Players' Guide

January-February 2014

Welcome to the Team Games

This edition of The Scripting Games is a *team sport.*

You'll start by logging into http://ScriptingGames.org. You can log in using your Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Google account; we are not accepting Live ID due to privacy concerns (they automatically grant us access to your address book, which we don't actually need or want). In addition to authenticating you, we store your full name as on file with the provider. Some of them offer us your e-mail address; we don't store that, and won't use e-mail to communicate with you in any way. We will also prompt you for your time zone.

This Guide is designed to help you get ready for the Games, and to do well. Here's what you'll find inside:

Joining a Team

When you first register for the Games, you will join a team. You can:

- Scan through the existing teams and choose one to join (provided it has less than 6 players already). You'll be shown the average timezone offset of the team's existing players, so that you can try and find a team closer to you schedule-wise.

- Have the system automatically find a team for you. You'll be joined to a team as close to you, time zone-wise, as possible.

- Create a new team. You'll get an invite code that you can send to other people (via private email, using your email software), so that they can quickly find and join your team.

  Note that teams **must have 2-6 players** in order to participate. So if you create a team, use Twitter/Facebook/Google/whatever to enlist some teammates.

New teams are given a default name, which any team member can change.

You have the option to leave your team at any time. You can also join a different team at any time. However, once you join a team, you will not be able to participate for any in-progress events. Your participation with your new team will start when the *next* event begins accepting entries.

We recommend picking a team and sticking with it.

As a note, if your team is full (6 players) and has one or more "deadbeat" players who are taking up a teammate slot but not participating, contact admin@powershell.org. We'll review the situation and take appropriate action. *Doing this is considered a Really Big Deal.* Don't do it just because you're having a disagreement with someone – we will *not* moderate. It's intended only to remove a player who is no longer playing.

Collaborating

The Scripting Games Web site is intended for submitting entries *only*. It is not intended as a collaboration platform. Online collaboration already exists, and we want folks to use what's already out there in the real world.

Use GitHub. Use Google+ Hangouts. Use YouTube. Use Google Docs. Use Office 365. Use PoshCode.org. It's your choice.

At the end of the day, your team must have a single, join entry (although that can consist of multiple files, if the scenario demands it). You'll be judged as a group on that one entry.

The Scripting Games Web site *does* include a comment/discussion feature, but it's *primarily* intended as a way for Coaches to offer feedback. You *can* use it to discuss with your teammates, and the system *does* allow you to submit new versions of your entry's files, up to the submission deadline.

You can use the team discussion feature to exchange e-mail addresses (or Twitter handles, or Skype usernames, or whatever) with your teammates, so that you can communicate outside of the system more easily.

Make sure your team has one, and only one entry, in the system by the entry submission deadline. If we see three files named "Entry.ps1," we're going to assume they're all separate entries and just disqualify the entire team.

Coaching

We will have expert coaches offering private commentary on your entries. This happens *before* the actual judging, and doesn't impact your score in any way. The trick is, your team has to *opt in* to coaching.

It's simple: We don't require you to post any script files to the Scripting Games Web site until just before the entry deadline. If you go that route, our coaches won't have anything to look at, and so they'll keep quiet. On the other hand, if you and your team post your *preliminary files* into the Web site, then our Coaches will see that, and will offer some constructive feedback.

Judging

After the entry submission deadline, our expert judges will go to work. Each scenario comes with *detailed* judging criteria, although our judges also have some leeway to exercise personal discretion.

Sometimes, some people prefer things one specific way, and other would prefer to have those things done another way. A judge may knock off points for something *you* feel you got absolutely right. That's the way the cookie crumbles, and we will *not* deal with complaints about the judging. The idea of having multiple expert judges is that their individualities will even themselves out, resulting in as fair a score as possible.

Code, like painting, is art. Some people like abstract art, others like modernism. That doesn't mean anyone is wrong. Just because a judge docks you some points does not mean you were *wrong.* It means *that judge* didn't think you had the right approach. Take that for what it's worth and move on.

As much as possible, we've tried to make the scoring criteria as objective (e.g., not subject to opinion) as possible, but there's always going to be room for interpretation.

Interpreting the Scenarios

Look, just don't obsess about this, okay? In the past, we've had comments like, "no, the scenario said 'display to the screen' so I used Write-Host, and you missed a comma after the word 'maybe,' so now it means something different."

Blah.

We *did not* write these scenarios to be some kind of trick-question certification-exam exercise. This is meant to be *fun.* Show us some creativity. Show us some passion. Don't be a whiner.

Also keep in mind that, this year, we wrote the scenarios *mostly* using people who speak English (either American or British) as their first language. Those of you who speak English as a second language may interpret certain phrases or words somewhat differently from a native speaker. That is not our intention – but be aware that the possibility exists for confusion. Therefore, try not to read too much into the scenarios. We really aren't trying to set up anything tricky or sneaky.

