
THE OWNER'S CREED

A **BIG SISTER** GULLIVER MINECRAFT SERVER GUIDEBOOK

by Ciabatta

I am the Owner.

I'm sorry to say this is not a rank to achieve, so you may be wondering what is the point to this document? Will I weave a narcissistic tale of bravery and tragedy to put my role on a pedestal? Will I list a bunch of rules and responsibilities for myself, just so I can laugh maniacally when I break them later on?

I would say none of that. Rather this is my chance to be frank and honest with you all, to give you a window to my thought processes, and an indication of the kind of person your owner is. It will be self-centered, yes, but then it would be dishonest to say I play no role in your server lives when in fact I, either willingly or unwillingly, will probably play an enormous role in how you enjoy your time here.

After reading all those strict and pompous creeds, the Owner's Creed is more an Un-Creed... a chance to deconstruct and break free (ascend, if you will) from the confines of server roleplay, and see our world through the eyes of its owner, even if only for a few pages. The more you know, the less fear, uncertainty and doubt you may have, and the happier you (and I) will be to be here. ^^

Because after all, despite what you may think – and what you have grown up to believe as far as the mythos of the all-seeing, un-caring server owner – I am and remain a human being at heart, much like you.

On The Subject of the Server

It still strikes people who are unaware of this, but originally I was never meant to be the server owner, or admin, or even a moderator. The [Sister] server was purchased by Cay and I to help during a massive outage on Gunia's server, but it was offered to the available staff at the time as a means to rescue Gunia's ailing machine (hosting her server) rather than to replace it outright with a different world. Even after this was unnecessary, the server continued on as a secondary sister site closely tied to Main, and with some elements of the former staff still in control to a degree.

I did not want the responsibility to run the server because I was still just a player at the time, not unlike the Novices of today. I did not know enough people to secure a sense of trust, nor was I willing to give up the tranquility and joy of Survival play, nor did I have the knowledge to actually set up and operate a Minecraft server. At best, my goal was to be the purse for the sister server: perhaps I could have gotten token commands to let me construct my dream builds, but ultimately I was looking to blend into the shadows like a private benefactor, allowing the professionals to handle all the heavy-lifting.

But through this and that reason, mostly related to the awful communication at the time, I ended up doing a large majority of the operational work. Pretty soon it became obvious to people I was opped, and pretty soon it became even more obvious to me that I was going to receive zero technical help to operate the server, and thus my downward spiral into perpetual work and responsibility ensued.

Now I find myself here, very much “inhuman” in the eyes of my players, and drawing a lot more attention to myself than I was ever comfortable with. However, I have tasted accomplishment in many forms, not least of which is being able to learn and operate a Minecraft server in so little time, and after being a largely Minecraft “noob” as well. I followed later on with accomplishments in redstone and command block creations, MCEdit imports (thus allowing the Dravics world to live on to some degree), and ultimately in forum and guide designs. While I'd be hard pressed to say this makes me “happy”, I will admit this makes me “confident” that I do have what it takes to maintain and evolve our server in a way that is beneficial to so many of you. My newness means I will make several mistakes along the way, but I am always amazed by the resilience of my players, and how hardy and forgiving they are with my goof-ups. So while I will feel

bad for the mistakes I commit, I will also feel emboldened enough to brush off, move on, and try again.

So in closing, I love my servers, both Big Sister and Little Brother, and I love and am proud of all the players and staff that have made its success possible. Without you, literally none of this would have been possible, as I would have never stepped up to the ownership plate to help people who didn't deserve it. :)

On The Subject of Rules and Regulations

People asked for them, so I provided them – in a way that was fun and inspiring to read, in the hopes of encouraging those with some responsibilities (Deputies, Commissioners and Moderators) to perform their job well. We are still a relatively young server with a small enough userbase that doesn't require overly-strict security, so ultimately some wiggle room can exist (or at least be negotiated).

