# The Domain of Doan the Nado
An RPGM2 community founded by Brandon Mintern

Vespuleth and I created the Domain of Doan the Nado in October of 2004. At the time, I was an active member of the Pavilion and Agetec message boards, and also an avid reader of the RPGMMag issues. In my six months frequenting those boards, I had met some other people like me who were very interested in the game, but I also found that the majority of the members did not seem to appreciate its full potential. I thought that RPGM2 needed a place where it was truly appreciated; one thing led to another, and I decided to create the Domain message board. I invited all the RPGM2 "pros" I had met at the Pavilion and Agetec message boards to come check my board out, and now, less than two years later, we are 100 members strong, and our members have put together many impressive feats with a game that many others had written off.

Some examples of Domain members' accomplishments include Bigfoot's amazing cutscenes, Rodak's extensive use of the Visual Effects Editor, Nash's script pioneering in the areas of Active Battle Systems and using Content scripts everywhere, the diverse game productions of Doyleman, The Smurf's epic series, heavy Default Battle System editing by Dungeon Warden and The Solemn Truth, the amazing maps created by The Final Rune, and the VFX editor has seen a huge resurgence in popularity with new work by members like RealityBites, TheTrueCoolness, Daburke, and more (sorry to anyone I missed). We hope to show you the potential of RPGM2 with the images on this page, which have all been produced solely through the use of RPG Maker 2.
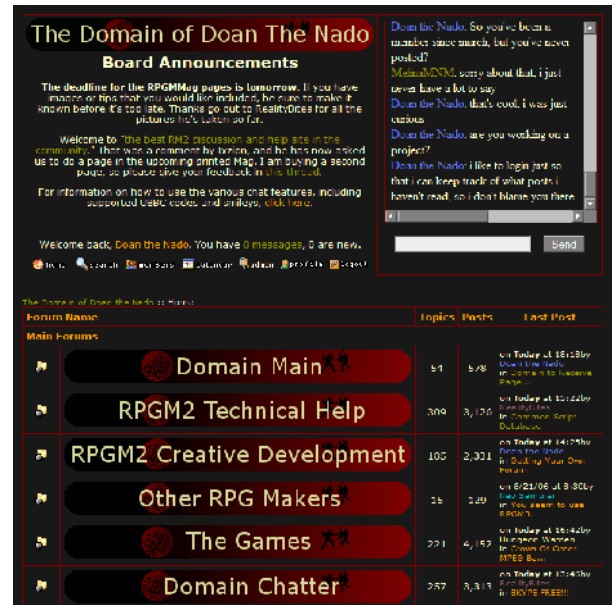
The images on this page (from left-to-right, top-to-bottom) were taken from the following games (Author - Game): Neonash - Mecha Mage, TheTrueCoolness - Jet Fighter, Dungeon Warden - Crown of Order, Doyleman - Legacy: Sky Frontier, Doan the Nado - Custom Menu, Neonash - Zelda: Link's Adventure, The Smurf - Spirit Saga II: The Yamikon Chronicle, Bigfoot - Mutanic Fallout, Doyleman - Tales of Goblia, Bigfoot - Mutanic Fallout, Rodak - Videogamedrome, RealityBites - Twisted Fates, Doyleman - The Farm Life, The Solemn Truth - The Solemn Truth, RealityBites - Random VFX, Reality Bites - Twisted Fates.

RPG Maker 2 Tips and Tricks
brought to you by the members of the Domain of Doan the Nado

Avoiding the X-Factor

Most of us have played at least one game where the majority of the time is spent tapping the X-button repeatedly, usually due to boring battles or uninspired cutscenes. If you want to ensure that players don't Uzi-X their way through your game, some of the following tips may help you out:

Avoid ho-hum conversations. One big factor in RPG Maker 2 titles is dialogue. The dialogue is important in driving your story: it should be the time to flesh out your characters, give them a background, and let them develop. Create interesting conversations that further the story and show conflict between the characters. Try to integrate dialogue as much as possible with cutscenes (see next tip), using dramatic camera effects and facial expressions to better get your point across. If the dialogue contains important details, the player will be much more likely to read it.

