

urth Digest, Vol 22, Issue 21

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 24 Jun 2006

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4657>

Exported from an unofficial mirror of a public mailing list. Copyright in each message remains with the person who wrote it. Email addresses are obscured as `user at host`, the form the original archive published. This file was rebuilt from parsed fields rather than retained headers, so it is faithful in content but not byte-exact.

Jonathan & Rachel Laidlow — 24 Jun 2006, 20:37

I wonder whether a wiki is really what is needed. Surely a wiki purports to a level of certainty on a par with an encyclopedic or other authoritative discourses such as dictionaries. How can we be certain that the interpretation in the wiki is correct? It is only an interpretation, after all. What is to stop the next person who edits it from changing your interpretation beyond all recognition?

Furthermore - what's wrong with searching the urth mailing lists? I found some fantastic discussion of "the Tree is my Hat" here when I found myself asking questions earlier this month.

J

Daniel D Jones — 24 Jun 2006, 21:10 · in reply to Jonathan & Rachel Laidlow

On Saturday 24 June 2006 16:37, Jonathan & Rachel Laidlow wrote:

I wonder whether a wiki is really what is needed. Surely a wiki purports to a level of certainty on a par with an encyclopedic or other authoritative discourses such as dictionaries. How can we be certain that the interpretation in the wiki is correct? It is only an interpretation, after all.

I think you're confusing the concept of a wiki with Wikipedia. Wikipedia is a wiki implementation of an encyclopedia. It primarily deals with facts, and strives to be correct. A wiki is nothing more than a browser-editable web page. It's no more necessarily concerned with objective facts than is any other web page. You could think of the Lupine wiki as a group blog if you like, and there's ample evidence that blogs are under no requirement to be based on objective facts.

What is to stop the next person who edits it from changing your interpretation beyond all recognition?

Absolutely nothing. And there's nothing to prevent you from changing it back. Generally speaking, in cases where there are competing opinions, both should be presented along with any evidence supporting that case. If vandalism and/or contentiousness becomes an issue, portions of the wiki can usually be locked down or editing privileges restricted to logged-in members, and those who refuse to "play nice" can have their membership removed.

Furthermore - what's wrong with searching the urth mailing lists? I found some fantastic discussion of "the Tree is my Hat" here when I found myself asking

questions earlier this month.

Absolutely nothing is wrong with searching the mailing lists, but the two approaches are more complementary than they are in competition. A wiki offers a great many advantages that a mailing list doesn't afford. For example, I mentioned I'm just finishing up "The Island of Doctor Death..." If a wiki were in place, it would only take me a few moment to create a stub page for each story in the book. (Assuming, of course, that the wiki is just getting off the ground and such pages don't already exist.) A month later, while browsing the wiki, you might see that one of the stories has nothing posted on its page. That reminds you of something that you really liked about the story and you post a few comments. Two months later, someone else reads your comments and adds a few of his own. This sort of thing is extremely unlikely to happen in a mailing list. Unlike a mailing list, "threads" never die on a wiki.

JWillard — 24 Jun 2006, 21:56 · in reply to Jonathan & Rachel Laidlow

Jonathan & Rachel Laidlow wrote:

I wonder whether a wiki is really what is needed. Surely a wiki purports to a level of certainty on a par with an encyclopedic or other authoritative discourses such as dictionaries. How can we be certain that the interpretation in the wiki is correct? It is only an interpretation, after all. What is to stop the next person who edits it from changing your interpretation beyond all recognition?

Furthermore - what's wrong with searching the urth mailing lists? I found some fantastic discussion of "the Tree is my Hat" here when I found myself asking questions earlier this month.

J

Copy addresses and emails from any email account to Yahoo! Mail - quick, easy and free.
<http://uk.docs.yahoo.com/trueswitch2.html>

Urth Mailing List

To post, write urth at urth.net

Subscription/information: <http://www.urth.net>

First and foremost, I think we want a gathering place of information.

If someone wants to know Thecla's eye color, it would be there, with a reference to where the quote is that says that. I believe we all have copies of the book and we're all pretty anal about checking information we are looking at. (Not to mention, all reading is interpretive. If I do an entry on Kurtz from Heart of Darkness in Wikipedia, can I truly present a perfect unbiased thumbnail?) Knowing the people on this list, I think everyone would be pretty quick to slam someone who presented something without textual evidence. Severian cuts of Morwenna's head: any arguments? Maybe someone could argue that *Thecla* cuts off Morwenna's head - that would have to go under a theoretical entry.

But a wiki could separate information, speculation, etc. If someone wanted to read about the multiple Severian theory, that could be a sub-entry in the theory section, with quotes from the book defending that theory's advancement.

And I don't think anyone plans for this to replace the mailing list. If anything, we'd like them to supplement each other.

I know I feel like a dog chasing its tail, bouncing from one place to the next - and the Wolfe oeuvre is pretty extensive now. It would be nice to have a tool to start gathering so many straggling ideas/details. But, obviously such a tool would not be compulsory, and one is always free to explore the works independently. I don't really understand some of the emails against the project that seem to sound threatened by it. No one here has a whip!