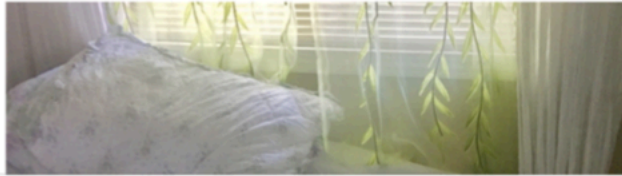




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We need your input on our Community Guidelines!

Hello to our friends and community!



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Blog posts categorically get better engagement when they contain images, so we include some cat photos when we don't have an image to use for our blog posts. You're welcome! (Photo by author)

We are so excited to begin bringing dropleaf into the world! We are getting new games in every week, and we're always making improvements to the platform. We hope you're ready to see what we can do!

After the great games, another big part of our goal at dropleaf is to make a community around our games, and to make that community a good place to be. We really need your help every step of the way to make that goal a reality. This is the first step.

We are of the opinion that it's not really too difficult to just be a good person. There's been a lot of discussion about tolerance of differences, but it's time to move beyond "tolerance" and into "inclusivity". We believe it's too low a bar to simply "tolerate" the differences that make us all unique.; it's time to actually help people feel included. We want that for our world and our community here at dropleaf.

In a similar vein, we are hoping to continue on from “anti-harassment” to “pro-being nice”. That doesn’t mean policing language for niceness or anything like that, but it does mean that we’re going to start by holding our community to a standard of kind discussion.

In doing this, we’ve made three basic assumptions:

- This *can* be done
- To do it right, we need to start from the ground up
- We don’t have all the answers

Below is the first draft of our Community Guidelines. We invite you to share your thoughts and criticisms. Comment on lines or paragraphs, ask others for their opinion—generally, to take part in helping us shape them. We are imperfect, and specifically I (Rachel) only have so much life experience that can inform how I drafted a set of guidelines like these. I (and we as a team and company) *will* make mistakes. So **we need your help to truly make sure that our community is a great place to be on the gaming internet.**

Here’s some questions you might have, and hopefully their answers:

- **Have you like, ever *been* on the internet?** Yeah, we have. That’s why we’re trying to make an enjoyable space for people to like games, and we think we can make it happen. Is that naive? Hell yeah, intentionally so. But a lot of us on staff here actually *do* have experience (quite a bit of it) building communities on and offline. We’ve been in the horrible, trashy, troll-ridden trenches, so we have ideas (some we’ve used successfully before, others new) about how to make things better.
- **What is this going to be, like a forum or something?** To be honest with you, we don’t know yet! Part of the work of building whatever tool we need will be informed by the kind of space we want our community to be!
- **With so many opinions, how is anyone going to get anything done by committee?** Well, we’re seeking your input, but we will ultimately decide what gets included. That said, we are actively seeking input from people who have different life experiences from ours.

Here we go! It’s all below.

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dropleaf Community Guidelines

content warning for brief mention of suicide and drugs as examples of things that need content warnings. Very meta.

Be good to each other.

We originally started this off with “don’t be an asshole”. Maybe we’ll have to go back to that someday. But we thought maybe we could start by expecting more from each other, and that means ourselves as a company as well as our





users.

"Don't be an asshole" is a subset of "be good to each other", but not being an asshole is a low bar. Like we said, maybe we're too optimistic about what an internet community can be. But we don't think so. Because here's the thing we firmly believe about being good to other people:

It's not that hard.

It really isn't. It only requires good intentions, the ability to learn from your mistakes, and genuine concern for other people. You have those, right? We don't think that's too much to ask; we respect our community, and we want community members to do the same.

Seriously, being considerate of other humans in shared spaces is not hard to do, and we actively encourage people to do the small, considerate things that make humans into communities and cultures. If any of that seems unjust to you, hey, we get it, but we're firm on that point. Feel free to engage us about it (not your fellow commenters), but know we're not going to do away with this philosophy—it's kind of at the core of who we are. If you seek a space where you can freely say bigoted, abusive, etc. things, that's totally your right to do. But this is not and will never be that space. Please respect that.



Our Goals:

First and foremost, we're all here because we love games. Our goal is to help people connect and talk about the games they love, and to form a community to support the awesome indie developers we work with. The more love and support they get, the more games they'll make. Everybody wins!

We also want to prove something: we think the culture around games doesn't have to be toxic, abusive, or exclusionary. Gaming communities have gotten a really bad name thanks to some of their worst members, but we also have been part of supportive, positive, awesome communities of nerds like us. We want to bring that online in a way that's safe, loving, and helps people connect.



