Subject: How Long?
Posted by Dr. Bender on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 11:01:58 GMT
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Now that the title has your attention...

What would people prefer? Shorter, more frequent updates or a whole story at once?

Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by A-Eadie on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 11:18:11 GMT
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My vote is for shorter, more frequent updates. I can take cliffhangers so long as it isn't a month or year before I get the resolution.

Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Niknokitueu on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 11:47:56 GMT
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Dr. Bender wrote on Tue, 30 August 2011 12:01Now that the title has your attention...

What would people prefer? Shorter, more frequent updates or a whole story at once?
It is sad that we have to choose... :d

Personally, a long-enough block of a story to count as a chapter (about the length of any of the non-short ones), and for that I am willing to wait as long as the authors need.

(ie I personally think you all have the length of each part about right, and am willing to accept infrequent updates as a consequence.)

However, I fully understand that there is a need to frequently update a site in order to keep visiting traffic high, and that many people desert sites they think are too infrequently updated, so in the end it will have to be your call.

Have Fun!
Niknokitueu

Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by beyogi on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 12:24:35 GMT
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I'd suggest so long that you can guarantee that there will be an update every week.

This sucks, having 5 updates half a year or so. It wasn't your fault, but it still sucks.

Thank you for your work, I personally hope for more frequent updates.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by JoeOutside on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 12:30:02 GMT
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I am an exceedingly patient person when it comes to waiting for story--I can distract myself with other things easily enough (looks at large pile of unfinished projects--I should probably distract myself more often anyway :d ). When you feel a story or chapter is ready for posting, it probably is, as far as I'm concerned.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by kd7mvs on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 13:41:00 GMT
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Well, we're used to the installment plan, and that provides more frequent stories to read, so long as they are of reasonable length. We like having more frequent story posting, which would support the multipart story plan.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Polk kitsune on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 14:14:14 GMT
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As a reviewer, I have to admit, I prefer a longer, much more full story for two reasons.

First one, mostly personal, it means I have to write one full review for a single story, rather than split it into five or so. I don't have to hold up to the cliffhangers so much, and I can give a proper opinion.

Second one, a full story gives a much more fulfilling experience. Cutting up the story into sections breaks the sense of continuity you get from it. There's a few times I compare a reading experience as a roller coaster, but I don't think your ride should stop every two hills to refuel. People would lose interest pretty quickly after a while.

On the flip side...

I know pumping out a story takes a lot of time, and we can't urge a writer to write that much faster to pump out an excellent full story every weeks.

At the same time, if traffic on the website is what keeps the new blood coming over and keeps the site alive, making updates infrequent would really hurt that. Personally, there's enough activity in the forum to pass time, but not everyone will agree.

Maybe there's a way to compromise? Short updates most weeks, except the first week every two months for a full length story? I'm sure it'd be tricky to pull off, but it might be the best of both worlds?

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Dr. Bender on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 14:16:46 GMT
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What if I brought out chapter-size updates then collated them into a single file?

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by sam105 on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 15:26:32 GMT
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It depends on the story.  Long stories can be broken up into several updates while some shorter ones work best as one post.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Nicky82 on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 16:32:06 GMT
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Dr. Bender wrote on Tue, 30 August 2011 13:01Now that the title has your attention...

What would people prefer? Shorter, more frequent updates or a whole story at once?

Like many things in the life it should be considered case by case; generally it's better having the story broken in chapter rather than a single behemot of an update in order to keep the gap between the updates shorter and avoid relising updates so long that it takes days to read (take a look to "In a single fold", now just think Insanity prerequisite or most of Diane's stories relised in that format), but sometimes you have to simply accept that it's ready when it's ready, sometimes the story doeasn't take interruptions well, in those cases it's better to wait one week rather than breaking the narrative flow at the wrong point.

Dr. Bender wrote on Tue, 30 August 2011 16:16What if I brought out chapter-size updates then collated them into a single file?I would say that it would be better if each update was a file and each file had a link to the previous and one to the next; in this way you keep the loading time down for the slower connections and it would make easier to make copies to read when you don't have access to internet (just open the file copy all and paste on a file on your computer without having to worry of copying a part that you had already)..... hmm, if there were .pdf files of the stories for that.

