[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:02:02 PM

Good day, everyone.

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:02:25 PM

👋🏼

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:02:32 PM

We're here to talk about Character creation. The Good, the bad, and the sometimes downright ugly! This panel has been written primarily from a Star Trek perspective, but many of the same basics of this can be applied across almost any genre of writing.

We may sometimes see veteran players, particularly GMs, talking about "a good bio," but what does that mean, exactly? Well, unfortunately, there doesn't always seem to be a straightforward answer to this. Ask a dozen different simmers "What makes a good bio?", and you may very well find yourself with a dozen noticeably different answers. By and far, it tends to come down to personal opinion, but there are certain things that most people will agree that you should keep in mind while you're creating your character.

Now, in my personal experience, there seems to be two major trains of thought about character creation, Develop At Start (DAS) and Develop In Play (DIP).

Develop At Start (DAS) - a larger, well-written out bio is prepared right at the start, prior to the submission of the application (with perhaps some minor modifications or expansions upon - such as adjustments made for a final issued rank - once the application is approved by the GM of the sim being applied to). This method of bio writing tells us a lot about the character right off the bat, because it provides lots and lots of details, but some people feel that it leaves little wiggle room if something really unexpected comes up during the course of playing the character (basically running the risk of doing the simming version of the player painting themselves into a corner if something that they didn't expect occurs in a plot and limits what their character can do in certain specific situations).

Develop In Play (DIP) - a very basic bio that is submitted upon joining, and hits upon a few major points (name, age, species, appearance, service record, and usually around 1-3 paragraphs, at most, in the Background section hitting just a few notable highlights about the character's background). Further specific information comes up during the course of play, in response to specific things that come up in the various plots/subplots that the character is involved in. Some feel that this character could cause problems, since such an "open-ended" character allows for the possibility of a

character knowing more different things than one individual would likely know (or at least on a more skilled level), creating a situation that allows for "Superhero Syndrome."

Personally, I'm in the middle of the two myself. Yes, what's the point of writing out a 10 page bio that contains information that may never even be relevant to your character's development during the course of play and that most other players might not even read in its entirety in the first place?

On the other hand, I don't like the idea of a bio that is nothing more than a name, position, and a single short paragraph of where they were born and grew up before joining Starfleet and rising through the ranks before being given the position being applied for. What we do is often called freeform roleplaying, because we don't have the complicated rules systems of things like D&D - so this means that in a lot of ways the character bio serves as a sort of "tether" as to what a particular character is and is not capable of doing. You don't see a newly enlisted security guard performing brain surgery, for example, or a scrawny science officer single-handedly beating up a bunch of Klingons (or at least, you shouldn't). The bio acts as our guide as to "what is possible" with regards to a specific character. As such, that means that there should be a certain amount of information placed into the bio that goes well beyond just a couple of Background section paragraphs and a few stats.

I've known of GMs who simply won't accept "open-ended backgrounds" because they need to know exactly who they are signing up into the sim. The GM has a plan of where they would like the sim to go, and having a character suddenly pop up and say "Hey, look at me, I can adjust the flow of time!" or "Wow, look, I can snap my fingers and do *anything*!" can *severely* interrupt not just the plot, but the sim itself.

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:10:14 PM

Honestly, I've found the limitations help for you to be more creative and make for a more interesting story.

Lia 2/20/2021, 2:10:25 PM

A character has to have something of the writer within them, or they will ring hollow when push comes to crunch.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:10:55 PM

True, but a bio is also a resume of sorts - often, it will be your "introduction" to both the GM of the sim you wish to join and to the other players who will be interacting with you if your application should be approved, and provide a sample of what you are capable of. These individuals may not know you outside of the sim - they will not know what else you are capable of doing immediately, much less months or even years down the road. How much thought you put into it can often tell others about the way you roleplay. If the bio is well done, you can come across as being someone who takes the time to put thought and effort into what they do. However, if your bio is poorly done, with misspellings, contradictions, or even sections that are blank or

only filled out a little, that can say that you don't put a lot of thought or effort into things - and where's the fun in that for either of us? Remember, first impressions count, and as an old saying reminds us, you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:11:20 PM