Otherwise, I am a simple person who wants to have fun playing on the servers she pays for and busts her butt maintaining, and who on top of that also assumes on here the role of baker, designer, firewoman, repairwoman, police officer, investigator, writer, artist, singer, dancer, jukebox, chatterbox, psychologist, paraphychologist, teacher, grader, auditor, parole officer, interviewer, adviser, deity AND guidance counselor. Ergo, I will not set any fancy-schmancy rules for myself, nor would I see the need to outline my rights if they are essentially limitless.

Is that unfair? It could be, but only if you are yourself a Rulebook Thumper... so incapable of being flexible or adaptable, that you cannot operate as a proper human being without strictly observing rules in a way that is devoid of compromise or any semblance of common courtesy (e.g., a grammar nazi).

Otherwise, I am still subject to rules coming from outside our server world, such as the Golden Rule which I strictly observe in my day-to-day. The Golden Rule... **Treat Others as You Want to be Treated Yourself...** has been such a powerful driving force both here and in my personal life, that it is largely responsible for why I have built these servers with such care and attention as I have... and more recently, why I am writing this very document. I do not want to play in an unpleasant, crime-infested, unsympathetic, overly-dramatic, and apathetic server (and I certainly wouldn't build great works of art in it), so why would I assume you be any different? Ergo, I have mustered all the knowledge and resources that I can to make this the kind of place I would enjoy myself if I were a Novice player... and although I don't think we're quite there yet, we are making steady progress towards that goal and most of you seem to enjoy the fun ride along the way. ^^

So if you need to know what stops me from going on a bloody rampage and blowing up cities out of boredom, it is a strong and pragmatic moral compass that's both fair to you and me. If people are [genuinely] nice to me, I will be [genuinely] nice to them. If they opt to give me crap, I will shovel it back in their direction. And if they leave me alone, I will leave them alone in kind. A very simple and sustainable proposition. :)

On The Subject of Fun

Building. Building in peace and quiet, on a project that can be of fun or useful to other people, is my definition of fun. People may think I'm bored being all silent and brooding and calculating and planning, but for me it is virtual bliss!

Therefore, too many distractions while I'm building, or instances where I have to surrender my pastime to repair the mess of other people (e.g., criminal investigations or surveillance) have a habit of making me fall way behind and irritable. And when I'm irritable, I'm also less likely to accept building suggestions and

feedback, or accept help from people who can't think for themselves or bring along their own materials.

Other than that, I do love talking but either only with specific people I love and trust, or with specific subject matters that kindle my inner-geek (such as history, anime, food or computers). I was never much of a fan of small talk, certainly less so on instant-messaging platforms where I don't have much time to think. For trivial chats, I'm more inclined to participate if it's through email, private message or forum posts, where I have the chance to answer the small talk when I'm more freely available. ^^

As for other interpretations of Minecraft fun:

- Adventuring I love, but typically in the context of finding something rare... to help me return back to my base to... you guessed it... build some more. XD
- Games I could enjoy, but it largely depends on the game and who I play with. I certainly won't interrupt a lovely building project to play Spleef, for instance.
- Roleplaying is more of an in-the-mood thing for me, and I'm generally only in the mood to RP 15% of the time anyway. Otherwise, it either does nothing for me, or it's an annoyance – and a redundancy anyway, since in Minecraft we're ALWAYS roleplaying. ;)
- PvP I hate like the plague.
- Stealing and griefing are sinful activities for me, being such an avid builder and a victim of both back on Gunia's server. So this is not something I would ever degrade myself into doing, and even investigating these crimes leaves a bitter (albeit morbidly curious) taste in my mouth.
- Mod-hopping is pretty much the premise behind Little Brother, and something I think I could enjoy, especially broken out at one-month intervals. But I get anxious when this occurs while I'm building something, as I then have to cut into my precious building time to do so. This is my dilemma now as of this writing, battling between trying out Thaumcraft on Little Brother, or finally finishing up that Spawnington Transit Hub on Big Sister. XD

On The Subject of Staff

Having been a normal player who essentially “bribed” her way into an ultimate position of power (not what actually happened, but certainly how it could look like), I have a unique perspective of having known the staff as a virtual unknown, and then suddenly trying to work with them as their de-facto leader for a while (and then permanently after the separation). By” staff” in this context, I mean Gunia's old moderator staff.

