

## DayTrippers RPGNET CHAT = Nov 5 2015

**DayTripper:** DAYTRIPPERS is a sci-fi RPG portraying a surrealistic near-future multiverse 100 years ahead... in which an assortment of colorful character classes pilot unique machines into dream worlds and pocket universes to retrieve items of value and bring them back home. Mechanically It is a hybrid: a fusion of Trad/OSR techniques with "Narrativist"/collaborative techniques, designed for High Bleed and High Improv... because I like forging into the breach!



**Dan:**

**DayTripper:** the official website is [daytrippersrpg.com](http://daytrippersrpg.com), and there are two rulebooks: The CORE RULES are for collab games and contain all general player info, and the GAMEMASTERS GUIDE is the hardcore toolkit for the Auteur GM. So you can play the game in different ways, depending on your group and preferred playstyle.

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Here are some other links you can check out...

[Media Kit](#)

[Core Rules sample](#)

[Character Building](#)

And some [samples from the GMs Guide](#)



**Dan:** Thanks, DayTripper! The floor is open to questions.



**DayTripper:**

**Dan:** So let's see... Can you say a bit about what you mean by High Bleed and High Improv?

**DayTripper:** Sure. In traditional OSR circles, the emphasis is on player creativity, not PC skills. likewise, in narrativist games, the emphasis is on collaborative building upon each others content. DayTrippers fuses these things into one system in order to get "inside your head" and produce startling narratives for both players and GM. several ways I do this...

1. for the GM during prep, there are more than 70 random content generators in the book, and dozens of "drama templates" which provide suggestive ideas for "PlotFields". The method of prep involves a quick "sketch" with lots of random

rolls, a limited set of descriptors, and just a few conditional actions for each Narrative Object. This sketchy approach both facilitates and necessitates a lot of improvisation, leaves plenty of room for Players to be creative in, and encourages the discovery of unconscious connections.

**2.** during runtime the game is powered by a back-and-forth of narrative input between the GM and the Players, and an approach in which one of the GM's principle functions is to re-incorporate "Psychic Content" arising from the Players. This approach leads to a more collaborative and less predictable story, and is guided by the mental energies of the group as a whole. For example, Action Resolution is determined mathematically but interpreted narratively, using bipartite resolvers like Archipelago ("Yes And", "Yes But", "No And", "No But"). When this happens, Players narrate their own positive results while the GM narrates the negative ones.

**3.** did you notice the word "PlotField" above? That's how you set up a session in this game. A Plotfield is a collection of Narrative Objects designed to cause a meaningful but unpredictable Story to emerge through Player Actions. The PlotField is not the Story; it is the fertile soil from which a Story will grow. It includes setups, but no resolutions. It suggests and informs, but it does not direct. Plot Direction will be up to the Players (sandbox-style) while the GM focuses on stringing together suggestive bits of Psychic Content with improvisation and provocative questions, controlling the tension in the story by dynamically modulating the difficulty of tasks and obstacles. Railroading is avoided by separating the Horizontal Control of the Players from the Vertical Control of the GM.

**4.** finally, there are several Environment Types in the game which are specifically designed to yield a large amount of chaotic material for Players to project on, and for that material to be incorporated back into the fiction in meaningful ways. "Dream Worlds" are one example, in which the laws of physics, logic and the line between objective and subjective may be suspended.

**Coalhada:** Could you describe a "typical" (whatever that means) session of DayTrippers and how it would grow out of the PlotField?

**DayTripper:** haha "typical", no. but... there are many ways the GM might set the world up. the GMG is a toolkit, not a setting. so if you wanted to do a "Star Trek" universe, you could, or "Solaris" or "The Airtight Garage of Jerry Cornelius". but that said... typical adventures will follow a narrative arc which is designed to product a one-shot with narrative closure. the GM is regulating tension all the time, remember. so the PCs go out to World X, they discover whats going on there, and this leads to further developments that increase tension or jeopardy.