I'm far more of a DIP player, which is why i focus on a paragraph per event type bio

Lia 2/20/2021, 2:11:31 PM

Even my Alien races have something of me within them

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:11:48 PM

one bout her early life; one about her teenage years; one about (in Trek: Academy yearS); one about her post academy years if she has one.

in non Trek ones, I have to spend a bit of time expanding teenage years going "Yeah, she learnt this, and had this experience" in order to provide grounding.

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:12:25 PM

As both a CO/GM *and* being someone who reviews Commanding Officer applications, I agree wholeheartedly with this sentiment:

Remember, first impressions count, and as an old saying reminds us, you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:12:41 PM

I do the same - but early life paragraph, then one per decade

Lia 2/20/2021, 2:12:52 PM

Don't you find some people can give TO MUCH information about a character, I like to keep something back just like a normal person.

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:12:55 PM

One option is you can do a multi-stage bio where the player writes a basic bio that's not as complete as you'd like, and you accept it anyway and take them into some sort of in-character interview where you start asking questions that develop parts of the bio. For this I take them in the Star Army Recruiting Center or in their interview to join a ship crew and I have the captain ask "so where were you born?" or "How would you describe your personality" and BAM now you got them writing those things and it's part of a fun IC experience. Also it's great to provide mentoring on the OOC side as you help them give great answers as needed (like giving them advice on choosing a birthplace to fit their concept).

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:13:06 PM

So what we've been trying to set up on the Ulysses is a bio to join by which has the basics- race, name, age, position. But then focusing on a Summary of your character idea, the internal conflicts you want to bring to the character, and the external conflicts you'd like to see done by players/plot etc.

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:13:17 PM

I seldom write more than a sentence or two about Academy unless there's a specific reason/formative event there

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:13:41 PM

And as someone looking at a large number of sims right now, I will say the first thing I do is read the bios and see if these are characters that I can see myself having fun interacting with

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:13:52 PM

Personally, I like character applications that have some storyline hook that I can use in future missions. I don't think EVERYTHING has to be set in stone. If it were, how could a character grow?

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:14:20 PM

It can sometimes be tricky. Like I noted, yes, a lot of detail can be good, but there can be a point in a lot of people's viewpoints where there could be to much - why write about something that may never be relevant?

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:14:36 PM

But you still need to have a solid idea of who this person is going to be. One can be flexible and adapt things that don't work, shore up the things that do.

[PF] AlexM 2/20/2021, 2:14:49 PM

I know I always hate writing bios. Some people write beautifully crafted histories for their characters. Others, well, don't. I like to find a middle ground. But I always feel like I never know enough about my character when it's created. I like having time to get to know the character in action, rather than figure everything out all at once.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:15:06 PM

hm. I actually one-lined Academy in my most recent bio. It wasn't relevant to her, and now that I'm reading her first draft, her final draft looks a lot different. The thing is, a lot of my characters are either "this idea is fun to play" or lately "This is a silly joke, but can I make it a serious concept?"; anyway - I don't like to give a lot of detail. It constraints my ability to add backstory planks when joining other people's plots if they want, and I find that the natural spurn of sims forces me to be creative rather than pre-writing it.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:15:25 PM

But at the same time, as was just mentioned - we need to have a good idea of who this person is that you're pitching. They didn't just come into being fully formed as an adult.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:15:34 PM

(Zhanyt's original bio was "rainbow haired bunny girl for no reason" and it eventually became me explaining her race. I'm having a blast writing her. <_<)

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:15:46 PM

When people join they are joining to RP so anything you can do to get them into RP as soon as possible is a good thing. I started offering a section of my site with Open RPs (meaning open to join, without an app required) that are things like public parties, bar scenes, anything that's a quick thing anyone can appear in.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:15:47 PM

@Gregory hang on.... What might or might not be relevant? If it helps you determine who the character is, it might be VERY relevant. I have a huge bio for some of my characters. Most of it will never come into play but it sometimes does and when it does, it is very helpful.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:15:51 PM

and most of the sim I'm in I think enjoys the worldbuilding

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:16:19 PM

And that can be a part of the problem - how does one define "relevant"?