I can't speak for them, but from my own experience it has been surreal to know them as almighty godlike figures on Gunia's, and then to really see them as down-to-earth people (and mostly youngsters at that!) from the top-down perspective as I have now. If many of our Novice players could see what I've seen, perhaps they won't be so demanding or harsh on our Moderators – ultimately they are players too, and volunteer their time and energy extensively often without anything in return (aside from some off-game perks I provide, but that's a recent thing). ^^

That said, the transition for the classic moderator staff has not been entirely painless and we have had some casualties along the way.... one who got banned, one who forfeited her position due to apathy, one who stopped in to peer about with his beady little eyes then left never to return, one who has never even showed up at all, and one who saw fit to turn over all server management to me. Then there is the Main Server as well, which now stands largely empty, unused or offline entirely.

In this respect, I have failed in the original goal of the [Sister] server which was to help the staff and ensure the continuation of Gunia's world (which was essentially the last “great” public Gulliver server since the time of that writing). Either as a result of culture shock or a perceived [or real] lack of purpose, these losses are still essentially my fault, and it begs to question whether these people, or the Main Server, would

still be here if not for our server's (and my) incompatibility with their way of being. It is the reason I carry the title of "Grand Usurper", since I have inserted myself into their lives (however unwillingly), and torn up the place they knew and loved. Whether I have built something they can love and cherish the same, or even more, remains to be seen, but it is certainly my hope as a way to make amends for all the mess. ^^

Also, it should be noted that while the classical Moderators were not selected on the basis of the Moderator's Creed, I still love and admire those who have stayed with us, and continue to help and communicate with me even as the world they knew changed all around them. They are valuable to me, and they each offer their specific expertise that lends our server its unique charm coupled with a subtle hint of nostalgia. I hope they feel at home here, and sufficiently appreciated and admired by me.

As for post-classical Moderators... they have been chosen by me specifically on the basis of the new requirements, and to me they have exemplified all that is good, fair, humble and trustworthy. I do my best to choose them as carefully as I would choose my friends, and I am happy and grateful that they have met or surpassed my expectations! Moderators are now personally-handpicked by me, but are admitted by the pre-existing staff via a parliamentary-style vote – we no longer follow the Gunia server model of Moderator Applications, as these are a good way to stir up unwanted trouble. ;)

Commissioners (as of this writing) don't exist on our server yet, but would hold the title that I (as a former player) would have loved to receive should I have been offered the opportunity to lead in some way. It's a great compromise between responsibility and play, and as such also serves the dual purpose of testing out new moderators. Although I can personally nominate commissioners the same way I would a Moderator, another Moderator or Commissioner can nominate a person for this position as well. And unless I really want that person as a Commissioner, I will generally wait for a nomination from another staff member.

Deputies started off as an experiment to create a volunteer crime-fighting force among the player ranks themselves, and showed lots of promise with my early Bread Knight experiment. It is another **Golden Rule** implementation of mine – I wanted some power to strike or hunt down thieves and griefers when I was a player, and so I offer the opportunity to my players to assume a similar crime-fighting rule on our server. As such, I will probably be very excited with them, and overjoyed whenever they assert their authority or put an official request for special equipment on my forum – and on the flip side, I will be easily cross with them when they cry and whine and otherwise cause some kind of embarrassment as if they were no different than standard, helpless players. This is the first player rank where I will expect "some" kind of rule-following, so don't be surprised if I ask a little more from you than from a standard player who I would more than likely leave alone. Deputies are chosen by Moderators or Commissioners only (meaning that, alas, I had to disband my poor Bread Knight team), and are a good way to have them exercise their leadership potential. ^^

And lastly, Monthly Moderators on Little Brother allow us to bypass any bias or assumption of mine, and test out people chosen democratically by our players rather than through a tight-system largely controlled by me. This gives players [willing to put in the effort to campaign] the chance to show off their management potential and establish themselves as people we can trust for up to one month (or two, if reelected). And with trust comes the prospect of new growth opportunities upon their return to normal server life... successful former Monthly Moderators could no doubt be trusted with a higher rank than what they had previously. ;)