**Dan:** (Oh, ScottHillsman, meet Tod "DayTripper" Foley, our guest for this evening.

DayTripper, ScottHillsman, author of the game *Evocraft* and a future Q&A guest

himself. 😊 )

**DayTripper:** as the PCs make up their minds about how to handle those, the GM is managing the Narrative Objects (NPCs, locations, events)

**ScottHillsman:** @Dan: Awesome! Nice to meet you!

**DayTripper:** they are independent, like NPCs in ApocWorld. (Hi! Howya doin!)

**Dan:** (For those who just came in: <http://daytrippersrpg.com/>)

**DayTripper:** basically a DayTrippers adventure is like a tiny sandbox and always ends with you coming home (or messing up and ending up in the wrong universe!)

**ScottHillsman:** @Dan: Thanks!

**Dan:** Do I recall correctly that you have a character sheet posted that we can check out?

**DayTripper:** I do. Also see the links above, there are more downloadables on the site. Here is the [PC Sheet](#). You'll notice the area called "LifeShaping"

\* ~Dan nods

**DayTripper:** that's where personal drama from the PCs life can be used to push storylines

**Dan:** (Sounds like something from a motivational speaker.)

**DayTripper:** DayTrippers uses what I call "Progressive CHaracter Generation" that means you do not have to spend all your points before you begin playing. in fact its smart to save some, because during an adventure, you could have a flashback scene or other bit of character development.

**Dan:** Ah... retroactive development?

**DayTripper:** in which we learn that you have a skill or etc that we didnt know about before.

\* ~Dan nods

**DayTripper:** yes – TV shows often do this... you've been watching for 2 years and

then one day you learn this character was in Desert Storm and knows how to kill people 😊 and the plot takes a whole new direction.

\* ~Dan nods

**DayTripper:** part of what i'm going for are adventures in which the GM is as surprised and entertained as the players are. if youve ever played a PbtA game, this will be familiar to you.

**Dan:** A worthy goal, IMO.

**ScottHillsman:** Funny synchronicity, Evocraft RPG also places a strong emphasis on character relations to create drama. I like this term "lifeshaping" — it sounds catchy, and I just used "backstory." But either way, I'm noticing a trend in RPGs to focus more on story and character, and I think that's important.

**DayTripper:** yes Scott, I think the days of the Great Divide are over. it is time for both camps to realize that we have a huge number of tools at our disposal to create new sorts of experiences.

**ScottHillsman:** I agree. And there is so much more new territory to explore. That's actually why I create games.

**Dan:** Can you describe the core mechanic?

**DayTripper:** DayTrippers is 75% OSR and 25% Narrativist. 😊  
CORE MECHANIC – this is very very simple, you want a simple system in order to adjudicate as flexibly as possible.

\* ~Dan nods

**DayTripper:** part of the inspiration was "Roll For Shoes". it goes like this: Every Skill has a Base Stat, and you can attempt it whether you have the skill or not. to perform an action you roll Xd6 (where X = your Base Stat) and then you add your Skill Level, trying to beat a DL (Difficulty Level). HOWEVER, here's where it gets funky... the resolution system goes beyond mere pass/fail. your result will almost always be two parts: YES/NO and then either an AND or a BUT – **YES AND, YES BUT, NO AND, NO BUT**. when you get a positive result the PLAYER narrates. negative result, the GM narrates. so you can see a great opportunity here for players to seize control of the plot at any moment.

**Dan:** Can I stop you there for a second?

**DayTripper:** Yes

**Dan:** In some narrative games I've played, that concept is taken to... well, sort of an extreme. Not necessarily in a bad way. But to clarify... in InSpectres, for example, if you're rolling to look for a clue and get a full success, you get to determine what the clue is. Does DayTrippers take that approach? How much narrative control can a player gain?

**DayTripper:** I understand the question. Remember I am cleaving to the OSR This means the GM is the ultimate authority (if you play that way)

\* ~Dan nods

**DayTripper:** and lets face it, the GM never really has to worry about "losing" – in fact it is his job to lose, in a way... so the GMG advises the GM to take ideas from the players – but *TWEAK THEM*

**ScottHillsman:** Nice

**DayTripper:** Like in Narrativist games, the goal here is not "Can I survive the deadly GM's trap" but rather : "What awesome story comes out when we put these things together with my free will?"