Anyway, as long as we get to read the story we are happy, dettails like whether using a single file or multiple ones are secondary; just do what you feel more confortable with, we aren't going to complain one way or the other.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Sir Lee on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 21:10:14 GMT
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I would say "whatever fits the story best."

If the story has natural breakpoints, I would say chapter-by-chapter could even enhance the reading experience. As an example, I would mention "Christmas Elves," which was planned as a four-parter and as such had a couple big cliffhangers that kinda lost part of their impact due to being published all at once.

The converse, of course, is that breaking apart a story with no natural breakpoints feels kinda odd.

Chapters, in particular chapters with regular sizes, are in large part an artifact of serialized publishing in the XIX and XX centuries. Some writers, like Terry Pratchett, don't bother with them in most cases -- but even pterry will break apart a story on occasion, when it feels right to the structure of the story (like on "Pyramids.")

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Polk kitsune on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 22:00:51 GMT
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Can't argue with that logic, I'll admit.

Though in a fashion, it may limit how the updates go, the story should be what determines a cutoff point. If there's no breakaway point to make chapters, then don't. If there's a wonderful moment to either stop a chapter, or a proper *cough*cliffhanger*cough*, better to make it in parts. It's a case to case situation.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by ShinZed on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 22:37:37 GMT
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It doesn't matter how long so long as it's a cohesive story. Cliffhangers are always good if you need a cutoff point (and I know you love watching your readers beat their heads against a wall!)

A story out every week would be wonderful, whatever you can do to keep up that pace would be great. I always check the site on sunday morning, and I'm a sad bunny when there is nothing new to devour. Of course, the server move has been a spanner in the works, but it would be great to return to regular service! :)

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Ryan Donn on Tue, 30 Aug 2011 23:35:21 GMT
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I think it mainly depends on the size of the story.  If it is going to be fairly short it is better to get it all at once.  If it is going to be a long one then chapter size updates are better.

As for collating chapters at a later date or leaving them as seperate files do whatever is easiest for you.  I'm just happy to get something to read and by the time you get to that point I will have already them all, twice.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by awjs on Wed, 31 Aug 2011 00:01:05 GMT
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Polk kitsune wrote on Tue, 30 August 2011 17:00Can't argue with that logic, I'll admit.

Though in a fashion, it may limit how the updates go, the story should be what determines a cutoff point. If there's no breakaway point to make chapters, then don't. If there's a wonderful moment to either stop a chapter, or a proper *cough*cliffhanger*cough*, better to make it in parts. It's a case to case situation.
This sounds like a good idea to me.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by rubberjohn on Wed, 31 Aug 2011 00:25:28 GMT
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I would like to see a return to a regular weekly update, assuming that sufficient material is available without straining the authors. As several others have remarked how a story breaks up naturally may affect how it is best released, some stories work better as several chapters while others lend themselves to being released as a whole.

I would have thought that there are enough active authors here to spread the load comfortably amoung you so that no-one is overloaded. For example the chapters of one story might be released over several months interspersed with chapters of other stories by the other authors, which is pretty much what has been happening most of the time anyway.

Collating multiple chapters into a single file would be a useful option, perhaps tucked away as a separate file on the authors or story page once the whole story has been released. That way the readers would have the choice of whether to go for a large download or not. I sometimes create my own collated files anyway on very large stories by copying into a word processor programme and then re-saving but it's a right pain having to re-establish the formatting.

Those are my thoughts on the subject anyway.

John.

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by XaltatunOfAcheron on Wed, 31 Aug 2011 02:05:38 GMT
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I'd go with "whatever fits the story best."

I've really only got one observation: different authors do serials quite differently. I know that if I

tried to write a chapter and then post it before working on the next chapter, the result would be a disheveled mess. Other authors seem to do well with the serial workflow. Dickens comes to mind...

Xaltatun

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Subject: Re: How Long?
Posted by Unyielding_Flame on Wed, 31 Aug 2011 02:27:34 GMT
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I'm with the 'case by case' camp. That said, I read rather quickly, so REALLY short chapters would be sort of annoying.

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