

Appendices



Playing WFRP by Email

by David Hatch

PBEM or 'Play By E-Mail' describes any game which is being played by way of electronic mail.

For example, you can play chess by E-Mail, taking turns to exchange moves with your opponent in alternate mail messages. Many games are designed to be played by email and many boardgames and wargames can be modified to allow it.

This guide is specifically aimed at people who are interested in playing WFRP via e-mail, but most of the content would be equally valid for other PBEM games.

I ran my own PBEM game, *Fragile Alliances*, for seven years with hardly a break and only stopped in November 2004. But, *Fragile Alliances* was not my first attempt at this type of gaming. My first attempt was a true Play-by-Mail game (with real envelopes and stamps) and was an historical game which explored the question 'What if Nelson had lost the Battle of Trafalgar?', and sought to explore the possibility of a full Napoleonic naval and military invasion of Great Britain

A PBEM can easily become the most frustrating gaming experience you have ever suffered, or one of the most rewarding. The key to success is understanding both its limitations and its advantages, and at the same time recognising just how much effort is involved in exploiting them. I have seen many PBEM games start with a flourish only to founder very quickly as the full impact of what is involved in running one becomes apparent to the GM.

The Pro's and Con's

This section provides a quick summary of the main benefits and pitfalls of PBEM gaming.

Benefits

It's Global

Perhaps the most important benefit of PBEM gaming is that there is no shortage of players. Literally anyone in the world can join the game as long as they have access to a computer and an email account. My own game involved players from the UK, Denmark, Holland, South America, Singapore, USA and Australia. So, if there are no local gaming groups in your area then a PBEM game could be your best option.

It's Time Lite

For many people getting a group together round a table for an evening can be a problem. Work and family commitments can make it almost impossible to organise and a last minute crisis

can throw a much anticipated game night into total chaos.

PBEM games have no such problems, players are able to chose a suitable time to read and respond to a GM Note and as long as the GM can spare the time every day or two to process the incoming mail then there is no need for everyone to be available at the same time.

Encourages Characterisation

A player who wants to embrace the full character of his role will find it much easier to do so in writing than trying to act in front of an audience. Most PBEM players submit their game replies 'in character' and make sure that any dialogue involved is written with the appropriate accent and style. An added advantage is that both the players and GM have much more time to consider their replies and to research an appropriate response. It is not unknown to receive a reply with the dialogue in fluent elvish.

The Fog of War

One problem with any round table game is that players tend to have far too much access to information. This does not have to be the case with a PBEM game.

In a PBEM game the GM can restrict the information provided to any or all the players as much as he likes and so there is a lot of potential to enhance the challenges that players face during play.

Plot Development

In a roundtable game a GM really has to think on his feet and be able to react rapidly to any unexpected player decision. The situation is much easier in a PBEM game as the GM can afford to take the time to ponder the implications of a players action and even construct a new plot around it if necessary.

Plot Innovation

Because of the nature of a PBEM game it is possible to work concepts into plots which would be very difficult to manage in a roundtable game.

Example: It is quite easy to allow a group of PC's in a PBEM game to split up and go off alone to complete separate tasks. Whilst this can cause continuity problems that have to be managed, it is far easier than trying to manage four or five separate plot threads in real time during a round table game.

It's a Casual Environment

One area of PBEM gaming worth exploiting is its inherent lack of commitment and personal risk. There are a great many people who would like to get involved in an RPG but cannot spare the time

to commit an entire evening every week or month to do so.

There are also a lot of people who are intrigued by roleplaying but are too shy, old, young or nervous to plunge cold turkey into a roundtable game with a bunch of people they have never met. A PBEM can provide a perfect opportunity to play or just try out a game without a major commitment or time or courage.

Pitfalls

It's slow

Nobody can claim that PBEM games are fast paced. The actual pace is determined partly by the GM, and partly by the players. But a PBEM is never going to be able to match that of a group of players and a GM sitting together round a table. It's also worth noting that just as the speed of a convoy is determined by that of the slowest ship so the speed of a PBEM is determined by that of its slowest player.