**ScottHillsman:** \*applauds\*

\* ~Dan chuckles



**Dan:** You have a new fan, it seems.

**DayTripper:** thak you thank you! I can always use more of those!

**ScottHillsman:** Well I like it when I find kindred designers.



**DayTripper:** as long as youre a Smart Person

**ScottHillsman:** Haha, I try to be! You see, I've been saying these things for a couple years.



\* ~Dan has a knack for sensing kindred spirits in game design.

**ScottHillsman:** XD

**Dan:** So let's take a simple example: the old "jumping a chasm" bit. How much leeway would you give the player in narrating a success?

**DayTripper:** ok let's break it down into its possible outcomes:

*NO AND* – GM says you fail and fall and hurt yourself badly.

*NO BUT* – GM says you fail but then asks you what happens that mitigates that failure.

*YES BUT* – GM says you made it BUT shall I roll on the Mishap Table for you? Or do you know what went wrong? Your choice.

*YES* – You make it exactly, just barely, no room for anything else to happen.

*YES AND* – GM says you made it SO WELL that... go ahead and tell me what other amazing thing came from it.

**ScottHillsman:** So "Yes And" is essentially the best thing you can roll?

**DayTripper:** yup

**ScottHillsman:** And "No And" is the worst?

**DayTripper:** yup again

**ScottHillsman:** I'm beginning to see how this works.

**Dan:** Okay, so... it sounds like the player can't really add setting facts in a YES AND result, if I'm following you correctly. They can just describe how well they succeed?

**DayTripper:** Correct. That said, however, remember that the GM is always on the lookout for *PSYCHIC CONTENT* – these are statements, emotions, actions, or whatever, that cause strong reactions in the players.

**Dan:** To go back to my InSpectres example, it doesn't sound like you'd have the player define his own discovered clue.

**DayTripper:** sometimes they may be environmental, and if the GM likes them, go ahead and use them. If the player rolls a *YES AND* and comes up with the clue, I might take it. But I would probably add a tweak to it.

**Dan:** How do you handle combat?

**DayTripper:** EVERYTHING is handled the same way. There is only one mechanic, really. Combat adds a few more mods. it also works in *FRAMES*. a frame is like a panel in a comic book. everyone declares actions up front, then everyone rolls

ONCE, then we compare everyone's rolls to their targets. whatever happened in that frame, your roll tells us how awesome you were. then we move to the next frame.

**Dan:** How is damage calculated?

**DayTripper:** like everything else in the game, very loosely. your Stats are literally your "hit points" and the GM takes points away from the stat that was affected by (whatever type of damage it was). when one stat reaches zero you are stunned for a frame. when three stats reach zero you are dead.

**Dan:** Sounds a bit like the Vortex System (Doctor Who, et al).

**ScottHillsman:** Does this system have a variety of challenges, enough to play a whole session without having to add combat to make things interesting?

**DayTripper:** Combat actually doesnt happen a lot in my home games. everything may be a challenge, to some stat or another, and the Difficulty of that challenge is where the dramatic tension comes from. Combat is only one example. Players are told to consider their skills as broadly as possible. Quoting from the Core Rules book: *"Characters can use Skills in all sorts of creative ways, whether or not those uses are generally considered 'part of' the Skill. The Skill of Prestidigitation, for instance, might be used for pickpocketing. Swimming Skill might be used to hold your breath in a toxic atmosphere. Don't hold back."*

**ScottHillsman:** Gotcha

**Dan:** I like that approach.

How do weapons and armor factor in? (Assuming that they do at all.)

**DayTripper:** Weapons, like any other items, may be of exceptional design and grant you a bonus. same with armor. so say I have MIGHT 2 and a WEAPON +1 and you have ARMOR 1 and GRACE 1, and I'm trying to hit you while youre trying to dodge

\* ~Dan nods

**DayTripper:** we both roll: I roll 2d6 (might) plus 1 (weapon). you roll 1d6 (grace) plus 1 (armor). then we compare and see what I got. if I got a YES, you take 1 hit. if there a BUT or an AND, we also have to narrate that. But this is important...