On The Subject of Players

The applications I've written for my server, as well as the creeds, will give you an indication of the quality of player that I consider ideal. While we have inherited all sorts of people on this server, and at times admit people who only barely pass the app requirements, I will for the most part favor the kind of Player that exhibits all or some of the following qualities:

- Creativity
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Humility
- Humor
- Intelligence
- Kindness
- Loyalty
- Nobility
- Resourcefulness
- Self-Respect
- Tact

It shouldn't come as a surprise that these are qualities that I tried to exhibit myself when I was a player; again, a Golden Rule thing. One should note some obvious omissions to this list, such as friendliness, helpfulness, appreciation, dedication or building prowess – traits that are often looked highly upon, but can be abused without a proper moral base. So long as the person has a solid moral foundation, these omitted traits can manifest themselves as a natural result of being a remarkable human being, rather than as a precondition to this.

Likewise, there are some types of players that can easily push me the wrong way, more so if they try to force me to recognize their “awe-inspiring” presence. These are typically people with little shame and little worth to me, so I am equally shameless in displaying my bias and contempt for them, else they misinterpret my civility or courtesy as a queue for them to continue to dispense their idiocies my way.

That's not to say that good people don't have the right to exhibit one or two of the below character flaws (no one is perfect, especially me); but when the behavior becomes rampant and systematic, and begins impacting my own personal enjoyment on these servers (or worse, starts impacting my own concentration and time management in real life), then we have some serious problems. You flaunt my pet peeves at your own risk, so you mustn't complain if reprimands, punishment, humiliation, unfairness, silence and/or banning result from your continued efforts to test the limits of my patience with the following:

- Arrogance
- Bigotry
- Chronic Bragging
- Deceitfulness
- Helplessness
- Inconsiderate Requests
- Lewdness
- Melodrama
- Obsessive stubbornness
- Rudeness
- Selfishness
- Shyness
- Stupidity
- Threatening Behavior

Does this mean I'm a biased person if, when confronted with a conflict, I will unfairly favor the “good” person or the one who historically has given me grief, or has contributed nothing of value to me?

Yes, or rather 'damn straight!' My time is too short, my patience too limited, and my server too focused on irreverent fun to try and create a sense of egalitarian justice where none, in my opinion, needs to exist. If you want unconditional justice and equal representation without putting an iota of effort on your part, you're probably in the wrong place. Your best bet is to avoid getting yourself into these situations, or avoid coming here in the first place, as you really won't find little sympathy from me. You are the guest who

trashes the house of your host, and if you can't stand that in your real life, please don't expect me to either.

Does that mean that it is impossible for us to coexist on the same server? Not at all,... no one is perfect, and following the guest analogy, there is always going to be at least one awkward guest that may make us uncomfortable, but otherwise poses no threat that necessitates being kicked out. And the truth is, you can enjoy this server without ever having to talk to me or attempt to befriend me – rather than despise you, I would respect you for your restraint, and your consideration for my server's peace, my personal well-being and my time. You will find things to do, new people to meet who may have more passion and tolerance for your unique character, and new and interesting ways to craft a legacy here.

Again, a Golden Rule thing: if all you can offer me is to leave me alone, then I will be perfectly happy to respond in kind. And that, contrary to belief, is a good thing for all of us.

On The Subject of Friendship

I am an old-fashioned person, and have a very old-fashioned conception of friendship that runs counter to the newfound ideas of Facebook and Twitter “friends” that, in my honest opinion, cheapen the concept severely to the detriment of our culture. In short, “real” friends are no different than family, people you unconditionally care for, love and respect, and who you do not mind embracing with all their best and worst traits. Their very presence brings you happiness, their very words and experiences enrich your life. Among “real” friends, there is no such thing as a waste of time, even if the activity itself could essentially be seen as a “waste of time” by other people. Friendship is a sacred and lasting bond, unbreakable without the risk of lasting despair and sorrow from both parties.