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:16:41 PM

hm. Well, in some cases, you can kind of tell by reading the intro and other bios

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:16:44 PM

Even if its not used, you *know it* and it informs you of their character.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:17:06 PM

Certainly, for example, it might be relevant to say in the bio as to why they joined Starfleet, even if that never actually comes up in play.

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:17:26 PM

To me, that reads like a character concept more than a bio. Like it's a foundation, not a house

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:17:45 PM

well, yes. But I like to build the house in sim. I spend most of my bio making sure the foundation is there.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:18:15 PM

But all character have to start somewhere. Without the foundation, what else do you have?

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:18:23 PM

I guess I tend to see it as "concept" is the foundation, character sheet/bio is the house, and you decorate in play

To extend a metaphor

[22] Taylor 2/20/2021, 2:19:03 PM

There are many characters where I writing short fiction before applying to get the basis correct

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:19:25 PM

Well, this is why you have to know your world and then figure out how your character came into that world and why they became who they became. It forms personalities and strengths and weaknesses. See my presentation from earlier today. 🙂

[22] Taylor 2/20/2021, 2:19:33 PM

Recently even after doing that, my new Chief Engineer turned out to be games bad guy and tried to kill everyone, not every bio is accurate 😄

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:20:18 PM

Exactly. I like to read about a character's childhood, and about why they joined Starfleet.

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:20:57 PM

Be still my six chambered Orion heart, agree.

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:21:28 PM

Honestly sometimes, especially for NPCs, a little morsel of a description can have huge utility. "J'Porth: A sappy Klingon warrior with an unusual taste for mystery solving and Orion women" is enough to write a post with. 🙂

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:22:05 PM

If I am creating a NPC, I might go barebones on the bio. But, for every PC, I go full detail in their bio. It helps me to "fit into their mindset", if you will. I actually come

at plotting issues differently, depending on who is there, even if more than one of my characters are present.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:22:46 PM

Yes, their growing up years provides the motivation - what kind of family did they have? What about friends or enemie? Why join Starfleet? Enlisted or commissioned officer? Why the particular course of study that they did?   In other words, what's their mindset?

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:24:18 PM

IT depends on the NPC, though @StarArmy. Some NPCs have to have details, like if they're a villain or a henchman or just someone that everyone grows to love.

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:24:19 PM

I think it's key to kind of look for trends in the actual roleplay and as you kind of "find out" or develop more aspects of your character you update your bio over time to include those for the sake of consistency and accuracy. Like maybe events go a way in the RP that end up with your character finding out she's actually OK with pushing a button that sends an alien out an airlock if that alien talks enough trash.

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:24:51 PM

Wouldn't it be lovely if Nova would allow for a shorter, more concise NPC bio? Like, a "Heres how to play them?"

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:25:02 PM

Each of my PC's has a bit of me in them. The one that is has the most of me, is a young Betazoid Marine pilot, George Charles. The darkness of his past is very near my own. It was difficult to write him into existence, but, I felt the need to do so.

[22] Taylor 2/20/2021, 2:25:20 PM

Feedback yoinked and sent on to the Nova3 devs

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:25:21 PM

I've actually played characters that were one line bios for a few sessions, then went back and fleshed them out

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:25:23 PM

Yes, but that's a conversation for another time

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:25:33 PM

This is an important point

[PF] AlexM 2/20/2021, 2:25:34 PM

That's actually a really cool idea. We'll have to get that passed along.