\* ~Dan listens

**DayTripper:** it's a "TAKE THE HIGHEST" system. so when I roll 2d6 I am only taking the highest one, then adding 1.

**Dan:** Is it possible to do more than one point of damage at a time?

**DayTripper:** Basically, your stat tells us how many dice in your pool, and your skills (plus other mods and bonuses) adds to that. if you roll YES AND, you may do

more damage. it's all very narrativey



**Dan:** Oh, speaking of which, what are the benchmarks for the degrees of success and failure?

**Dan:** (Welcome to #rpgnet, Jeshields!)

**DayTripper:** Hi James!

**Jeshields:** Howdy, howdy, howdy.

**DayTripper:** James Shields has done some of the illustrations in the books, and

I'mo get him to do more!!!



**Dan:** Ah! Glad to have you here, James.



**DayTripper:** cuz he's awesome

**Jeshields:** Thank you, Dan.



and thank you, Tod.



**DayTripper:** dan what did you mean about benchmarks?

**Dan:** I mean, what do you need to get a YES AND result, for example?

**DayTripper:** oh it goes like this (there's a handy little table that gets used for everything)...

MISS BY MORE THAN 1 = NO AND

MISS BY 1 = NO BUT

HIT EXACTLY = YES BUT

EXCEED BY 1 = YES EXACTLY

EXCEED BY MORE THAN 1 = YES AND

**ScottHillsman:** It seems like the surreal and strange is a big motif in this game. Are the characters accustomed to a surreal reality, or do they have to gradually

discover it? Is questioning reality a theme in this game, or is it more of a thought experiment in “what if we lived in a wild world?”

**DayTripper:** great question, scott. I will quote...

**Dan:** Dealing with the surreal is kind of the job, right?

**DayTripper:** “The time is shortly after the year 2100, the location is the first world. Massive megacorporations dominate the economic landscape and incredible advances in technology make the most miraculous things possible, from dream recording and genetic modification to medical nanotechnology and microfusion power generators...

But the most earth-shaking development of the 21st century is one we’re only beginning to see the ramifications of... As the 22nd century dawns, the inner and outer realities of SlipSpace are opening for exploration in new and experimental vehicles known as *SlipShips*\*.

Basically, the SlipShip technology was invented about 15 years ago by a mad genius who worked publicly online and made everything opensource. he is a mixture of Buckminster Fuller and opensource techowizard Douglas Coulter. now the cat is out of the bag. the governments dont know what to do about this new tech. corporations are hopping on board to exploit it, and weirdos all over the wolrd are building their own ships and xploring other dimensions.

the DayTrippers milieu was inspired by the surrealistic fiction of Moebius, Michael Moorcock, Rudy Rucker, Stanley Weinbaum, Robert Heinlein, Jack Vance...

there is really very little detail put into “home earth” – it’s a sarcastic version of today, like a fusion of “2001” and “Idiocracy”

**Dan:** (brb — please continue)

**DayTripper:** the WEIRD STUFF happens in the other worlds, and the game has a PSYCHE stat which is used a lot like the SANITY stat in Call of Cthulhu. so yes, dealing with the surreal is all part and parcel of the game, both in content and in structure.



**ScottHillsman:** Very unique.

That explains why you say: “Each adventure is designed to last a single session and return the PCs back to Earth”

**DayTripper:** I am a lifelong SF fan, but I always preferred “New Wave” over Hard SF

I wanted a game that focused on the subjective, the internal

**ScottHillsman:** On your web page. So you can have episodic parallel dimension adventures in these Slip Ships.

**DayTripper:** to allow for experiences that are not just “alien” but literally mind-twisting, it was important to run the game as a series of one-shots each session has its own arc. you can string them together if you wish, but you are not obliged to. you could treat them all as taking place in different alternate earths, if you wanted.

**ScottHillsman:** Nice. The internal fascinates me as well. Could you elaborate, perhaps with an example, on how you’ve explored the deep, internal spheres in a play session?