In short, “real” friendship is rare, it takes time and patience to form naturally over time, and it's not something that can be formed easily as each person has a unique emotional “checklist” for what he or she constitutes as a friend.

Friendship is NOT a value of how many people follow you on social media or join your server. Friendship is NOT a factor of how many gifts you give out to people, or how many favors you pander out to individuals of interest. Friendship is NOT a reward to be owed to someone, but a mutual commitment among two individuals that beg to be with one another, and join together in the journey of life. Friendship CANNOT be assumed just by the act of being friendly – the latter is simply a manifestation of kindness, and kindness is simply but one of many ingredients on the path of true friendship.

So if I look at our whitelist, I won't tell people I have 140 “friends” – I have 140 active players, banned players, non-players (who are whitelisted but never show up) and staff members registered on our server. Of those 140 people, I have a smaller number of acquaintances; people who I still admire, love and respect for helping to make the atmosphere on my server fun, pleasant and enjoyable to me. These are the people more commonly considered “Friends” in the Facebook sense.

But even out of this pool of acquaintances, I can only count my “real” friends in one hand. This is not a diss to everyone else – simply an honest statement of fact from someone who takes friendship seriously. If we treated our acquaintances with the same dedication and commitment as we treated our “real” friends, chances are we would find ourselves quickly overwhelmed, and end up becoming a good friend to no one.

So if there is no possible way for you to become my “real” friend, does that mean you have no right to be on my server? Not at all, in much the same way as the server would not be interesting if it were only populated by my small team of moderators. In life, one NEEDS casual acquaintances, neutral observers and even enemies, to help you cover all manner of challenges that can help you grow in ways that even a “real” friend cannot help with. Likewise, your presence is still desired and wanted, and you still have the

opportunity to make friends and acquaintances of your own, with or without my intervention. Friendship is **not** a precondition to things like kindness, honesty, loyalty, generosity, laughter or civility, but quite the opposite, “real” friendship is the natural evolutionary result of these traits (and more) over time.

It is only the mediocrities who cannot fathom an existence here without forcing my friendship, and it is typically these people who greedily yearn for something of interest to themselves, such as Creative Mode or a Moderator rank. If they have the gaul to demand something as important and sacred as the institution of friendship as a mere “precondition” for good behavior on our server, then they are essentially holding us and myself hostage for their own personal gain. And if they use threats, intimidation, harassment or other destructive behaviors to force our hand, then this is essentially an act of emotional terrorism, and we simply don't negotiate with these types of people (not in any way that could be considered civil or peaceful).

Again, the Golden Rule thing... so long as you don't set unrealistic expectations of me, I won't set unrealistic expectations of you.

On The Subject of Communication

As I say time and time again, the server was born from miscommunication, and we try our best to never repeat the mistakes of the past in this regard. This is why we stress people to check my blog guide (<http://ciabatta-breadalot.blogspot.com/>) and our official server forum (<http://bigsister.forumotion.com/>) to stay on top of news and developments. If there is ever a server outage or massive update that impairs your ability to sign on, chances are you'll find the reason here.

If you ever need to communicate a question or a call for help, chances are you can post your question on any of these venues, and my staff or I (or even a knowledgeable player) will be able to answer them within a reasonable timeframe. And of course, you're free to talk to your friends and acquaintances on the server whenever and however you want; there is no rule saying you can't socialize with people (so long as it's not destructive, of course).

If you intend to communicate to me personally, however, please take into consideration my needs outside of the server. For instance, I have a job and I cannot access many websites during the course of the day, nor would I be able to do instant messaging at any time of your choosing. This is why people who wish to talk to me in a considerate fashion will email me or send me a private message on the forum, to allow me the opportunity to reply to them when I am able to, as well as to write an answer to a question or concern in the most thoughtful way possible.