It's not very sociable

If one of the reasons you play a game is to make new friends or meet with your mates then a PBEM can be disappointing. Drinking a beer whilst typing in a player response is just not the same as sitting round a table with six friends. There is nothing to stop players from communicating directly by email or even phone but I find most social interaction between players actually takes place 'in game' via their characters. Most players refer to other players by their character names and very often don't even know what their real names are.

It lacks dice

It is said that when Austrian Army Officers first heard of the new Kriegspiel being played by their Prussian counterparts they were very enthusiastic and put a lot of pressure on the Austrian government to introduce the game at

their military academies.

However, they quickly tired of it when they realised that the rules did not allow them to use dice to determine the outcomes. Players joining a PBEM may be equally disappointed as there is little one can do in practical terms to allow players to roll their own dice and for some this may take away a major part of the fun of playing.

Accurate location detail

One of the biggest challenges for a GM running a PBEM is making sure the players know exactly where their characters are standing and where everything else is in relation to them.

In a round table game a GM can resort to quick sketch maps, the use of miniature figurines and even use the salt and pepper pot, if all else fails. But unless the PBEM game being played comes with a purpose built electronic mapping system, the GM of a PBEM is left with nothing but words to describe where everything and everyone is located, and sometimes words are just not enough.

Finding Players

If you were planning to play a roundtable game it is likely you would already have a group of players in mind. In most cases a group of friends exist before the game itself. This is much less likely with PBEM game and the chances are you have already decided to run a game and are now looking for players to join it.

Players are the most important part of any game and to be a success the game needs to match the expectations of its players. Unfortunately, what makes a good tabletop game player does not necessarily make a good PBEM player, and players who enjoy a tabletop game don't always enjoy its PBEM equivalent.

A bored or frustrated player can be a major headache both for you as the GM and for the



other players in the game and so finding and selecting the right players for your game can make the difference between it being a success or a failure.

The best way to attract players is to advertise your game on the appropriate forums. Some game sites actually have databases of players looking for games.

My own WFRP PBEM is still advertised on the WFRP Directory run by Glen Sharman (<http://wfrpdb.shargl.net/intro.php>) and has obtained a number of new players as a result.

I also used a simple online player application form on my sons WFRP website, which prospective players can fill in and submit.

PBEM Player Guide

Although this is a GM Guide I thought it would be incomplete if I did not include some tips and guidance for those who join PBEM games as players.

Reasonable Expectations

The first point to make is that PBEM games are not for everyone. Read the Pro's and Con's section of the GM guide and you will see that PBEM games have both advantages and disadvantages.

Most notably, they are slow paced and they lack the excitement of rolling large numbers of dice.

So, don't expect to see your PBEM character rise rapidly up the development tree to become a super-hero and don't expect to wade rapidly through an entire scenario in a few weeks.

PBEM gamers need to recognise that they are in for a long-haul which might take years to complete and modify their expectations accordingly.

That said PBEM games still offer a lot of advantages in terms of roleplay and characterisation. They provide players with plenty of time to consider their responses and research their characters background. Make the most of that time and you will get a lot of fun and enjoyment out of your PBEM experience.

Message Management (from a players perspective)

It a good idea to keep your game Emails in a separate mail folder.

If your GM is using a standard subject line format then a simple Email rule can be devised that will automatically spot an incoming game message and redirect it to your Game Folder.

Remember to move your replies from your sent folder to your game folder so that you have a record of all your responses.

If you are using Web Based Email or multiple Email accounts consider keeping a journal of GM Notes and Responses and copying their content

into it so that you have a full and complete history of recent events in the game.

Formulating a response.

Many new PBEM players have difficulty formulating their responses, so I thought I would provide a checklist of things to consider.

Who are you?