**DayTripper:** well there are some APs up on the site... i think they in the forum I had one player who created a character called “Frank Frass” – he was a slipship pilot who was starting to lose his mind the player came up with this idea... when Frank came back from his last trip (remember this was his first session), he felt he was not “whole”. something was missing, and he was having this weird dream in which he kept waking up in a tank of blue gel, surrounded by other bodies in tanks. that’s what he gave me to start with!

**Jeshields:** Nice

**DayTripper:** I wrote one adventure in which we traveled to a dream world – IN HIS OWN MIND, and i created an evil corporation which is experimenting on him – without him knowing it. when we got there, I asked the player for details. i asked him about his dream. i asked him about his childhood, because he said it was the apartment building where he grew up. i realized he was talking about a real thing from his past... so I began tweaking it, setting his apartment on fire, and confronting him with a vision of his younger self, only twisted and evil. because the setting was now part fiction and part memory, everything that happened in it caused the player to have very strong reactions. you can watch these APs on the site.

**Dan:** What sorts of weird abilities can PCs have? And can they be something other than human?

**DayTripper:** there are no rules for specific abilities there are no rules for specific weapons or items

**ScottHillsman:** Very cool. I see how this system can have people trying to figure out what is reality and what is not. Or perhaps flipping between two versions of

reality.

**DayTripper:** this is not NUMENERA. instead, there are numbers. you tell me what you want to have, and if I can see it, I'll tell you what number it is. when I say "see it" i mean, if I can see it in this campaign world. So its very much up to the GM and the players.

**Dan:** (Heh. I'm currently in a game of Numenera, as it happens. 😊 )

**DayTripper:** dont get me wrong, i love numenera.

**Dan:** Oh, I didn't take that as a dig at it.  
Howdy, DustinDePenning! Long time no see!

**DayTripper:** i think *THE STRANGE* is probably the closest thing to DayTrippers

\* ~Dan nods

**DustinDePenning:** Hey! Is Tod still around?

**DayTripper:** but I wanted something with NO SETTING and FULL FLEXIBILIITY  
(Hi Dustin!)

\* ~Dan indicates DayTripper

**Dan:** There he is. 😊

**DayTripper:** Dustin is creator of *SYNTHICIDE* – an awesome RPG you should check out

**Dan:** He's also a past Q&A guest. 😊

**DayTripper:** I was one of his playtesters. YAY!

**DustinDePenning:** Thanks Tod 😊 and my friend brady really likes Day Trippers. I have yet to play it but loved reading the origins of it on Story Games.

**DayTripper:** well then he must be a Smart Person!



\* ~Dan chuckles

**DayTripper:** ok inside joke, I will explain... there have been some reviewers who said they would recommend the game for “smart people” that bothered me for 3 days

**DustinDePenning:** hahaha gotcha

**DayTripper:** then I decided not to fight it.

**Dan:** Oh, I’d forgotten about that. Ha!



**DustinDePenning:** yeah that can turn a potential audience off, but in the end isn’t a big deal

**DayTripper:** DAYTRIPPERS – THE SF RPG FOR SMART PEOPLE!



**ScottHillsman:** Hahaha. I see — it just makes people want to play it, because then they’ll be seen as “smart.”

**DayTripper:** sure, why not turn it into Marketing, yeah?

**ScottHillsman:** Sure

**Dan:** Does the game feature a bestiary?

**DayTripper:** Nope! No weapons lists, no gear lists, no bestiary, no armor lists

**Jeshields:** And since it’s all about reality... or not reality, the slogan could be:

DAYTRIPPERS – THE SF RPG FOR SMART PEOPLE... and not smart people.



**DayTripper:** you make it all up. that said, more objects are released in modules and supplements. I am currently working on a supplement called “*GOLDEN AGE ADVENTURES*”

**Dan:** Ooooh, that sounds promising!

**DayTripper:** I'm deconstructing 16 golden age SF stories from classic authors including Philip K. Dick, Stanley Weinbaum, Poul Anderson... and they are full of alien creatures, weird planets, new tech, etc

**Vorthon:** Ooooh, that reminds me. Gotta read more Weinbaum.

**DayTripper:** all this stuff can be mixed and matched, I am not here to create your multiverse for you. DT does not have a "Setting" and it's written as a Toolkit. My job – like the old AD&D DMs guide – is to give you tools to make YOUR multiverse.

