standard disclaimer: <http://www.games-workshop.com/gws/content/article.jsp?catId=&categoryId=§ion=&pIndex=6&aid=3900002&start=7&multiPageMode=true>

Epic Fan Supplement Formats

There has been some discussion regarding what format the fan supplement should be in and if there needs to be some requirement. After all, look at the precedents set by ***Epic: Argameddon, Epic: Swordwind, Epic: Raiders, and Epic Siege***. Each book contains three armies, details of those armies' units, army lists, and special rules for those armies. Each book contained a story of some type which involved those armies and a modeling section for customizing specific units or terrain.

Of course, there the differences end. So what should we do in the way of standardization, if anything? Let's take a look at a few main topics:

Book Size

Armageddon is the largest book with pages in the 160s, whereas ***Siege*** struggles to get to 60 pages. ***Swordwind*** sits at around 80 pages while ***Raiders*** pushes to 130. In terms of page count, the first question you need to ask yourself is do you want this supplement to be printed and bound? If so, 60 pages is a minimum count in terms of cost effectiveness.

Does that mean that your dreams of printing your supplement are dashed if you cannot make this minimum? Not really. There have been several discussions online about combining several mini-supplements into one volume. I think this is an outstanding idea and would give Epic players more bang for their buck.

There hasn't been much discussion about a maximum size for the supplements, but I think it is safe to assume that under 200 pages will be just fine. If you are in doubt, I can always make an inquiry and get back to you.

Paper size

Some folk suggested that we mandate a paper size for ease of printing. The question that invariably follows is, "Fine... Which size paper?" ***Raiders*** was done up on 8.5x11, which is a standard printing size in the U.S. ***Siege*** was printed on A4. ***Swordwind*** and ***Armageddon*** were both printed in some odd format that nobody recognizes. So which one is right?

There are two considerations to make on the topic. Firstly, the ease of printing should be addressed. For the printing and binding, the printing company can do pretty much any standard size paper, European or American. If you are printing these at home, virtually all printers will accommodate the change from American standard to European standard with a slight change in settings. Since markets for these two major groups are roughly evenly split, imposing a standard seems a bad idea.

Instead, if you are going to be printing something other than on 8.5x11 or A4, just email me and we can figure out what the implications might be.

The second consideration is will the supplement fit in an envelope with other supplements. So far A4 and 8.5x11 fit together just fine.

Margins

When the printer goes to make your book, the edges of the paper are going to get cut for a variety of reasons that aren't worth going into here. The important thing to remember is that it is going to happen whether you like it or not. If you have a typical 1 inch margin for the content, you will be more than safe. If you want to narrow the margins of your book, let me know and I will discuss it with you and the printing company.

A true bleed is an extension of the color that you intend to stay on the page past the finished cut so the end product is left with clean edges. This is true for both the interior pages and the book's cover. A 1/8 inch bleed on all sides is what the printer has suggested adding, although pushing the printing of material to the limit is taking a chance. Simply stated, don't put anything on the edges of your supplement that are important to you or it could get completely or partially cut off. Any artwork you have for the cover should be designed in a likeminded manner.

Content

I don't want anyone getting the idea that an Epic supplement must match the three army, story driven template. Chroma (who assisted on the Epic: Raiders supplement) is designing a supplement that contains non-tournament scenarios for people to play out. I already mentioned that two or more mini-supplements could be combined into a single volume. You may want to include six or seven armies into one mega book. Or you may have only one army list that is accompanied by a tremendous fictional story that you want published. All of these are good ideas.

Honestly, the long range concern we have is competing over content. The first two supplements had no problems with this because the 40K universe was wide open. However, as we move forward we are going to have fewer and fewer places to go, so-to-speak. However, for the short term, it makes little sense to bog down the process of making the supplements right now.

Instead here are some guidelines we can use to keep things going. When making a supplement, try not to include a list that other groups are currently using for their supplement ideas. This means staying informed on the forums and/or contacting me for guidance at times. If you end up wanting to use a Chaos list, for example, that somebody else is using, consider using a variant list. If you simply cannot

do without a certain list, let's discuss the matter openly on the forum. For the good of the community, I see no reason to hamper the development of anyone's supplements.