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:26:01 PM

Not just from a player perspective, but from a CO perspective, it can help raise red flags for over powered characters.

Really? You went to Starfleet Academy, graduated at the top of your class and you're an engineer, a doctor and a Judge?

Yeah, no.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:26:42 PM

I mean, if you're ... 60..

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:26:44 PM

Lol

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:26:58 PM

i'd be impressed if you were *current* in all three

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:27:05 PM

Or El Aurian

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:27:11 PM

Usually they're like... 20

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:27:19 PM

Lol

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:27:31 PM

I agree, in fact the bar for playing officers in my RP is usually an impressive bio, haha (or was at some point).

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:27:32 PM

I mean you could be a biomedical engineer with a degree in patent law 😉

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:27:32 PM

And that's why I'm kind of like a certain amount of DAS type development. It's the "tether" that keeps us from throwing in more stuff during play that would be feasible for one person to know.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:27:34 PM

Yeah, I know, it';s why I made that joke. I knew someone who was a 3xPhD at 34 and I was "wow."

"no, I don't believe this bio."

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:28:02 PM

And if they *do* throw it in, then it could be caught easily.

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:28:41 PM

I, personally, really appreciate the combination of sample post with bio. It allows for some demonstration of what is being said in the bio. You can say a character is arrogant, but if they don't come across that way in writing it can raise eyebrows

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:28:44 PM

Characters have to make sense. We actually talked about this in the overflow room after my presentation. How many hybrid characters are there in the world and why do they always seem to have the best of both sets of parents with no weaknesses? Really need to think about how your characters came to be.

I hate the sample posts thing in Nova. I can tell if you're a good writer or not from the way you do your bio. I don't need anything more.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:29:20 PM

I dunno. I've seen people with amazing bios..

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:29:22 PM

nods

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:29:31 PM

and then they start writing. And you realize, rapidly, that they're GREAT at char building but not at writing

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:29:56 PM

Its different when you are the sole infor giver

Then when others are giving input

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:30:29 PM

I know not everyone likes the sample post piece, but writing a bio and writing style are two different things. It's the difference between a resume and an interview

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:30:34 PM

I feel somewhat the same way. If you've done a good bio, then that goes a long way towards telling me about. But I have also seen where someone has a very basic bio but does much better posts.

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:30:34 PM

Also, bios are a lot more objective in style than posts. Like, dialogue is a skill all on its own

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:31:04 PM

I'd say that's the exception and not the rule.

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:31:25 PM

This brings up a good point. Characters should be a product of the setting they're in. When people submit a character that wasn't made for the setting it stands out in a weird way because of not making sense.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:32:27 PM

Yeah

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:32:49 PM

Said this already.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:32:52 PM

I suppose a lot of why I have problems with a sample post is that so many provide a very similar setup. You're off-duty (either in your quarters or in the ship/station lounge) when something bad happens (the place shakes and main power goes out, or red alert is called), and you're supposed to write what happened. How am I supposed to be creative when the setup....isn't?

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:33:00 PM

I've had to rewrite bios, due to sims shutting down, and I wanted to move to a different sim

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:33:31 PM

That's an issue of the setup, though, yes? Not necessarily the tool.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:33:31 PM

I also find that many sample posts are canned.

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:33:58 PM

My first impulse is to write how my character rolls out of bed and hits the floor, because they're not expecting it, and then can't find their pants

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:34:15 PM

I mean, in Star Trek sims, at least you're probably dealing with a mostly-shared universe of sorts.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:34:17 PM

I tend to use samples (now, lol) of past sim writing, and will state which char is mine

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:34:27 PM

I love that. #letsallfindourpanta

aio 2/20/2021, 2:34:29 PM

I try and make the sample posts different from time to time, try and mix it up a bit.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:34:54 PM

lol @Terrie

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:34:58 PM

True. I've seen some GMs propose using a "coming on board" setup (since you have to write one anyway, right?), and I've seen suggestions where you are given a list of random words and phrases and you have to use a certain amount of them in the sample post.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:34:59 PM