I do still have a Steam account (graciously donated to me by our former co-leader), but while I do try to keep it open all day, I do so to maintain an emergency line open whenever possible. It is not meant for idle conversation, and unless you are a friend or a damn good acquaintance, then you do run the risk of being barked at if you try to Steam message me for less-than-important reasons during less-than-opportune times. Treat Steam as you would a 911 number (or whatever emergency dial-in number exists in your country).

Skype is out of the question, so please refrain from suggesting that. I would prefer Hangouts from a moral and technical standpoint, but even so I will not do it for reasons of privacy which leads me to my next subject...

On The Subject of Privacy

In short, I have my reasons for being an overly private person, in part emotional, in part psychological. Dealing with such an overtly paranoid person must be taken as a small price to pay for letting her pay for the server and take care of all the technical intricacies for you. After all, nothing is ever free – and the fact that you will never really “know” the person that owns your server seems a fair price to pay in exchange for so many amenities. And given the nature of the internet, it is a very *harmless* price to pay since – unless you know players in real life, we may not necessarily be who we say we are (I learned this the hard way many years ago).

As part of my privacy-focus, I will rarely if ever divulge matters of my personal life on the server. I have many problems to deal with and conflicts to resolve, but I never feel it necessary (or proper) to burden anyone on the server with these facts – after all, the server is meant to be an escape from those kinds of things, and the last thing I'd want for myself is to corrupt my only venue for escape. So as a courtesy to me and in consideration for my wishes, please don't ask about my personal life.

Likewise, I may not necessarily be amenable to hearing about your own personal life and problems, especially since I won't do the same in return. I can do it from time to time, certainly to friends and fond acquaintances, but if it becomes a chronic thing I'm afraid I simply won't be able to keep up. I am not being paid enough to be anyone's guidance counselor, and although I will try my best, do note that I am not qualified for the job either. If you really have serious real life issues that need to be addressed, please take some time off the server to try and address them with a qualified professional in real life. Please accept that I cannot be held responsible for your own emotional well-being, and it would a cruel disservice to me to hold your own well-being hostage in exchange for forcing me to engage in your own problems. That is a sign of dangerous psychological problems that I strongly urge you seek qualified medical help with.

On The Subject of Gaming

I am not a gamer, pure and simple. I was raised in a strict academic upbringing of only modest wealth, so I was afforded very little time to play video games of any kind. I owned and played an NES and Sega Genesis long into the time when most people were already on a Sony Playstation, and even then I had little time to play these. I leapfrogged into the Nintendo Wii and desktop/mobile game era, in large part under the encouragement of friends, but even to this date I don't play any game other than Minecraft and some fun, casual mobile games.

This is both a benefit and a curse; a benefit in that I remain dedicated to the Big Sister and Little Brother servers as nothing else (not Terraria or Starbound, or violent games like Team Fortress or Left for Dead) will ever distract me away from these. And it is a curse in that it makes me less likely to relate to the vast majority of my players, who may whine and beg me to join them in some multiplayer romp elsewhere, only to be met with disinterest and a cold shoulder.

I would beg you to not think much of this, as this is simply the kind of person I am, and what little time I can afford to try new things will be used in other pastimes that fulfill me in some other way, such as artwork, outdoor activities or socializing with my real life friends. Even Minecraft I don't see as a game, but rather a form of art... and our servers are less online communities to me, as they are virtual clubhouses which offer escape and guidance for younger players who may need the occasional break from real life as I often do myself.

In short, if I am going to “game”, I want to do so in a socially-responsible manner, which is why I will never advocate that your real-life be impacted by joining our server. If you have homework to do, do it first before logging in. If you have friends or family over, entertain them first before you entertain us. If you need to sleep to get up early for work or school, do it now, and forget that “one more block”. If you need to take an extended break for whatever reason, then take it and think nothing of it – we’d appreciate the forewarning, but of course we will appreciate your concern for your own life even more.

The server is prepaid for a year, and cemented by a solid moral and pragmatic foundation, so we will not be going anywhere anytime soon. We will offer a solid focal point for as long as we can, so you may come in and out as you wish (provided you're not someone who has the responsibility to communicate these facts, such as a Moderator). We will try to keep your creations safe, and even offer the ability to download your creations for your own safe-keeping should the worst ever happen. In short, we want to help you augment your real life, not replace it – and while I admire dedication, I will refuse it in full if you turn us into a liability for what truly matters to you as a person.