It may sound obvious but one of the most common errors in player responses is not making it clear who you are, both in real life and in the game.

Always put the name of your Character at the start of your reply and when writing to the GM 'out of character' use your real name but remind the GM which character you are playing in the game.

e.g. David (aka Drachenfels)

Read the GM Note...Again

It is always worth reading the GM Note again just before you send your response. Just to make sure you haven't misread or overlooked something.

Dealing with 'What If's'

Before you send your response give some thought to what you want your character to do if things don't go as planned. It's impossible to cover every eventuality but think about the most likely things that may happen during the next game turn and let the GM know how you want your character to react if they do.

Stay in Character

Try to keep your reply 'in character'. Many player responses include both 'in character' instructions and amusing personal asides aimed at the GM. If you decide to do this make sure it is clear which are which, particularly if you are writing in the first person. 'Out of Character' comments can be very confusing for a GM, particularly if they are mixed in with character instructions.

Make your intentions clear

Whilst, in postal chess it's normal practice just to send your opponent your next move, in an RPG game it helps the GM understand your intentions if you explain why you are making that move and what you hope to achieve as a result. Some players do this as an extension of their characterisation and a good GM will use your intentions as a guide on how to carry your instructions out.

Talking to the GM

There will be times when you wish to talk directly to the GM. Either to ask a question or to let him know you are going away from a few days. Try to keep these messages separate from your player responses. If you send them as a separate Email remember to mention who your character is in the game, but there is nothing wrong with tacking such messages on the bottom of a game response as long as you make it clear that they are not part of the response itself.

Memory Management

I know I keep saying this but, PBEM games are slow. It might take weeks, months or even years for a plot to develop to the final showdown. A few days in game time might be weeks in real life, during which period you may have been to work, been on holiday and perhaps even been involved in other games.

Over that time you will probably have received up to three GM Notes a week containing all sorts of information from NPC names, clues, locations, maps, notes and background detail.

The biggest problem players have is trying to remember everything that has happened in the game. Little wonder then, that most PC's in my game seemed to have very bad memories.

My advice is simple.....Keep a Game Journal.

This might seem a bit bureaucratic but it will pay dividends in the long run. Such a journal should not contain a complete record of everything, but should just be used to record any thing which you think might be important and might be needed later in the game. It can be sub-divided however you wish with sections for Maps, NPC's, Clues etc. and will provide a quick aide memoir over the weeks and months to come. If your GM is using the numbering system suggested in the GM Guide you can use this to cross-reference your notes back to the full message.

Away from your computer?

If you know you are going to be away from your computer for a few days or weeks it's a good idea to let your GM know. That way they will not expect a response from you over that period and so your absence will not slow down the game.

It is also a good idea to inform the GM what your intentions are for your character over the period you are away. It's unlikely that your character will be allowed to sit and do nothing and the GM will probably take personal control of it until you return. So, any instructions you wish to give the GM on how to look after your character in your absence will be useful in making sure that you don't have a nasty shock waiting for you when you get back.

And finally...

PBEM gaming can be one of the most rewarding types of roleplaying, or one of the most frustrating. My advice to anyone is that if it starts to becoming more like work than fun, then the best thing you can do is take a break from it. A GM who is tired and bored will make the whole game unpleasant and tedious for everyone involved.

Also, if you are playing in a PBEM game and you are unhappy with how things are going, then write to the GM and discuss why you are not having fun. A good GM will want to hear constructive criticism and may be able to adjust his style to meet your expectations.

But most of all have fun, isn't that the whole point of why you're gaming!

Want more?

The full-length version of this article can be found online at the *Liber Fanatica* webpage!

Playing WFRP using Online Chat

by Jude Hornborg

Roleplaying online in real-time is quite a different experience from sitting around your living room table. There are no dedicated WFRP play-by-chat utilities (yet), but a number of generic software programs can be used to play WFRP over the internet:

MSN Messenger, AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) or ICQ: common messenger services can be downloaded for free, and have the advantage of being widely used. Although they lack the die rollers and advanced commands of IRC, they are easy for computer-challenged players to use.