I always rewrite from scratch, since I build narration of the character's view into the paragraph, and I've very much failed if three of my characters observe in the same way

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:35:23 PM

if people don't give me the sample post i specifically ask for, its normally a bad sign that they won't follow instruction and can't work with other people

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:35:28 PM

This happened to me once where we were (simulated) attacked in an Army training and I couldn't find my glasses. 😦

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:35:40 PM

@StarArmy , true. As I'm not in any other sims, but OF sims, I don't know the struggle in other genres

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:35:45 PM

you have to be able to riff off what others do. not following the sample post instructions is a good sign you can't

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:36:14 PM

I guess my point is that just like in a job interview you get different things from the bio and sample. Those two combined give a fuller character picture

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:36:16 PM

I still hate sample posts. I don't remember doing one for you @Beautiful Night but I probably did 'cause I know how particular you are.

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:36:31 PM

you did

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:36:48 PM

Lol

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:37:03 PM

If you want to improve the sample post experience, why not replace it with a joint post where you write with the applicant. It'll show you care and will probably be more fun for both of you.

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:37:09 PM

and that's a very polite way to say fussy

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:37:14 PM

Sample posts are hard because you want to show you are capable with this new creation of course- showing relevance- but you yourself are just learning about them.

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:37:15 PM

my sample post is usually what I'll use as an intro post

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:37:18 PM

You're probably the last one I did. I just hate them. Like I said, I much prefer being able to read someone's bio to get a sense of their writing style. Bad writers always weed themselves out quickly.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:37:21 PM

@Amanda Rose , she's a taskmaster, ain't she? Lololll

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:37:32 PM

hush you, go tag 🙂

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:37:37 PM

@UncleBirdy only the best kind. Submits to @Beautiful Night

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:37:40 PM

@Beautiful Night , *looking away innocently*

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:37:42 PM

hm. Yeah, when I was creating something for SA I had to struggle to come up with a good 80's sci-fi anime character. Since my 80's anime sci-fi is Bubblegum Crisis..

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:37:45 PM

What if the result is a decline? Out of curiosity?

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:37:55 PM

can we keep it on task please guys!

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:37:55 PM

I already hit my DS5 tags, didn't I?

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:37:57 PM

andI think that ties back into bio generation - you can tell who knows the setting from that

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:38:06 PM

So, how often do you write a character based upon past experiences? I know that sometimes I'll take something I liked, whether it was an original part of the bio or something that came up during play, and use it in future bios.

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:38:34 PM

oof aint that the truth.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:38:35 PM

On character's past experience or writer's?

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:38:36 PM

Politely tell the person it's not what you're looking for but you had fun and hope they did too and wish them luck on their RP search.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:38:47 PM

Either.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:39:13 PM

Frequently, honestly. A lot of times I recycle bio ideas forward, especially if I think the character didn't get a chance to tella full story.

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:39:22 PM

all of my characters have an element of myself in them.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:39:22 PM

I try not to recycle *the character* in the process

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:39:28 PM

It makes it easier to relate to the character

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:39:45 PM

For example, I actually have some sword training in Real Life, and that's actually come up in a coupe of character bios, one of who actually did wind up getting into a sword fight IC once.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:39:48 PM

I always use past experiences on creating my characters, either large sections of their lives, or minor chapters.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:40:13 PM

I wrote one character based on personal experience. One. Won't do it again.

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:40:26 PM

i'm too boring to be a PC

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:40:27 PM

I have to, to connect to them

Even if it's just a birthrate that's important to me

Birthdate

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:40:56 PM

(As an example, a recent trend in my characters in Star Trek games is that the Academy wasn't their first career, and something traumatic pushed them out of their first career. I'll probably eventually stop that, because the well is drying up.)