For instance, if you are making a supplement that contains the Black Legion Chaos list and you've been sitting on the idea for four years, you have no argument against somebody else using the Black Legion Chaos list in theirs. At the end of the day, the supplements are there to serve the community and groups that produce books are better than groups that produce ideas.

If somebody is working on a supplement involving your favorite Eldar Craftworld, maybe you should join that person's development team instead of creating a competing book. I found that some of the best ideas for the **Raiders** supplement came from discussion between to seemingly contradictory positions.

As a courtesy, I would ask that anyone working on a supplement provide me with some basic information about your efforts:

- Name: SUPPLEMENT NAME (this can be a WIP name obviously)
- Armies: PLANNED ARMIES (or whatever book is going to contain, such as scenarios)
- Team Members: (this would be a list of the main people working on the project)
- Estimated Completion Date: YOUR BEST GUESS
- Status: Respond with one of the following-
 - Content completed, working on layouts now
 - More than half-way done with content
 - Less than half-way done with content
 - Preliminary work (sketch-ups, notes, etc.)
 - Just ideas and big plans!
- Notes: Anything else you think might be helpful. You can use this as an opportunity to ask for help, voice concerns, whatever.

Status updates as you go are also helpful. I don't need day-by-day emails! I'm only trying to remain on top of things as the community moves all these great ideas forward.

Army Lists should be well balanced and playtested as much as possible. This might come off as hypocritical given the fast-n-loose way we playtested the Necrons for **Raiders**. Although the Necron army adjustments were the driving force behind Raiders 2.0, which cost me and the Epic community money. Stay in touch with your *Army Champions* and the *Net Epic Rules Committee* is the best advice I can give you on this topic.

Other Considerations

Software

You may think that you need some very expensive publishing software to get the task done, but allow me to assuage these concerns. **Raiders** and **Raiders 2.0** were completed using Microsoft Word, Open Office, and CutePDF Pro. Most PC based computers come with Word already on them, Open Office is free, and CutePDF Pro was under \$40 US. You may have an easier time using publishing software, but move forward knowing the difference between *want* and *need*. I tell my kids, “You *need* your liver, you *want* a cookie.”

Artwork

Epic players and hobbyists in general like to see artwork. You may get the occasional grumble from players who don’t like the fact that your electronic publication is eating up their ink cartridge, but I believe you please more people by including artwork than by not including it. If you choose to include artwork, make sure you follow the IP guidelines from GW.

The foremost consideration is who owns the artwork? If it is GW, then you cannot use it. It does not matter if you are using it appropriately or if it is from a reeeeeeeally old publication; you still can’t use it. I suppose you could ask GW to use it, but be prepared for them to either not respond or firmly deny your request. So what are you supposed to do?

The internet opens up a tremendous world to us and finding artwork for your supplement is vastly easier with each passing day. There are literally thousands of amateur artists who sketch up pictures for the GW universe simply for fun. They aren’t paid to do it and that means the artwork is owned by the artist. Sure, their artwork is derivative, but most artists know that. And since it is derivative, you can use it without permission, right? Not so fast!

Artwork is typically protected as intellectual property. There are some doubts as to whether or not he or she could legitimately win a fight over DIP, but why fight at all? Just ask the artist for permission. It really is that simple. Most artists acknowledge they aren’t going to make a dime on that drawing that you desperately want for your publication. They may give you permission because they think this is their big break, because they want to be nice, or because they are narcissists who want to be published. Regardless of the reason, most artists will simply say ‘yes’. I personally received very few denials and most artists expressed a deep gratitude for asking for their permission. In this electronic age where it is so easy to steal a digital picture, you will make friends by treating them with respect that they so infrequently receive. I can tell you that having artists as friends is a good thing (especially as I work on my next supplement).

When contacting an artist about using his or her artwork, be sure to ask if it is an original piece. Sometimes artists will make renditions or colorations or simply repost artwork they found on the

internet. By asking for their permission, you are also opening up a dialogue that can potentially protect you from an ugly IP fight down the road. And –if it isn't clear already- I will not print any publication that doesn't respect the artists whose work is being used.

Crediting

One way that you can keep all your contributors happy (writers, playtesters, artists, model owners, etc.) is by crediting them in print. Everybody likes to be acknowledged and most folk would appreciate that acknowledgment in writing in your publication.