Internet Relay Chat (IRC): websites like RPG.net have IRC servers that can be used for real-time role playing, and software like MIRC can be downloaded for free. IRC offers the advantage of built-in die rollers, emotes and changeable screen names.

Specialized RPG utilities: dedicated roleplaying software such as OpenRPG, ondaksportal, Fantasy Grounds, Ghostorb, GRiP, Kloogewerks, Screen Monkey and WebRPG can be downloaded either for free or for a small fee. These programs include mapping utilities, detailed movement tracking, image-sharing capability, and die rollers. They're a good choice for more involved games demanding a visual component.



Pros and Cons

Advantages of RPG by Chat:

- From the comfort of your own home, you can play with people all over the world.
- Text-only communication can sometimes be more “immersive” than face-to-face (FtF), especially when the player's real-life physical appearance is very different from the character being portrayed.
- If necessary, players and GMs can communicate privately outside of the main chat room without the other players even knowing.
- Descriptions and dialogue can be polished before submitting, since a certain amount of delay is both expected and tolerated.
- The anonymity of online chat may enable shy players to express themselves more freely.

Drawbacks of RPG by Chat:

- Play is slower than face-to-face, and rules complexities are exaggerated.
- Participants must be capable of decent typing speed to keep the game moving.
- Participants should have good, spontaneous creative writing skills to compensate for the less interactive quality of online play.
- Time zones and computer problems will inevitably create delays and scheduling problems. If you're prone to impatience, you should reconsider.
- Detailed position tracking is difficult without a dedicated program like OpenRPG, and even then it demands considerable extra effort from the GM.

Tips and tricks for improving your Online WFRP experience

Hurry up and take your time

As a general guideline, plan to accomplish about 1/3 to 1/2 as much as you would in the equivalent time allotment of face-to-face play. Set low expectations for campaign progress, but always keep the game moving. Excessive delays in a chat game can put players to sleep...fast.

Rules-light is your friend

Rules discussions by chat can become tedious. Fortunately, WFRP's rules are fairly quick and easy. Consider eliminating Advanced Actions (except perhaps Parrying Stance and Run) if combat's moving too slowly for your tastes. Think twice before challenging the GM's rules interpretations; oftentimes it's best for the game pace if mistakes are allowed to slide.

Think ahead

While the other players and GM are interacting, anticipate what your character will do next and prepare the order in your dialogue box. Then, when the time is right, you only need to hit ENTER. It may be beneficial for the GM to pre-write descriptions of key NPCs and locations in advance of the session (using MS Word or Notepad). These can be quickly relayed to the chat room via copy & paste. However, also remember that details can change drastically depending on the characters' actions, so pre-scripting *too* much of the scenario may give the impression of "railroading".

Encourage kibitzing

Play-by-chat can aggravate boredom caused by character inactivity. If someone's character is absent from a particular scene, they should be allowed to contribute ideas and commentary. Private messages can create a nice Fog of War effect, but should be sent sparingly to minimize player idleness. Oftentimes, players will chat amongst themselves while planning or role playing. The GM should use *this* time to handle personal business (e.g. equipment questions or side stories) via private messages, rather than trying to do it while everyone's anxiously waiting for the next plot turn.