On The Subject of Technology

I hate Windows and Microsoft products in general, there I've said it. I also hold little respect for Apple products – I might have had at one point, but any company that attempts to imitate the ruthlessness of Microsoft and Oracle loses my respect fast. While I recognize that no one is perfect, especially mega-corporations that almost universally have skeletons in the closet, I enjoy the feeling of accomplishment that comes from putting my money where my mouth is, and taking the effort to explore and promote alternatives that do their small part in starving valuable mindshare from these most evil of morally-bankrupt corporate entities.

In short, I operate my technology as I operate my gaming: in as much of a socially-responsible manner as humanly possible. So I will not pirate software, nor would I use software that is prohibitively expensive to buy, making it impossible to share with people who could not afford it without stealing it. I will instead put in the effort to learn free and open source alternatives that can be universally shared, and open their minds to a whole world of alternative computing that most people may not realize exists. Once their minds are free of any technological sin that accompanies software theft, and once they embrace a culture of self-reliance, independence and a sense of purpose beyond one's own, then like me they may experience a moral revolution that could extend well beyond the world of technology.

In a world that loves to stress our faults and lambast our helplessness, it becomes a rare and beautiful thing to prove to yourself that you “can” accomplish what you set out to do. And that sense of confidence and self-respect is a contagious thing, and at least for yourself this can be a good thing. Just remember to keep things in moderation, as enlightenment is not a precondition to smart-assedness.

Quite the contrary, the more one knows, the closer one is brought to the most humbling, beautiful and inspiring truth of all: **all I know is that I know nothing**. Henceforth, your life of unreasonable and uncertain expectations ends, and your journey of perpetual discovery and learning begins anew.

Now of course I describe this in such flowery terms for technology, but passion exists in many forms and many professions, and all have the potential to lead towards the same ideal. I love anything that encourages the pursuit of passion and self-development, and generally loathe anything that does quite the opposite of promoting mediocrity, obedience and self-dependence on a consumerist way of life. This is in case anyone asks why I really hate the aforementioned technology companies (aside from all the countless irreplaceable files I lost in my early days as a Windows user, thank to mysterious crashes, and a backwards computing culture that never taught me the value of “backing up often”). ;)

On The Subject of the Arts

As I said with technology, I love the arts and I love people who pursue art as a hobby and passion. I specifically love writing, drawing and creating learning materials, and I would like to pursue more physical pastimes like 3D printing and papercrafts. Regarding writing, I naturally write a lot and for me writing these long-winded diatribes are easy and simple for me. Regarding drawing, I'm not the best or fastest artist in the world, but I will never say I can't draw and will work hard to produce results that I like. I have some wonderful friends in real life who have taught me to draw on a computer, especially through Inkscape and MyPaint, and recently on a Galaxy Note, and over time I'd like to show you what I can do with the lessons learned from their guidance.

As for as enjoying the works of others, I love landscape paintings, Anime style drawings, educational non-fiction, 19th-century literature (or audiobooks), good-quality Anime, high-quality movies, and inspiring music. If you can think of sports as an art, I love tennis and volleyball (even if I'm bad at these), and I love calm, quiet and passive pastimes that can extend my knowledge of the world around me, such as hiking, biking and boating (but not driving, I am criminally-bad at it). I used to love building things... Legos as a kid, for instance... so Minecraft fits very naturally with that aspect of me. ;)

I encourage everyone to pursue some hobby or passion, as this is a life-changing pursuit that can give your life focus, purpose and at times even an extra source of income!

