



EMBARGOED UNTIL AUGUST 11, 2026

Tabletop Game Designers Association (TTGDA) Releases Scoring Rubric and Tabletop Market Contract Analysis to Promote Equitable Industry Standards

Bridgewater, NJ – The Tabletop Game Designers Association (TTGDA) today announced the launch of their Contract Scoring Rubric and publication of its *Tabletop Market Contract Analysis – 2026*, a comprehensive industry report designed to share information about contract practices and advocate for fair treatment, intellectual property protection, and designer involvement in the tabletop game publishing process.

The report, developed by the TTGDA contract & grievance committee—led by industry veterans Geoff Engelstein, Elizabeth Hargrave, Matt Leacock, and James Lowder—seeks to address the wide disparity in publishing agreements across the industry. With many first-time game designers accepting terms that may be disadvantageous, the TTGDA has developed a rigorous, objective scoring rubric to evaluate publisher contracts.

“Our intention is to shine a light on these industry practices and lead to more equitable standards,” says TTGDA Vice President Sen-Foong Lim. To assist in this effort, the TTGDA will be releasing model contracts that adhere to the criteria established in the scoring rubric.

The full report can be downloaded at www.ttgda.org/contract-basics.

Key Industry Findings

The analysis of contracts from over 50 publishers reveals several critical areas where many standard publishing agreements fall short of fair practices:

- **Advances:** Only two-thirds of publishers offer a baseline advance above the TTGDA-recommended minimum of \$1,000, while 20% offer no advance at all.
- **Designer Involvement in Expansions:** 40% of publishers retain the right to create expansions without consulting the original game’s designer.

- **Intellectual Property Rights:** 75% of publishers retain the rights to a game's name after the publication agreement concludes and rights to the design revert to the creator.
- **Financial Transparency:** One-third of publishers deny designers the right to audit their books, and 10% include non-standard deductions to revenue before royalties are calculated.

Moving Toward Standards

The Tabletop Market Contract Analysis includes aggregate results, with summary scores for each individual publisher available to TTGDA members. However TTGDA would like to highlight the top five scoring publishers (alphabetically): 25th Century Games, Fireside Games, Lunar Punk, Plaid Hat Games, and UP Games.

"These results are not a call to avoid specific publishers," says TTGDA President Geoff Engelstein. "Rather they are a tool for designers to negotiate terms that include fair payment, intellectual property protection, and a meaningful role in the final product."

The organization plans to release semi-annual updates to the Tabletop Market Contract Analysis as more contracts are reviewed and publishers revise their standard agreements.

About the Tabletop Game Designers Association

The Tabletop Game Designers Association is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting designers of all types of tabletop games, including board games, role playing games, card games, miniature games, and others, whether mass market, specialty, or hobby. Learn more about us at www.ttgda.org.

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