OOC vs IC notations

In-character (IC) dialogue should be distinguished from Out of character (OOC) dialogue by use of "quotes". OOC dialogue may be further isolated using parentheses). This is particularly helpful if someone plans to edit the chat log later for their campaign journal. Text-

based emotes (/me commands using IRC) are a valuable substitute for facial expressions and vocal cues. Here are some examples of how a player running Waldo the Outlaw might use various notations in play:

1. IC Dialogue: Waldo: "Oy...I needs to rest me feet after dis long walk!"
2. OOC Planning: Waldo: (so guys, should we stop at this inn or keep going?)
3. Emote: *Waldo flops down by the roadside and removes his smelly shoes
4. Status Reports: brb = I'll be right back, afk 5 min = away from keyboard for 5 minutes

Talk about the game

At the end of every session, the GM should set aside 5 minutes for discussion about the game. If a player was unhappy about something, it may not have been apparent during the chat session and it's unwise to let bad feelings go unchecked. Conversely, the fun moments should be recounted, because smiles and laughter may have gone unnoticed over the internet. The occasional "lol" (laugh out loud) or ";-)" (winking smile) during the game can let others know when their role playing is appreciated, and it keeps the atmosphere positive. Like any RPG, online games are best when the players and GM are constantly responding to – and building upon – each others' ideas.



Playing WFRP by Message Board

by Philip Hamilton

Play By Message Board (PBMB) is a close cousin of Play By Email, using the same electronic media to enable participation in a roleplaying game. It's considerably younger, what with PBEM having sprung up out of Play By Post and PBMB having branched off from the initial ideas, but it has some key differences that can make it very much preferable to other forms of internet roleplaying, depending on your circumstances and preferences.

For those who don't know, a Message Board is a public discussion area on the internet, where running discussions called "threads" are categorised in named forums. There are probably millions of such communities now extant on the web, with thousands being dedicated to Warhammer: new ones sprout all the time, as the companies that host these discussion areas tend to provide free "basic services" with the option to pay for an advanced, ad-free and enhanced service. Many established Warhammer boards already have roleplaying forums; there are also completely RP-dedicated boards, and boards created by small groups of friends exclusively to run their own RPs. Should you wish to pursue this last option, invisionfree.com is a very good community host. Visit their website, register, and you should be able to create your own board with the minimum of fuss: most hosts provide forum-creation controls that even the most ignorant of the world of computers (such as myself) can figure out easily.

PBMB Basics

On to the meat, then: how a forum-based RP works. In essence, the idea is the same as that of PBEM: people who are far apart or do not have the time to meet regularly are able to play their favourite roleplaying games with each other via the medium of the 'net. Much of the same pros and cons apply: you're able to think your descriptions and responses through fully, but it's far slower, etc, etc. However, already the first key difference creeps in at this basic level: a forum RP on anything but an exclusively-established board is "open", whereas an email-based RP is "closed".

Allow me to explain: on any established board, there will be a community: to survive more than a year or so, most boards will have a registered membership of greater than or equal to 200, with a far smaller "core membership" – those who are consistently active, posting regularly and taking an interest in the well-being and continued existence of the board. This core membership can equal just about any number over thirty or so; a board with a core membership of less than

twenty is something of a "white dwarf", and will probably implode within three to nine months, due to lack of activity. Activity is something I'll go into in more detail later.

Finding Players

Anyway, provided you haven't created a board exclusively for the use of you and your friends, the PBMB method offers an "open" RP setup: rather than organising it by inviting/pressurising people to join, you simply set up a "recruitment thread", in which you ask who wants to join in. People reading the RP section will be able to see your recruitment thread, to have a look at any taster text you've put in there, and to decide whether they like the look of your RP: rather than sending out emails to gather people in as in PBEM, or talking some friends into doing a normal RP, people actually *apply* to join your game: not only people you know, but people from all over the world, with whom you might be speaking for the first time when you receive their application. This is a great way to get to know some new people, and also takes a lot of the pressure out of the RPing situation: no-one is going to be meeting with strangers, everything is done in a group situation with everyone able to see what everyone's saying, and you are shielded behind the persona of your username. It also gives you a fast and easy way to gather up people for an RP should you live somewhere where roleplayers are thin on the ground, and allows you great choice: I generally receive somewhere in the region of 10 to 15 applications when I start a new RP.