Loqui 2/20/2021, 2:40:56 PM

What happened?

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:41:15 PM

You're far from boring @Beautiful Night

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:41:20 PM

I agree, it's good to have some basic way to see if someone read the setting/story overview. I wouldn't expect them to know the setting completely but they gotta have some at least vague sense of where and when the RP takes place 🙂

[PF] LtCmdrToran XO/Leto 2/20/2021, 2:41:34 PM

I usually write my characters with a little of my experiences and emotions. It makes for an interesting story.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:41:46 PM

As to what happened, @Loqui, let's just say that when things went wrong and others were making fun of the character for whatever reason, it didn't feel very good to me.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:42:10 PM

I've done similarly. In the past, I've seen characters (like Spock) who were in Starfleet and then became Federation diplomats after. Well, a couple of my characters were the reverse - they were Federation diplomats, got bored with it, and so joined Starfleet.

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:42:13 PM

I was talking about this will a co-writer the other day, but each of my characters has a personality trait that I associate with. It's not something you might specifically see in the bio, but comes out in how they interact

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:42:31 PM

I might pull from from similarities, but never 1:1 with the character. It's not a line I want to blur

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:42:32 PM

Oh, speaking of which, for character creation how do you guys feel about public vs private bio reviews?

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:42:55 PM

What do you mean?

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:43:01 PM

Say more?

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:43:17 PM

Also a good point. This is for fun, and sometimes the fun is playing someone you aren't in Real Life.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:43:25 PM

All my characters are unique. I like them that way. Sure, they may have a trait here or there in common with me or an aspect of me, but they're their own people and that's the way it should be.

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:43:37 PM

When people join your site, do they post their character where people can see it or do they privately message it to the staff or something?

Which is preferred?

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:44:00 PM

Ah. We do ours privately

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:44:05 PM

The bios are listed on the manifests that everyone can read

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:44:08 PM

I've only ever been in simms that privately post to staff

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:44:16 PM

I use Nova so they submit the application on the site, it comes to me and my senior staff. If it's approved, it's visible on the manifest.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:44:20 PM

I'm confused here

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:44:22 PM

Most of the sims I've been in were private, just the GM and maybe the XO and 2nd Officer. I think I prefer it that way,

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:44:24 PM

once accepted, they are on the simm site

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:44:45 PM

Yeah, I'm used to Nova

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:44:46 PM

a lot of forum sims post bios to a "new applicants" forum, where staff can view them, and usually, other players

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:45:00 PM

never seen that

Reminder 2/20/2021, 2:45:07 PM

This is your 15-minute warning

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:45:12 PM

You shh

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:45:15 PM

in any fleet or indie I've been in

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:45:16 PM

LOL

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:45:18 PM

Granted, I come from d&d groups, where .. you might want to have other players buy in to new players, over freeform sims

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:45:19 PM

Yeah, that would scare me away if I was a real newbie to RP

[PF] LtCmdrToran XO/Leto 2/20/2021, 2:45:30 PM

Yes but when writing a bio sometimes I ask if it is alright to say a certain thing or if it is ok to make tge chara ter have this or that. Then put it public

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:45:52 PM

On my site people plug their bios into the wiki and then usually submit the link for approval by whoever is running the plot they want to join. But I found there's some people who get really intimidated by the public app process so I introduced a private option for character creation which is (occasionally) used.

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:46:07 PM

I've had players send bios to me by email or google docs so I can read them before they submit them online.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:46:33 PM

How does one feel about use of different species, since we've talked about playing someone other than ourselves?

Use as in what the PC character is.

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:46:51 PM

I use different species all the time

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:46:57 PM

@Gregory in what sense?

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:47:00 PM

more than half my characters are Romulans

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:47:27 PM

I'm 50-50 on humans vs other species at this point

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:47:31 PM

Generally, that's half the point of Star Trek, but I think if you're going to do it, you need to be willing to know the canon reasonably well.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:47:34 PM

So, what species is the PC character that is being created?