When anyone contributes anything, ask them explicitly how they want to be credited. Some want their full name printed; others will want a pseudonym printed. A small percentage may ask to remain unnamed and that is okay. Just keep that correspondence, just in case. My paranoid side says that you should look very carefully at the work that any anonymous source provides as it may be their work was not original - food for thought.

Picture Resolution

Pictures of models for datafaxes or simply to showcase an army are a great way to make your supplement pop. They also help people who are new to your army (and to the game in general) identify which pieces are what. If you are dealing with kit-busting models or scratch-building models, pictures are a must.

There are different standards on picture resolution between online publications and printed materials. PDFs don't need to have high resolution photos and a 96dpi is good enough to get by with. When printing, however, 300dpi is a minimum for good quality photos.

Consider the **Raiders** supplement. While we were constructing the content, there were *two* hard drive failures that claimed some of our best pictures. We had backups that had been emailed back and forth, but these had been reduced in size for email considerations. The pictures we used in the modeling section are hit-or-miss on their resolution. Check them out – you'll be able to see the differences. This is a good segue into our next topic...

Back-ups

Back up your work in at least three locations. Update these back-ups every week. Keep copies of older iterations in case you screwed things up along the way. Data storage is cheap. Your time isn't. Enough said.

Page Numbers

You can have your publishing software do this for you. However, consider two minor points:

1. When you look through a book, you look for the page number in the corner. It's easier, right? So consider placing your page numbers in the corner. This means making sure the layout is properly done where the page numbers "bounce" from one side of the page to the other.
2. Do your page numbers next-to-last. You are going to be moving stuff around a lot and potentially switching up a page. The table of contents will need to be updated last, of course, once you have everything looking all shiny.

Page Layouts

I am no expert on this subject, but consider how other publications lay out their text and pictures and whatsits. There are no huge gaping holes or blank spots in these supplements. Sometimes that means reducing or enlarging a picture, or shimmying a breakout text box so that the space it takes up is maximized. I can tell you this is the worst part of the publication process but it will pay off when you are finally finished.

Bookmarks

PDF documents can be bookmarked so that you can click on a tab and it will bring you to that location in the book. The table of contents can likewise be linked in such a fashion where clicking on a topic will automatically bring you to that spot in the PDF.

Bear in mind, however, that links look different when printed. You may want to consider making two different formats when it comes time to print.

Teams: Reality Setting In

More than likely you are going to be working on a supplement with other people. How you organize your team is entirely up to you. People who most likely be the ones helping the most are the ones you helped develop the army list(s), playtesters, and major contributors. There are going to be some people who want to help a lot but fall short, and –conversely– people who come out of nowhere and save your skin (Chroma and Hena were fine examples of this for *Raiders*).

We're all volunteers and sometimes life interferes. Sometimes interests wane. Sometimes personalities clash. It stinks when the person who you thought you could count on for (insert whatever here) falls short of expectations, but what are you going to do about it? You can't make that person help. Learn

from my mistakes, do yourself a favor, and just move on. Your frustration will only alienate that person more and potentially drive that contributor away. Good advice I received that turned out to be very true: an effort like this will probably mean you will do 90% of the work. If you do less, then kudos!

Project Completion

It is tough releasing your work to the general public. People can be critical and sometimes downright cruel. The worst is when somebody is lambasting your efforts *and* they are correct. Did you forget to proof the last six pages? Did you make a critical error on a special rule? Does the PDF conversion keep shoving a text box out of alignment? Having a bunch of people nodding their head feels great, but the critics that will come out of the word work are going to be your best friends when it comes time for the final push to clean things up. If you make a mistake and find it after you print the book, your eye will forever train to that error. It will glare back at you and sneer. You will hate it. You will wish you had some uber-critical troll picking at the draft you published online prior to the printing run. Trust me – welcome the critics.

Of course, there comes a point where your project feels like it should be done. Your efforts have an expiration date and you might find yourself in a funk. You could proofread the book for a thirtieth time I suppose. But consider that at an undefined point in the future, your supplement will be *good enough*.

Final Thoughts

This writing is meant to be a living document. Your advice, comments, and questions will undoubtedly help make this a better tool over time. Like the supplements themselves, I hope each of you readers will share your thoughts and ideas with me.

I look forward to seeing a bevy of fan supplements in the future!

Thanks for reading,

William Sturtevant *a.k.a.* Moscovian