Getting the Game Going

The advantage of this openness continues once the game gets rolling: because everyone can see what everyone else is doing instantly, PBMB is significantly swifter than PBEM, and cuts around all the troublesome filing and meticulous organisation necessary to keep the different players on the same timescale; since posts are displayed in chronological order, things are much more easy and casual to arrange. Most boards also incorporate a Private Message system, allowing you to communicate with other board members without giving away your email address; this allows you to split off certain members of the group should you so wish, keeping their actions screened from the others. Similarly, you are able to read back across your RP as a simple, story-style linear timeline rather than a series of numbered files, and thus the amount you need to store and save is drastically reduced, plus great nostalgia value is added since

you and others can easily read back over your own work. I know at least a couple of people on the relatively small board in which I roleplay who avidly read roleplays they are not actually involved in, and budding GMs can often gain helpful, constructive criticism from fellow GMs and players, since their work is open to all and easy to read.

Disadvantages of PBMB

Of course, there are disadvantages: like PBEM, PBMB is significantly slower than real-time roleplaying. My PBMB roleplays tend to last around a year (although I use quite sweeping story arcs); this pales in contrast with the seven year "Fragile Alliances" mentioned earlier, but also is extremely long compared to real-world roleplaying, where even the most convoluted of adventures will probably last less than half that time. PBMB also has its own unique problem, in that with impersonal, remote players, activity is much harder to control: chivvying via personal message and out-of-character discussion is all that is achievable, and people can drop out or lose interest without a great degree of warning. If their computers crash, players will be unable to communicate with the GM, even to say how long they'll be absent for; players could even be run down in the street outside their home and you'd never know, save that they stopped posting. A million and one personal circumstances can slow down post rates and pull players out of the game altogether with minimal notice: thus PBMB games suffer from the two flaws of inactivity, where post rates decline at an exponential rate as other people see the roleplay as 'dead' when the first slowdown begins and slow down themselves, and autopiloted characters, where players on holidays or with intervening personal circumstances voluntarily or through necessity have their PCs put under the control of the GM until the player can return or the PC can be quietly disposed of.

Another, less important but noticeable blight on PBMB is quality of roleplaying: while those who invite/persuade their groups will usually have a relatively good idea of the roleplaying capacities of the people they ask, you cannot control who applies. Those who already use message boards will be all too aware that many people on boards post in a manner somewhat like this:

"i think yu shud drop teh unit of pikemen, cos i dont think that iz gud in a dow army. but then dow suxx, buy CHAOS WARRIORS khorn ROXXORZZ!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

A note on language in PBMB

Even worse is the dreaded "l33t sp34k", where bad posters seem to revel in just how horribly they can abuse the English language by inserting absolutely unnecessary abbreviations (3s for Es, 4s for As, u for "you", 4 for "for", and so forth) at every possible opportunity, generally spraying a

generous helping of gurning emoticons into their text to break it down into inane expressions in case you find their chunks of unpunctuated (...save for the occasional horde of exclamation marks) code incomprehensible. These are people you do not want in your roleplay. You don't want to make them angry or upset, but it's best to introduce some sort of quality control: as I mentioned earlier, you will probably receive more applications than you have space to use, especially if your roleplays turn out to be popular. I myself use a "marking sheet," which evaluates the originality, realistic-ness and general quality of character background and assigns a quantitative value by which character entries can be compared: by releasing the marks only privately and by request, and offering advice and pointers on where those who missed being in the roleplay lost 'marks', you can make sure that the process of selection and rejection is as friendly and civil as possible. It is important, however, to remember that many on the boards may not have English as a first language, and that people will get irritated if you begin to develop a set 'clique' of players to the exclusion of everyone else: if others drift away, you may, ironically, get stuck with that clique, even if some of them disappear/become inactive or the quality of their roleplaying begins to degrade.

Assorted Advice

So, I hope I've outlined the pros and cons of PBMB without making your eyes bleed from the reading so far; what remains is the how. Most of the stuff that has been or will be said about PBEM applies: you can't break down decision-making as much due to time restraints, and minor railroading is necessary in places to keep things going, especially if inactivity looms.