**ScottHillsman:** This question is a bit of a tangent, but I feel like these highly creative, thought experiment type games are an emerging sub-genre under RPGs. But I haven't heard anyone identify this phenomenon yet. What might we call this sub-genre?

**DayTripper:** we are talking about this on G+ right now. some say "Third Wave" which is kinda cool. I personally consider it "Eclecticism"... a mixture of trad and narr techniques. i think we will see more of it, until finally The Great Rift is no more.



**ScottHillsman:** Hmm. Or "Smart People Games"

**DayTripper:** haha!

**Dan:** SPGs!

**Jeshields:** Gah! You type faster than I!  
So long RPGs... make way for SPGs!

**DayTripper:** hmm SPG has a nice ring to it but it will be a while before getting Trads to accept anything with the word "Story" in so prominent a position



**Jeshields:** Just make sure that's a G and not a D

**DustinDePenning:** What was your favorite session of playing daytrippers?

**DayTripper:** its weird, man, everyone says "Dont do Railroads" – but when you write a game that's totally object-oriented, only Smart People can understand what you're doing!  
oh boy, favorite session? ummm.... well I LOVE the sessions with Frank Frass

because they got so DEEP into the player's head. but there's another fave... i ran one adventure with a PC who was a monkey.  
*Space Monkey.*

**DustinDePenning:** haha nice

**ScottHillsman:** Lol

**DayTripper:** he couldnt speak, so we worked out some simple signs and eveyrthing was described in terms of emotions and physical actions, rather than speech. to make it weirder... i sent him into a soap-opera-like fishbowl in which he could NOT understand the relations between the humans. but he worked out HIS OWN narrative, and it was awesome. you can watch that on the Daytrippersrpg.com site – in the forum.

**DustinDePenning:** awesome! Loads of actual play on the site. That's really cool

**DayTripper:** I need to do more APs, but I'm busy writing supplements!

**DustinDePenning:** I've never even recorded an AP, so you're way ahead of me  
haha

**ScottHillsman:** (It's been a pleasure, you all, but I'm off to bed. Day Tripper, I look forward to following your game!)

**DayTripper:** you didnt record our playtests?

**Dan:** Sleep well, ScottHillsman!

**DayTripper:** Scott it was great meeting you  
drop me a line! tod@asifproductions.com

**Dan:** So in what remains of "regular time", is there anything we haven't covered that you'd like to bring up?

**DustinDePenning:** Nope, I did not. Never even occurred to me.

**Dan:** And you're more than welcome to hang out as long as you like, mind you.



**ScottHillsman:**  Will do

**Dan:** (In fact, a fellow author I think you'd find interesting is on his way.)

**DayTripper:** I'll hang for a bit, if anybody has any questions I'm happy to answer them. but i think you asked all the important stuff!

**Coalhada:** What's in the pipeline from As If Productions?

**DayTripper:** ah well if you go to [patreon.com/asif](https://patreon.com/asif) you can help support not only DayTrippers but my other projects...

**Dan:** (Howdy, Feylands!)

**DayTripper:** *ORGANIC MAGIC* is a systemless magical system – high detail high improv

*SCENEPLAY* is a card-driven narrative game of creating a movie or tv show and I also run [FICTIONEERS.NET](https://fictioneers.net) which is an online directory of indie games. but the next thing to come out will be *GOLDEN AGE ADVENTURES* for DayTrippers. I'm also working with other authors and artists on DT modules.



**Dan:** Awesome.

**Jeshields:** OTHER artists? I didn't know you were seeing other artists... How could you do this to me?

**DayTripper:** there just MAY BE a module on the way from David Guyll, author of *A Sundered World*

**DustinDePenning:** Nice!!!!

**DayTripper:** so you can bug him about that!

**Dan:** Thanks very much for joining us, DayTripper!

**DayTripper:** Dan, it has been a pleasure.

**Dan:** Again, no need to run off — I'm just going to log the chat and get you the link.

**DayTripper:** thank you all for your time!