So in general, if you're thinking, "ah, they're trying to catch me with this one!" you're wrong. Nobody is trying to "catch" anyone. Stop thinking that.

Note that we will not provide scenario clarification in the Scripting Games forum on PowerShell.org, or anywhere else.

Folks, please try to have fun with this.

Versions

Do remember that the Games scenarios don't take place in *your* corporate environment – they take place in Dr. Scripto's environment. Dr. Scripto has access to all the latest versions of Windows and PowerShell, so unless something in the scenario leads you to believe differently (and that could happen), you should assume you're working on the latest and greatest. That is, if you're using some old v1.0-style approach instead of a neater, easier v4.0-approach, the judges might knock a couple of points off your score.

Justification

Most judges love to see comments in scripts – provided they are useful and tell us something new.

```
# Get the WMI Object
$o = Get-WmiObject –Class Win32_BIOS
```

Don't do that. The comment, there, is completely superfluous. Also, don't do this:

```
# Using WMI instead of CIM because some
# computers might have Windows 7 and I won't know
# if remoting is enabled or not so this is safer
$o = Get-WmiObject –Class Win32_BIOS
```

We call that "putting lengthy justification into the script." In other words, you think something in the scenario is trying to trick you, and you're pointing out that you "caught" the trick, and you were clever, or something. Nope. Nobody was trying to trick you, and reading lengthy comment-based rationales just make judges want to skip your entry and move on to something less wordy. Again, we're looking for your team to exercise creativity and to have a little fun. This is not a certification exam.

Watch the Clock / Calendar

All times given to you will be in UTC. **Although we ask for your local time when you register,** we only do so to help with team pairing. **We do not calculate local time when showing you times.**

All times are in UTC. It's up to you to do the math. Got it?

We will make NO EXCEPTIONS FOR MISSED TIMES. You're an IT professional. Figure it out. Set yourself calendar reminders accordingly.

All. Times. Are. In. UTC.

UTC.

Event Phases

Each event is broken into specific phases:

1. You'll be able to access the instructions for the event. Sometimes this will be a PDF file, other times it might be a ZIP that includes supporting files.

2. On the appointed date, you and your entire team will be able to submit entries. Entries may consist of multiple files (e.g., a .psm1, .psd1, and .ps1xml file, if needed). *Anyone* in the team can add or delete files, and *anyone* in the team can edit existing files.

   We suggest that your team communicate and devise some means of collaborating with each other. You're welcome to use git, PoshCode, or just go back-and-forth in email. You can Skype, Google Hangout, or meet for pizza. It's your call.

   What's important is that your team's final entries be entered into the Scripting Games system by the entry cutoff date for your event. **Note that all dates are shown in UTC** – they are not translated to your local time zone and no exceptions will be made for missed deadlines because you lost track of time zones.

   During collaboration time, your team will have access to a team discussion thread, as well as discussion threads specifically for each file you've submitted. Use this discussion area however you like – including to trade e-mail addresses so you can handle the discussion via e-mail. It's up to you and your team.

   Also during collaboration time, our expert coaches **may** drop by and offer commentary on your submissions. That's a good reason to get at least an initial effort into the Scripting Games system, even if you plan to collaborate elsewhere and submit a final entry.

3. After the entry cutoff, judging will begin. Public browsing of entries is also permitted at this time, although we aren't doing public scoring. Note that the next event may begin while the judges are working on a previous one.

4. Once the scoring phase is complete, you'll be able to see your team's score.

The idea is to get your team working together, sharing perspectives and viewpoints, until you come up with the best solution that you can collaboratively create. Note that many events in the Games may be more complex than in the past – you'll be glad to be working on a team to accomplish everything in time!

A Word About the Web Site

The Scripting Games Web site is a complete redo from the last time you played. It's *mostly* done, and it's been through some tests, but we're not promising 100% bug-free, and we might all discover some functionality we'd like to add.

Please **politely** report bugs in the Scripting Games forum on PowerShell.org. Open a new thread per problem, so we can keep track. We'll work as hard as we can to keep everything working as smoothly as possible.

Also, what we may encounter are *problems.* They are not *issues.* Magazines have issues; computers have problems. ☺

We have one known problem: OneAll.com provides our social login capability. Some corporate networks block access to that domain (probably because they also block stuff like Twitter and Facebook, but who knows). If you're not seeing login buttons, then you're going to have to access the Web site from elsewhere, or get your company to allow OneAll.com. OneAll.com also provides the login functionality for PowerShell.org, so hopefully if you're reading this then you've already worked that out.