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:47:35 PM

but maybe that reflects who I am 😉

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:47:39 PM

I only have one human right now.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:47:47 PM

I like to spread my creativeness around. I've written human, Bolian, Klingon, Betazoid, El Aurian, Betalgeasian

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:47:47 PM

Of my 4 playing characters

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:48:20 PM

Had fun with my Betalgeasians and El Aurians.

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:48:21 PM

I mostly play humans... but I do have one 'intergalactic mutt' that is fun.

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:48:22 PM

I think a lot had to do with the sim itself. What is the makeup of the existing crew, etc.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:48:25 PM

I've created canon for Andorians (before TNG came out). I've created Tygarians' culture and species from next to nothing. I've expanded on Halanan's.

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:48:30 PM

Your post just made me think of someone who didn't know Star Trek well making a Vulcan Clown.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:48:33 PM

Sadly, my bird people are dead

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:48:42 PM

But when it isn't something unique, I generally play humans. I loathe Betazoids.

(And I play one)

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:48:57 PM

Lol

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:49:04 PM

I mean, variations are fine, but I've seen a couple bios out there that directly contradict canon

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:49:15 PM

That is a no go

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:49:24 PM

Most of the time I try for species underdetailed to expand on them, but I'll probably end up creating a betazoid eventually.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:49:55 PM

Its fun writing the lesser known ones

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:49:56 PM

I have a 1/4 betazed, very slight empath

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:50:05 PM

Trills in TOS sims bug me a little 😛

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:50:15 PM

I mean, if you want to, say, play a Klingon minority whose ancestors were conquered by the predominant Klingon culture, that could be cool. But, say, a Klingon in Starfleet in TOS would be... no

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:50:18 PM

Me too! They would have to avoid every scan if they have a symbiont because that's not exposed until TNG

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:50:28 PM

I've created some history for the El Aurians and built on the Betelgeausian too

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:50:55 PM

One of my pet peeves is characters that are half vulcan (really romulan), half betazoid and half klingon with super strength and super psychic powers

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:51:00 PM

I think one must also be prepared to not only understand canon species and where they fit into the sim's timeline, but be prepared to understand and use limitations to whatever "special ability" they bring in. Yes, Vulcans are touch telepaths, but they also have ethical principles in place to keep that from being abused. Similar with Betazoids.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:51:23 PM

True

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:51:31 PM

Another bad thing is mixing species and leaving the particular species power at full-strength. Definite no-no.

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:51:33 PM

And don't forget racial enemies

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:52:03 PM

unless you're one of several simmers out there that figure Betazoids are long range empathic scanners. *growl*

UncleBirdy 2/20/2021, 2:52:09 PM

Bajorans and Betazoids both hate Carrie's, for example

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:52:10 PM

I only have 2 hybrids - both have very little advantage, and more disadvantage from their heritage

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:52:47 PM

Ex-Borg Gorn-Traveller Hybrids 😛

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:52:53 PM

There are lots of Bajoran/Cardassian half breeds thanks to all the raping and pillaging during the occupation.

Zhanyt Lafizatar 2/20/2021, 2:52:56 PM

made by Dr. Narud?

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:52:59 PM

Some players want the "best" of different kinds of species (telepathy of Vulcans, empathic abilities of Betazoids, shapeshifting abilities of the Founders, the redundant organ systems of Klingons, the long lives of El-Aurians, the ability to have a symbiont with all the knowledge of its past hosts like the Trill, etc.). No. Just...no.

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:53:12 PM

I have a concept for an embittered Cardassian war orphan who hates Bajorans (for killing his parents) and Cardassians (for abandoning him as an orphan)

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:53:30 PM

Intriguing!

[PF] AlexM 2/20/2021, 2:53:42 PM

I have a half-Romulan/half-human. She has all the strengths and weaknesses of both races.