Here's what we mean by "be good to each other"

No abusive language, hate speech, or violent speech:

We heartily appreciate the value of a well-placed curse word, and the games that we distribute may have offensive, upsetting, or insulting content (though we hope they'll warn you—see below). But you'll need to stay away from racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic, ableist, etc. language. Once will result in a warning. More than once is instaban. No exceptions. Yes, even if you're discussing a game that contains these things, you need to be respectful of how you discuss them, and keep in mind our community rules.

However, if you see someone using speech that they seem to be unaware is hurtful, consider helping them understand why they shouldn't use that language if you have the energy for it. We understand that if you're directly impacted by hurtful speech you're under no obligation to calmly explain why

it's hurtful, but if you are able to, it's good to help educate people on how we can all be better humans.

This extends to usernames, profiles, and really anywhere you have an opportunity to enter text into a field on our platform.

Content warnings:

We really appreciate the value of content warnings (cw). A content warning is simply a note about content some people might find hurtful or upsetting. We won't require them, but we do VERY strongly recommend that people use them when in discussions. We also very strongly prefer that our game creators use them for the games they upload, and will require this when we have the resources to police it.

For example, if you're discussing a game that contains a scene with suicide or drugs, you should make an effort to put "cw: suicide, drugs" in the title of your discussion, or at the top of your post. Even some things like discussions of food and eating or gore or poop can be upsetting to some folks. Just say "cw: blood" or even "cw: gross" if there's something disgusting to talk about.

If you're worried that a content warning about something is going to be a spoiler, put the cws inside a spoiler tag along with the spoilery content. Keep in mind that our stance on this is: avoiding spoilers is *infinitely* less important than avoiding hurting people. Even if we're talking about live chat, there's still opportunity and obligation to keep your language in check.

Jokes about content warnings or trigger warnings aren't funny, and will result in a warning (ironic, right?). If someone asks you to add a content warning to your post, just do it. No need to ask questions, although you are welcome to do so after you've added the requested warning if you genuinely don't understand. We promise, it will not affect your life negatively.

For civil discussion about complex issues:

We don't want to stay away from the topics of race, politics, gender, language, etc.—in fact, a lot of our games are commentaries on these topics, or made by folks who are negatively impacted by prejudices in these areas. It'd be silly to limit discussion. However, there are some things to keep in mind:

- You can disagree without being a jerk about it. You can disagree with someone without insulting them, their mother, their intelligence, whatever. There's a huge difference between "you're shitty" and "that's a shitty way to look at things." Neither is particularly polite or kind, but the latter at least is criticizing an idea, not a person. Take two seconds to be an adult about things. We feel we can expect this of our community. Try not to prove us wrong.
- Be as constructive as you're able. If someone's saying horrible stuff about a marginalized group that includes you, you may be angry, and you probably have every right to be. You're under no obligation to patiently explain to someone why you're a human being like everyone else. However, if you have the mental and emotional energy, try talking to the person about what they said. Or at least, say "um hey that's really ____ist, but I don't know the correct word for ____."

but I don't have the energy to explain. Could someone else?"

- Know where you stand in relation to others. If you are a member of one of society's "default" groups (white, male, able-bodied, cisgender, neurotypical, etc. etc.), please be aware of that in discussions involving that group. You probably belong to one privileged group in some cases, and a marginalized group in other cases. Most of us do. Recognize that when you are part of a privileged group, your needs are already well represented in our society, and you can and should make an effort to let other voices be heard. If someone expresses frustration with a privileged group, they aren't insulting you personally—they're expressing frustration at their lack of privilege. There's no need for "not all _____."
- If you make a mistake? Just apologize. Not "sorry if you were upset by that", just "sorry". We promise, being able to admit you fucked up and then keep going will make you a better person.

Other stuff:

It's super rude to try to sell or push anything—we're the ones who get to sell around here! You can be banned for this.

We reserve the right to ban or shadow ban (ie, you can talk but no one can hear you) users for their conduct anywhere within dropleaf's properties.

We will be using common sense definitions of things like "harassment" and "abuse"—— we're not lawyers and more importantly, we reserve the right to exclude anyone we feel isn't living up to our community standards, regardless of whether their conduct fits some sort of legal definition.

In a similar vein, these are guidelines, not to-the-letter rules. You should not use these rules to shut down people whose opinions you dislike, or to argue for your right to say/do a specific thing because *technically* it's not in the rules. That won't work for you.

* * *

So, what are we missing? What needs clarity? What isn't right? Let us know!

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