Don't trouble characters with tiny, irritating decisions that you know they'd take anyway: let them do what they want when working on a low level, and keep intervening tests to a minimum, since you want to keep the flow running.

Similarly, I would advise that **chopping up fights into more than one or two segments can be fatal**: you will lose the sense of pace that should be instilled in good fight-writing, and you will also make even the simplest encounters drag on for weeks. My standard practice is simply to obtain a plan/plans from the players before an encounter, generally with a time limit before I will initiate it, and then run through the entire fight according to that/those plan/s. Should major new developments arise, the fight can then be broken off in mid-swing to allow a second round of urgent decision-making, heightening the tension, but generally two segments is as much as I would consider. After all, if you make your encounters too tactical, your players may begin to see the game as more of a strategy exercise than a roleplaying game, and treat it as such.

Keep activity high by gently prodding people whose post rates drop off (using private messages, OOC discussion and sometimes email) and by keeping things exciting: PBMB roleplays need to be fast-paced, since the slowed rate at which investigations and subtleties can occur makes it important to convey information quickly and emphatically before investigations and such like can become boring: intersperse your plotline liberally with encounters, as a well-written fight can inject a lot of life into a floundering RP.

Don't let things get stale, keep things fluid and dynamic: a lot of PBMB is a balancing-act on the part of the GM, not going overboard on the battles and explosions while keeping his or her players interested, involved and excited about where the plot might go next. The key cause of inactivity is simply people deciding they're not happy with the commitment of the GM/the quality of the roleplay game and stepping their characters down a gear so that they require minimal input while not being rude and dropping out: you need to treat your players a tad less like powerless pawns (however fun that may be) and a tad more like customers, whose expectations you have to fulfil in order to keep them subscribing to your 'product'. Just a tad, mind you. Don't let them forget who's boss.

Open an OOC thread, to run parallel to the game thread: this will stop large OOC passages cluttering your game thread, which should be mainly in character (OOO means Out Of Character – I probably should have mentioned that before). This will allow you to answer questions about situations in-game without posting contrived and cumbersome in-character creative writing, and will also allow you to convey large masses of important information should you need to without having ridiculous IC passages: recently I had some warriors searching a large room, and it is in this kind of situation where the OOC thread is invaluable: it would have taken me for ever and set the whole group yawning were I to describe the cellar IC, so I simply described the most striking bits IC and then conveyed the more mundane info on my OOC thread, saying how many chests there were, which were locked, the relative positions of everything in the room, where the bookcases were, whether there was anything hanging on

the walls, etc, etc, etc. Finally, OOC threads also allow your players to vent any silliness/humour to do with the RP completely freely, without endangering the feel of the game thread at all: I'm sure many GMs know the horror of the good gaming-session going down the drain as the joker of the group decides that a half-hour of hysterical guffaws and lewd puns will greatly enhance the atmosphere.

PBMB Links

So... well, I hope this has been helpful. For people looking for the specifics I think I mentioned earlier, here are a few links:

Board Hosts

www.invisionfree.com
www.ezboard.com

Warhammer Boards with flourishing Roleplay Sections

www.druchii.net
www.invisionfree.com/forums/warhammer_palace
(where I post mine)

I'm sure there are many more in both categories: these are merely the ones I can think of off the top of my head. If you speak to Luc_Arkhame on Warhammer Palace, he will happily direct you to a site which I do not have the address of, called the Blood Soaked Ruins (lovely name, eh?): quite a large and established board, entirely dedicated to roleplaying (although not by any means exclusively warhammer-based roleplaying).

Conclusion

Thanks for reading my ramble, and I hope that as a result of doing so a few people will have a try at the old PBMB: I would certainly be delighted to see an influx of new GMs at the Warhammer Palace (where I'm moderator for the roleplay section, so will definitely notice new arrivals).

