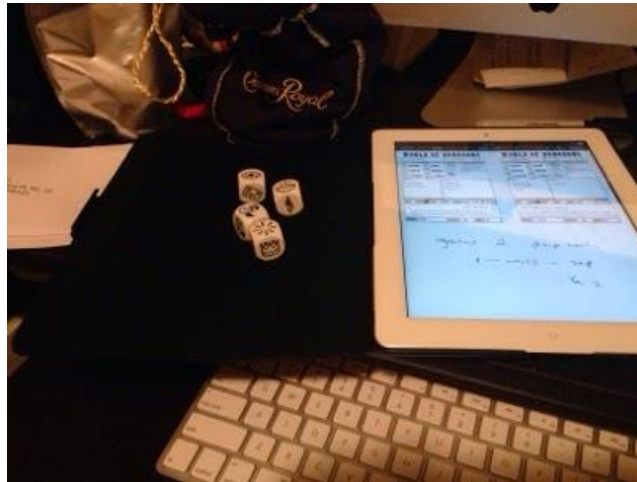


Solitarius Ludus Mobilis

aka, solo pocket campaign

Long ago I promised that I would write a blog entry about play environments. How do I organize my own place space? What tricks do I have that make solo play easier? I won't be able to answer that to everyone's satisfaction, for certain. Actually, my own way of doing things will not work for everyone. Nonetheless, here are my own methods and spaces real and virtual...



To answer, I must preface first that my own time allotment for play is neither regular nor anticipated. I will happily grab a few minutes here and there when circumstances allow for it.

I have two options that work for me. The first is actual table space on which I can use my dice, scratch paper, iPad, and any other things I need, including rulebooks. This is the rarest medium of play for me. I may only get a few hours of this every few months due to my personal schedule. The more common form of play for me is to have tools on my iPhone, or iPad, that I can quickly do all the things I need as I play.

The former method is probably common to all, so I am not going to elaborate or illustrate any of this. The latter way is my preferred method due to my restrictive schedule, and may have a few interesting or unique elements that might help others do the same.

What do we absolutely need to reduce solo gameplay to a minimalist medium, trimming any fat we can to make things manageable and mobile? This will be a different answer for many. For me, the basics are some form of notation, electronic dice (this is easy), PDF rulebooks that I can reference with some sort of capable mobile reader, a camera, and perhaps a separate app for taking really concise notes or marking game stats, dice rolls, brief notes and the like.



Journal. This one is a must. I use [Trunk Notes](#), which is a great little app for making your own personal wiki. I tend to journal actual sessions right into it. It has a convenient table of contents, tags, and other metadata elements which make searching easier. It also allows me to import graphics or even voice memos if I need to, so organization is a cinch. Maps, sketches, voice notes, or anything else I like are right there. It also backs up to my dropbox account, so that I can keep all those notes synchronized between devices (because I never know whether I might have my iPad with me or my phone). Often I will dictate right into the app if my voice is not going to bother somebody. (Keep in mind voice recognition sucks royally for all those crazy fantasy-inspired names!). More often than not, I will tap right in. I won't deny that's a pain in the ass. However, I've gotten pretty good at tapping away.



Dice. This is a no-brainer. There are enough apps out there on your digital market of choice that I need say no more. However, a very integral part of my solo game experience includes [Rory's Story Cubes](#). I now have the complete set, but I can't lug around a huge sack with me in case a fraction of spare time may grace me. So instead, thankfully, "[...there's an app for that!](#)"



Reader. Any gamer, regardless of whether they play face-to-face or solo, needs to keep their books with them for reference at any given moment. All gamers love their books. And whether one prefers the dead tree option, it's always nice to have a portable PDF backup. Therefore, having a good reader is a must for any gamer. I use [GoodReader](#), which is robust to handle large files and has served me well. It also allows me to keep my whole cache of books on Dropbox.



Scratchpad. also important, if not the most important, is to record little bits of notes during the session before they actually get written up into an actual play. (Some forgo any sort of detailed writeups... I'm all for that too, but my personal preference is to take a pretty detailed prose account of the action.) I have discovered [Inkflow](#), a great little sketch pad app that allows me to do several important things for me. It especially works great on my iPad, when I can use a stylus to actually write in little notes and scores. Some of the great features that it will allow me to do is to, for example, import images on top of which I can scribble. I love this for character sheets. I have adapted some character sheets, taking a quick screenshot of them, and imported them into Inkflow, and, *Voilà!* I can then sketch right on the sheet and make changes without rubbing a hole through the paper with my eraser. Furthermore, I can update it in my dropbox account and keep it synchronized between my devices. For Fate enthusiasts, there's the new [Fate Companion](#), which has a great mobile character sheet.

Camera. I also find that sometimes, for whatever reason, if I'm not equipped or I have some scratch paper in hand and do things the old-fashioned way, having the camera on my phone or other device is invaluable. Little sketches and drawings made, notes done — these can all be captured on the camera in moments (in case one has to immediately run to one's next activities).

Mobile Storage. Lastly, a mobile storage space for all your documents, PDF rulebooks, notes, pictures, what have you, is a necessity for keeping things on the go.

My method is not always fast, but it has the great advantage that I'm always equipped and ready to go should the opportunity (and desire) present itself. On those rare occasions when I can actually spread out my materials on a table or work with my computer to dictate sessions, I have not observed much more facility or speed than my mobile method; so I guess it's still well within the realm of acceptability for me.

What is your play environment? What sort of dirty techniques and tricks have you discovered that helps facilitate your own solo experiences?

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