



FACT SHEET

INTERACTIVE FICTION

- Interactive fiction (IF) is a category of game where the player's interactions primarily involve text. In a typical IF work the player types in actions to perform, or chooses them from a list, and the game responds with a text description of what happens next. Others are more like *Choose Your Own Adventure* books for a computer.
- IF was incredibly popular in the 1980s. For example, *Zork*, the best-selling computer game of 1980, was an IF game, casting the player as treasure-hunter exploring the Great Underground Empire.
- By the 1990s, computer graphics had improved and become more important to the gaming world. IF was no longer commercially viable.
- At the same time, the internet allowed a community of amateur IF enthusiasts to form. They created new, noncommercial work, new tools and techniques for IF development, and well as services for preserving existing work, keeping interest in IF alive.
- In the past few years, IF has rebounded. For instance, *TIME* magazine's 2014 Game of the Year, *80 Days*, enjoyed smash commercial and critical success by pairing intriguing, text-driven gameplay with a sharp critique of colonialism. (It was also nominated for four BAFTAs!)
- Since 1995, the Annual Interactive Fiction Competition has spurred the creation of original new IF works of every size, shape, and style—in 2015 attracting nearly 20,000 players, and continuing to set record numbers of entrants in 2017 and 2018.

THE INTERACTIVE FICTION TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION

- The Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation (IFTF) was formed in 2016 by IF community members seeking to bring greater legal organization and financial stability to the free software and services that modern IF relies upon.
 - IFTF seeks to help IF continue to flourish by making sure that its tools and resources—which have, up till now, been maintained through sheer force of will and individual volunteer passion—stay healthy for a long time to come.
 - IFTF's first public-service program was its stewardship of the Annual Interactive Fiction Competition, an important and prestigious source of IF innovation that has taken place every year since 1995.
 - IFTF directly supports Twine, a free and popular tool for IF creation; is directing research into improving IF's accessibility for players with disabilities; hosts historically important archives of games and languages; and runs a standing committee on the use of IF in education.
 - In 2018, IFTF announced [NarraScope](#), a new games conference that will support interactive narrative, adventure games, and interactive fiction by bringing together writers, developers, and players, to be held in 2019.
 - IFTF is registered in the United States as a 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization.
 - **Our Mission:** The Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation (IFTF) helps ensure the ongoing maintenance, improvement, and preservation of the tools and services crucial to the creation and distribution of interactive fiction, as well as the development of new projects to foster the continued growth of this art form.
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IFTF BOARD MEMBERS



Liza Daly is a software engineer and technology executive who specializes in digital publishing and web-based storytelling. She founded ifMUD, an influential chatroom for the IF community, and authored works including *Harmonia* (2017 XYZZY Awards, Best Use of Multimedia & Best Use of Innovation).



Chris Klimas created Twine, an open-source tool for interactive text-based storytelling, in 2009 and continues to lead the project. He's also the author of several IF works, including the award-winning *Blue Chairs*, and is a principal at *Unmapped Path*.



Jason McIntosh has been an active game creator, critic, and consultant since the late 1990s. His recent IF work includes *The Warbler's Nest* (2010 XYZZY Awards, Best Story) and the multiplayer experiment *Barbetween*. Jason organized the *Annual Interactive Fiction Competition* from 2014 through 2017, and continues to maintain its software.

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Judith Pinter directs the **Electronic Literatures & Literacies Lab** at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has been a game author and teacher of IF since her AGT game, **CosmoServe**, was released in the early 1990s. She is committed to extending the use of IF languages and platforms into educational and public spaces, and as a tool for digital inclusion.



Andrew Plotkin was put in front of a Colossal Cave terminal at the age of eight; the experience stuck. He has been writing influential IF games, tools, and reviews since the 20th century. Currently he helps maintain the **IF Archive** and the **Glulx** IF platform.