Create balanced cutscenes. A large part of cutscenes is the dialogue, but they should not be comprised entirely of "Screen: Message Window" commands. Keep them interesting with camera changes, visual effects, character movement, and anything else that makes sense for the scene. For example, if a character is relating something important about their past, create a flashback scene that shows what that person is saying rather than making it exclusively dialogue. By limiting the amount of text that must be read, the player is less likely to skip over it.

Focus on balance. Too many RPGs (even commercial ones) are set up so that one technique is used to complete the majority of battles. The important thing to remember is that the player typically wants to do whatever gives him the best chance of winning, and too often this is simply attacking. Try to make your game so that the thing that gives the player the best chance of winning is *balance*. Make sure that every action is equally usable and that no option overpowers most other options. Choosing to do something inferior is not truly a choice: make sure that in choosing the best course of action, the player is not doing the same thing over and over. Put simply, "Balance = Fun".

Learn a Lesson! Learn a Lesson!

Your characters need to learn a lesson from their adventure. If they don't, then they'll go back to their everyday lives like nothing happened. Something about the journey should have changed their viewpoint of the world, for better or worse. It is equally important for the player to learn something. If the characters grow as a person and come to learn a lesson in life through the story, perhaps the audience will too. Without a theme, it isn't a true adventure.

Don't Rewrite, Copy-Paste

In the VFX Editor: When Making Visual Effects for Perpetual Display (anything from a fire to a Full VFX Character) ALWAYS use copy and paste for making your last frame identical. Then create your "Middle" frame and work out to the ends. The motions are easier to understand this way, and will always loop smoothly.

In the Script Editor: Try as you may to make your scripts efficient (see next tip), there will be some parts of your script that get very repetitious, such as "Script Branch: Sort" blocks. One good strategy is to set up the first one (i.e. "Apply If 1 – Do Something – Script Branch: To End"), and then copy it and paste it numerous times, editing the relevant information instead of rewriting it all.

The Importance of Efficiency

We are all aware of the memory limitations of RPG Maker 2, and because of that, many of us focus on making our games take up very little space. This is a good thing to do, but it is essential that this conservation is performed at a high level. Try to separate functions as much as possible so that frequently-used commands can be reused. Remember that calling a script only requires 4 memory, while Data: Variable commands require 42. Also try to set up repetitious commands in such a way that they can be executed in a simple "Script Branch: Repeat" instead of explicitly writing them out. Following these tips will not only make your scripts more efficient, they will also be easier to read and follow, meaning that maintaining your game will be a simple, enjoyable act rather than an exercise in drudgery.

What now?

If you're having trouble coming up with an idea for gameplay elements in an RPG, look at one of your favorite RPGs and find the gaming element of it that really pulls you in. Try to add something like that to your game and add your own take to it. You may find that it's difficult to recreate the element that you would like to add; instead, try to figure out what makes that component fun, and focus on that part when adding the feature to your own game. And while it may be true that "Bad writers borrow and good writers steal," always make sure to give proper credit for everything that you put in your game.

Asking for Help

There comes a point when even the smartest of us can use a little help, and when that time comes, the message boards are an invaluable asset. If you don't feel like your questions are being answered as you would like, consider that perhaps you are not asking them right. Some ideas to help you get the answers you need are to title your posts appropriately, explain your problem in as much detail as possible, indicate what you have tried and why it didn't work (if you haven't tried anything, then you should), and most importantly, be patient and grateful. The people helping you are doing it for free, and they cannot be expected to create your game for you or to be at your beck and call.

Make a Game that You Want to Play

When all is said and done, remember that you are making a game mainly for yourself. At some point, you said, "I can do better than that," and now is your chance. Every time you add something to the game, ask yourself, "Am I going to have more fun if such and such is in my game?" If not, the addition may not be worth the time, effort, and memory that it will consume. If you don't like your game, who will?

Listen to Play-Testers, Ignore Critics

If you are creating your game to be played by others, it is very important to get feedback from those people to see what they like and don't like about your game. When you release a demo, expect a lot of criticism, and remember that these people are trying to help you, not to beat you down. Take what they say seriously (but with a grain of salt), and keep their tips in mind when proceeding with your game.

After the release, however, don't let critics get you down. Surely you should fix any bugs, but do what you can to focus on the positives. No matter how much work you put into something, there will always be an element that someone doesn't like, so try not to let it bother you. The most important thing is that *you* like your game, and if that is true, then the biggest critic of all has been satisfied.