Volunteering in a Megagame

Who, What, When, Where, Why...
and How?

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What is control?

Historical basis in the military

Other terms: Volunteer, Facilitator, Games Master (GM), Adjudicator, Moderator,

It's simply the term that most megagame runners use.

Why is control important?

To run the game!

To make sure the story progresses.

To make sure everyone is having a good time.

To teach the rules.

A poor control team can be damaging to the event

Catch issues before they arrive.

How to be control

Control is a first and foremost a facilitative role – do not lead the players or take over their game by making decisions for them or by railroading them into choices we think they should make.

Understand the game - rules, feedback loops and story.

Provide story hooks.

Do "sanity checks" on players.
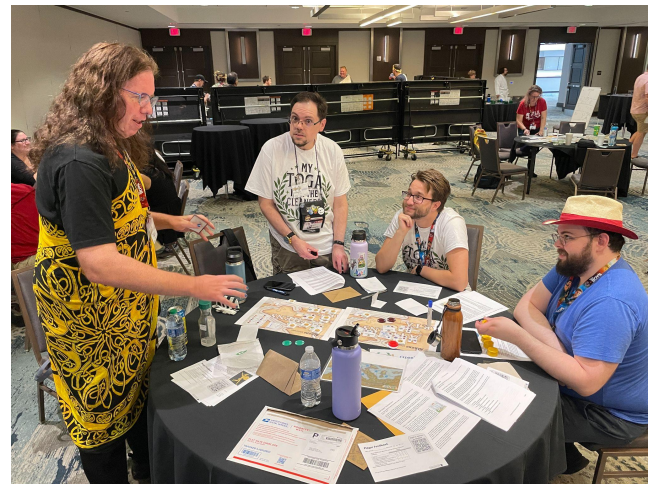
Keep the game moving.

Be consistent with rulings and stories - across the entire team.

Have interesting consequences (and not cheap).

Get other players involved in solo story lines.

Bring energy.

Be confident.

Be humble, fair, and aware

What to look out for

Players feeling isolated.

Players feeling overwhelmed.

Interpersonal conflicts.

Players being rude.

Players being bored.

Lack of decision making.

Alpha players.

From the document "**BEING CONTROL**"

On the day, the issues Control confront will be extremely varied – no two megagame experiences are the same. Control issues I've seen would include:

1. Players have not read their briefings and want you to tell them how the game works

2. Players who do 'decision shopping' . That is asking the same question of several members of the control team in the hope one of them will provide the answer they want

3. Player – player personal conflicts.

4. Player – Control conflicts.

5. Unpopular game results.

6. Pedantic rule-mongers & Optimisers. Control can find itself engaging with players who argue about the precise interpretation of the exact wording of the game briefing

What to look out for #2

From the document "**BEING CONTROL**"

Lack of involvement on the part of a player might indicate one of the following:

• They are feeling out of their depth. This can be a concern, especially with inexperienced or new players.

• Their game role is not holding their attention. This might be a design flaw that the game designer didn't anticipate or maybe that particular player finds they're just not into being the Queen of Naples all day after all.

• There is some interpersonal problem within their team or with another player or even with a member of the Control Team.

• They are having a bad day/year/life in general.

• They are fine but had a late night last night and just need a nap.

Why be control?

★ Because it's awesome.
★ You'll have as much fun (if not more) as the players.
★ You get to see behind the scenes.
★ You get to hang out with lots of passionate megagame designers and organizers.
★ You'll empathize with control in games where you're a player.
★ You don't have to pay for an event ticket.
★ There are other financial rewards.
★ Be "new" eyes for the game runners and designers.

Global Survey Response 37

Love facilitator role - enjoy making fun, and seeing others have fun. Enjoy playing different roles, getting up to stuff along with others, sometimes against them.

When to be control

January 7: Event submission opens
February 11: Badge Registration opens
February 18: Early event submission closes (to secure top priority on GM housing, if available)
February 25: Housing portal opens
March 10: Final event submission deadline
May 12: GM Badge & Hotel requests due
May 19: Event Registration opens
July TBD: Receive confirmation from Gen Con regarding housing
August 1 - 4: Gen Con!

What's happening at Gen Con 2024?

We plan to run 17 events!

