

# Practical Fleet Management for Multi-Plot Communities

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WIP (SM): This page's contents are a work in progress by [Wes](#).

Practical Fleet Management for Multi-Plot Communities Thursday May 14 - 10 to 11pm - SWOC2

*A discussion on running a fleet, aimed at fleet commanders, starship captains, and game masters. We will go into various issues including maintaining timelines, cross-fleet quality standards, metaplots, and more.*

## Issues

### Shared Universal Canon

It's crucial to smooth roleplay that the shared imaginary space in each player and game master's mind be mostly the same. If one player sees a starship as a battleship-tough luxury yacht and another player thinks of it as a cramped, delicate machine that one stray bullet will destroy, you're going to run into problems when Player 1 starts spraying down bad guys with his machine gun.

Most players and Game Masters, especially in a large community, will simply not have the time or inclination to thoroughly read every in-character post for additions to the setting, so you can't rely on RP posts or transcripts alone to keep everyone's imaginations together. If you want players to know the setting, you need to have major events and setting elements documented and easily accessible (and searchable).

Get a wiki. A wiki, which is a website anyone (or selected persons) can edit. As a community leader this is probably the best thing you can ever do for your roleplay. Having a well-used wiki allows for all players and game masters to be on the same page as far as the universe goes, because the universe is not only documented, but can be continually updated and added to by any game master or roleplayer. This relieves you of an enormous workload and helps build a foundation for new players to start with. Star Army uses Dokuwiki hosted on our website (for ease of backup), but any decent wiki software will do. You can host it on your server if you have one, or use another wiki site to host your game files.

## Timelines

All roleplay moves at the speed of plot. This is inevitable because your players can't be online all the time. In an independent plot, this is a non-issue, but in a multi-plot environment you will probably end up with two plots that are moving at different paces. Example: The Star Army light cruiser [Miharu](#) launched

in [YE 29](#) (29th Year of the Empire) on a mission to hunt down a war criminal. Because the Miharu operates through lengthy, very detailed forum posts and the game master has a very elaborate plot plan, it can take months for a single in-character day to pass. Meanwhile, you have the repair ship [YSS Senbu](#), which hosts a [joint-post](#) plot where roleplay is conducted in chat, edited, and posted in 15-page-long chunks on the forum. Because Senbu players respond instantly during chat sessions, time moves very fast for them and they may have one or more in-character days pass in chat. Further complicating things is the site-wide in game timeline, which states that today's date 2009 is today's date [YE 31](#).

How do we reconcile the time differences? What if a player wants to transfer his character from the Senbu to the Miharu (which is two years in the past)? Our solution thus far on Star Army has been to implement a mission-based system. Starships out on missions are on their own in-character time as needed, and then the "downtime" between played missions is flexible. Mission starts are synchronized with the site-wide IC date when possible. I also tend to just fudge when it comes to site-wide events, putting them into the plot as they occur rather than calculating when they should occur in the future ship-based timeline. My advice is to approach the matter casually. For that ship-to-ship transfer, you may want to just go ahead and let the character be in two places at once for the sake of gameplay fun.

If you're more of a stickler for temporal accuracy, I think a vital tactic for your community is to require each roleplay post to start with a timestamp that includes the in-character date and time. As for time travel, we don't do it, but I've thought about it from time to time.

Worst come to worst, you can always chalk discrepancies up to FTL travel combined with time dilation and/or temporal instability/anomalies.

What are your thoughts on timeline synchronizing?

## Quality Standards

To maintain quality standards across the various plots of the fleet, the most important thing is to make your expectations known.

Star Army rates plot alignment to standards by use of a common checklist process called a [Roleplay Reviews](#). Plot audits ask GMs questions like "does your plot have an up to date history section on the wiki?" and scores their plot based on the number of standards they have met. Plots that do very poorly can be dropped from the site. This keeps the quality level of the site as a whole high. Audits are conducted every 1-2 months.

## MetaPlots

<description of what a metaplot is goes here>

Is participation mandatory? This is a difficult question. I think that while individual plots should not be able to ignore the events of the overall setting, at the same time, no one should be forced to roleplay out something they don't want to roleplay. For instance, say a huge war breaks out and ships are called to defend an area in a fleet battle. If a [Game Master](#) would rather continue peaceful exploration, try to

accommodate him rather than put him somewhere he's uncomfortable. Maybe his ship gets special orders to find suitable sites for placing monitoring stations on the enemy border, or to secure peace with an alien race that possesses much-needed trade resources that would help in the war or the battle. Hopefully GMs avoiding your meta-plot will be minimal; if a large number do, maybe you should reconsider the meta-plot or their plot ship's mission.

## Recruiting and Retention



## Where to Advertise

- Conventions (face to face and with fliers)
- Facebook groups (key demographic + personal)
- Yahoo Groups

## Removal of Troublesome Members



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