Mikey- Rozia 2/20/2021, 2:53:45 PM

I've got a Joined Trill, but this is the third host only, no super long life experiences!

[GEC] Kuna 2/20/2021, 2:53:50 PM

I have one of them Trill symbionts. He always ends up dead in the end.

Cara Letsul 2/20/2021, 2:53:56 PM

One thing that is a troubling factor are figuring out strengths and weaknesses.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:54:19 PM

I've played a couple of Trills who weren't joined and didn't want to be.

[SC] KyleB 2/20/2021, 2:54:29 PM

hell yes to this

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:54:34 PM

my 1/8 Klingon has slightly better strength/endurance but a horrible temper that she wrestles with

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:54:53 PM

not after @Amanda Rose session earlier it isn't 🙂

Reminder 2/20/2021, 2:55:04 PM

This is your 5-minute warning. Consider moving the conversation to the appropriate overflow room.

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:55:19 PM

Bless you!

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:55:27 PM

I have an unjoined trill , who is violently anti - joining

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:55:30 PM

I think the thing about combined races (or really any of them) is to be cautious of stereotypes.

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:55:35 PM

Some of it is a result of how Trek is written, but biology is also not culture. Just because your hybrid is 1/4 Klingon doesn't mean they will think like a Klingon if they were raised elsewhere

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:55:40 PM

Yes, and you see characters like Spock or B'Lanna Torres who struggled with being of mixed heritage (and in fact B'Lanna hated being half-Klingon to the point where she

tried to reprogram the Doctor to perform genetic engineering on her and Tom Paris's unborn daughter to edit out the Klingon genes altogether.)

[RPGW] Amanda Rose 2/20/2021, 2:55:47 PM

Yes, T'Lul's nightmare and her now deceased father's nightmare.

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:55:51 PM

and look at the issues alexanda had

[SC] Beth 2/20/2021, 2:56:10 PM

One of my favorite characters written by a colleague is a really arrogant curmudgeonly Vulcan.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:56:40 PM

And make sure that if you do a mixed species character that it makes sense - Aquatic Xindi/Tellarite ain't gonna work - same with Breen/Tholian. Other combinations are possible but aren't very likely, like Vulcan/Klingon (Klingons are very passionate and emotional, while Vulcans are quite the opposite).

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:56:41 PM

this was my basis for going with the temper being heriditary

[PF] Amethyst 2/20/2021, 2:56:59 PM

My fave character right now is human/vulcan/betazoid with basically no special talents except sass and attitude.

[OF] Cam 2/20/2021, 2:57:09 PM

lol

perfect

Beautiful Night 2/20/2021, 2:57:31 PM

vulcans are onlyt the opposite due to social conditioning. an unconditioned vulcan would be a match for a klingon

[SA] Wes of Star Army 2/20/2021, 2:57:49 PM

Thanks for hosting this panel! It was a great one! 👋

[PF] Doug 2/20/2021, 2:57:49 PM

This is a good point. I've read behind-the-scenes stuff about how Worf had this more idealized understanding of what it meant to be Klingon because he was intentional about learning it outside the context of Klingon culture growing up.

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:58:08 PM

Yes, but why I said "unlikely" and not "impossible".

Terrie 2/20/2021, 2:58:26 PM

There's one novel where I think Martok basically observes that Worf is the most joyless Klingon ever

Which makes sense. He gets all the big ideals and tries to live them full time

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 2:59:28 PM

Yes, which is why Worf and the idea of Cardassian war orphans could be such interesting characters - they're from a species whose cultures they didn't grow up in.

Terrie 2/20/2021, 3:00:24 PM

I was a con once where it was observed that Worf also tends to date hybrids a lot. Like, he wants someone who also feels out of step with their culture

[PF] Gregory 2/20/2021, 3:00:56 PM

Thank you for everyone's participation. If anyone wishes to continue, I refer you to the #overflow-one channel.