★ SCP: Lockdown (Cal)
★ Rising Tides (Shaun)
★ The Soviets (Riley)
★ Jungle (Riley)
★ Touched by Darkness (Riley)
★ Touched by Darkness (Ben)
★ It Belongs in a Museum (Tony)
★ It came from… The Skies!!! (Tony)
★ Grimvale Ventures (Trenton)
★ Goblin City (Scott)

★ Crucible of Nations (Josh)
★ Hear/Say 4: The Mega Murder Mystery (Stevenson)
★ Den of Wolves (Chris)
★ Gods of the Ancient World (Forrest)
★ Den of Wolves (Nathan)
★ Pantheon (Pinto X2)

More information on the game details and schedule coming soon. Watch this space!

What are the volunteer perks for Gen Con 2024?

| Recruit (< 8 hours volunteering)	Apprentice (8-14 hours volunteering)	Journeyman (15-21 hours volunteering)	Master (22+ hours volunteering)
★ Access to the MGC Chill Space throughout the Con. ★ Invitation to evening hangouts. ★ 4th tier priority access to subsidized MGC housing block & AirBnB.	★ All previous tier rewards plus… ★ Free GM Gen Con badge ($143 value). ★ 3rd tier priority access to subsidized MGC housing block & AirBnB.	★ All previous tier rewards plus… ★ Housing reimbursement (post-convention) of $150. ★ 2nd tier priority access to subsidized MGC housing block & AirBnB.	★ All previous tier rewards plus… ★ 2x the Journeyman housing reimbursement ($300). ★ 1st tier priority access to subsidized MGC housing block & AirBnB.

* The MGC is working to obtain as much housing as possible for our gamerunners and our volunteers. However, since Gen Con does not confirm GM housing for event runners until July, we cannot guarantee that we will have enough housing (especially downtown housing) for the entire Gen Con 2024 team.

Who should be control?

Fill out our interest survey using the link below or by scanning the QR code.

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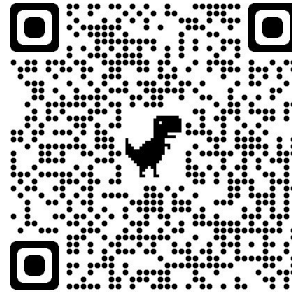
Where to find additional resources

MGA Blog - Thoughts on the plot control role:

https://www.megagameassembly.com/blog/controlling-the-narrative-some-thoughts-on-the-plot-control-role

MGA Blog - Being a control player:

https://www.megagameassembly.com/blog/being-a-control-player

Control Guide (uncredited):

https://www.dukesofhighland.net/game-documentation/control-guide

MGA Survey Comments:

https://www.megagameassembly.com/blog/megagame-survey-comments-2023

Comments from the global survey responses

Response 21 - Cleaner codes of conduct that can be easily given and used by game runners, i.e. don't make ableist jokes, use pronoun badges.

Response 28 - I think megagames are fun, but they're really draining.

Response 31 - I'd love to try my hand at facilitating/running/designing a megagame - if there was a workshop on "how to run a good megagame" I'd probably attend, and if there was explicit "hey, we're looking for people to facilitate, no experience required!" calls I think I would apply, I'm just nervous about doing something wrong and messing something up.

Response 36 - … which leads me to the main pressure point with megagames: Controls and organisers. You are all awesome and so important. But there's weird game theory dilemma here, where competent controls (and in good numbers) to make everything smooth and fun are needed, but to get there you need people who will forgo that very fun that is being achieved. I've found that some of my interactions with controls were just as exciting and game-making as with other players. If everyone was purely self-interested here, I think this would fall apart. I don't know how to solve this, but I'm glad people are doing this.

Response 43 - Most Megagames there's a point two thirds of the way through where my activity drops to about zero. I'm tired, and usually I've achieved my goals, either roleplay or I've traded everything I can, and have achieved my trading goals or hit a barrier based on outlook where the other side won't deal under any achievable circumstances.

Response 52 - …what factors might put someone off attending. Such as: poor admin / game organisation, perceived compulsory requirement to dress up, gloss (merch, shiny expensive game components) substituting for good game design, over emphasis on dishonesty/treachery, ageism or sexism (in game materials and in the room), poor value for money, poor previous experience in a megagame, over complicated or obscure game mechanisms, rude or incompetent Control team, poorly managed player interactions…

Response 63 - Lately I've started doing less in the community, because the drama and safety issues caused by a few people have really ruined it for me. It seems that often, those organizing and running games don't do enough to protect players and other control from this kind of behavior. … I'm glad I wasn't involved in helping with GenCon this year as I heard a long-time game runner allowed slavery into an in-person game, causing a lot of players to drop. We as game runners need to be better and I don't know that I will be involved much anymore until I see some change in that area.