On The Subject of Culture

Despite the many negative things that can be said about the server, or any kind of digital escape from the real world, there is one very important and oft-ignored positive aspect that no school, clubhouse, church or other social-gathering could ever reproduce as efficiently. We are a great unifier... we use the power of the digital world to reset all people of different ages, genders, races, creeds, denominations and lifestyles into virtual manifestations of ourselves, and allow them to interact with the potential for equality. Even people who naturally swear like sailors, who hold nothing but contempt for religious beliefs, or who come to us bearing over-sexualized tendencies, can still be given the opportunity to learn how to coexist peacefully with other players who are vastly different than they are – so long as they can observe the rules of coexistence which, coincidentally, require a tacit respect for differing beliefs.

Use the guest house analogy if you're ever curious on how to respect differing beliefs. If the exchanging of opinions is leading towards some kind of conflict, diffuse the situation by either redirecting it to something else, or dropping it entirely. If an apology is required, be brave enough to issue it if it will enhance the peace of the server. If the person wishes to be left alone after an altercation, respect that right to privacy – sometimes the best thing to say is nothing at all.

And most of all, never say or display things that are completely and blatantly socially-unacceptable even in real life; if a perverted act can get you incarcerated in real life, chances are we will ban you at the drop of the dime. So if your interests can be deemed socially-unacceptable by most people, try to keep these separate from your server life, or at least try to integrate these in a way that is positive, platonic and universally-enjoyable for all players. Who's to say you might be successful in turning a once socially-unacceptable behavior into a slightly more acceptable one? [Heaven knows that this has been successful accomplished with violent gaming, even if I don't personally agree with it!] :P

Again, a golden rule thing: try to behave properly as guests in our house, and we will try to behave courteously to you.

On The Subject of Learning

Some people tell me I should have been a teacher – which would not be possible in the classic sense, given I hate schools with a passion (believe it or not). But be that as it may, I love learning and I love imparting what I learn to other people, and I love doing so as part of a socially-responsible mission to do my part to bring about positive change in the world. This is why I will be very passionate and detailed in my explanation of things that I know – and things that I don't know, I will make the attempt to find out. I love giving people all the knowledge possible to make educated, informed decisions – that way, if they still make mistakes, we can be absolutely sure that its their own damn fault. ;P

And best of all, I want to do it in a way that does not require me to preach or behave smugly. We are all students and I don't have all the answers. I will make many mistakes and snap decisions, and not all of these will be necessarily smart or logical. But we excel our most when we become willing to learn from everything, including our mistakes, and this very document is testament to the need to make things as clear and detailed to avoid future mistakes from ever happening (both on your part and mine). Armed with the facts, you will be better able to deal with me, gain my trust and respect, and perhaps over time even develop a kind of special online friendship. At the very least you could become a better person in the pursuit of this, during which time you may realize your time is better spent befriending some other person, or pursuing some other interest. And that too is perfectly fine, and if your journey through this server has taught you something as helpful as that, then my mission is done. ^^

Always remember... despite everything, never lose sight of what you are doing and where you come from. In all honesty, our server is a little digital world with little digital representations of people, run by a little digital baker who writes a lot of pompous literature that perhaps is largely unnecessary for such a little setting. Be mindful that the little digital baker is understanding of this, and writes this pompous literature precisely to make you aware of things – aware that this little place is taking up precious hours of your life, while your infinitely-larger real world remains temporarily abandoned. We want the learning opportunity of this literature, and how our little world is operated, to serve as an anchor for you – a reminder that you come from that much larger real world, and that that real world needs your attention more than we do.

Because at the end of the day, when your little digital baker leaves, or the server ceases to be, or Minecraft ceases to be popular, or online gaming ceases to be possible for you, or the Internet and computers as we know it cease to exist... then ultimately what you are left with is yourself and your large real world to deal with. And if something from the little world you once knew can prepare you for a challenge in that large real world, then your time here with us will not have been in vain. The little digital baker will have been a teacher to you in some respect rather than a harmful distraction, and that will make her very happy.

On The Subject of the Future

I don't know and I can't assume what I won't know, but I will leave this open-ended from here on out in case there are more subject matters that people would like my opinion on.

Thank you for reading my document, and I hope you will have learned something valuable from this. Good luck on your journey of fun and discovery!

--Ciabatta