Harry Potter and the Methods of Rationality

International Wrap Party Organisers Handbook

Welcome

Thank you for being a host of an event 5 years in the making. Along with dozens of other hosts internationally, you are taking a step into the world to discover and create offline community. This guide aims to give you some inspiration to help you craft a maximally rewarding event with with minimal effort.

Guidelines

The movement that HPMOR embodies has ignited values rarely seen in our surrounding cultures - the pursuit for truth above all else, the absolute rejection of death as the natural order, and the burning passion to understand and improve our world. Over the 5 years that HPMOR has been under creation, large parts of the readership have discovered the communities of Less Wrong or Effective Altruism. Many other readers will have never experienced offline community interaction before. In order to be the most welcoming, inclusive, and enthusiastic to both new and old community members, it's a great rule of thumb to create the event that you personally are the most excited about.

With that in mind, here are some ideas to get your event off the ground.

Options and Guidelines for new hosts

Venue

This is probably the first variable to lock in, as it allows early advertising and allows you to know the constraints that the rest of you event has. Some possible options, ranging from the smallest events with the lowest barrier of entry upwards are:

- Coffee shop. Pick something equally accessible to most of the major forms of transport in your region (public, car+parking, etc). Set a time and a place, and simply publicly precommit to being there for a certain duration of time. This can make it easy for others to come without feeling obligated to RSVP, and you can bring something to do that would make the time pass valuably for you even if no strangers come. E.g. "I'll be at the starbucks near the public library from 6pm to 8pm, sitting with a copy of *Thinking Physics*."
- Private house, living area. This can work for small events depending on the size of your house (note - you may think that your event size is limited by the number of chairs that you have, but in my experience many parties can accommodate at least double this number of guests comfortably for a couple of hours). Private venues can be a little higher barrier of entry to those used to the mainly online community. Making it clear in your invitation that everyone is welcome and that this isn't just for your close friends may help people make the crucial step. (I personally put off attending offline events in my city for 9 months because I knew neither the people nor the venue. This delay is one of my biggest regrets in life).
- Public communal space. E.g. Board Game venues, quiet floors in pubs that are normally closed during the day, picnic grounds or parks. Many common spaces for groups to celebrate together can be found online. This option may require a phone call with the proprietor during business hours to check if they are willing and able to host you. You may be able to find free options if you search for an hour, other places could require you to pay a rate or purchase drinks. You'd also want to check if there are age restrictions as this could exclude some guests, or cause them inconvenience.
- University or Campus locations. Many students should have the means to book a classroom, social area at a library or study building, or even meet in public

outdoor space on campus. If you are not in a student organisation that has access to official campus venues you may want to ask a friend that is. Make sure to provide extra clear instructions to off-campus guests who may be unfamiliar with parking or navigating the campus.

Time

The schelling time is 6pm Local time on Pi Day (March 14th), but you're the host! Feel free to set up anything at your convenience.

- You may want to check in advance what time the final chapter is going to be posted at (tentatively 5pm UTC on Saturday March 14th), as some guests may not want to come to an event if they are not caught up to the end of the story.
- If you are in the Eastern Hemisphere, Sunday should be a fine option too.

Getting the word out

So, you've got a where and a when, now how can you spread the word and get it on peoples calendars far enough in advance?

- The best first step is to post to the facebook group for [Wrap Events](), and invite anyone and everyone in your area. Set the event type to public so that it's not limited to just the hosts in that facebook group.
- Add your event, including time and directions, to the official [Wrap Parties Map](). Then ping anyone nearby that has already said they are interested in an event to let them know about your thing. (Bystander alert! If you are that lonely dot in a city then it's up to you to post an official coffee shop invitation, don't assume that anyone else has a better plan that you would be blocking)
- Posting an event on [LessWrong.com](). Even if you are keeping things simple and doing the coffee shop route, there will likely still be lurkers on LW that will see your option. I personally only ever lurked on LW but ended up hosting dozens of events that I advertised there, so don't be put off just because you are not an active LW poster.

Improving the quality of your event

Now that you've got the foundations covered, anything else is just a bonus. However, there are some simple things you could put a small amount of resources into that would make things extra special.

- Food! Having snacks for guests on arrival is the basis for any good event and ensures people come back if you are ever a host again. This can be as easy as nuts and chips. If you are in a professional establishment you may want to see what options you are allowed to have.
- HPMOR THEMED EVERYTHING. Post in the [subreddit](#) and ask people for poster designs, badge designs, printed copies of the book, outfits, and so on. Create your own and share them with other hosts online. Why not allow guests at your party to pick which of the Battle Magic armies they want to enroll in at the door? Play a game of quidditch without the snitch (the lack of snitch makes the game at least decent!).
- Dramatic readings of your favourite moments!
- Party game HPMOR themed Mafia/Werewolf battles
- Give guests the opportunity to share the impact that HPMOR has had on their lives. For large events, this could be in written form, like on a papered wall with sharpies or in a group journal in a conspicuous location. For smaller events, this could be shared in person.

Follow Ups

As your event winds down, consider getting feedback on what types of interactions your guests would like to see more often in their lives. If there is demand, consider suggesting another meetup a month later. If your group shares enough similar interests, you may get value out of trying to [create a new LessWrong discussion group](), or start discussing how you can immediately put yourself in a higher leverage position to contribute good to the world [under the banner of Effective Altruism](). Maybe start a group that communally rereads HPMOR, the sequences, or [other](https) [rationalist]() fiction.

A reminder that what you are doing here is more than celebrating an inspiring work of fiction. You are bringing people together in a world where it can be exceedingly hard to connect with people who share your values and your ambition. The art of crafting the community starts with the work of hundreds of people across the world who decide that, just for one day, they can make something happen that doesn't normally exist. It is the people in our life who we surround ourselves by that give us the opportunity to share our powers, strengthen each other, and lead fulfilling and happy lives. I have personally seen this connection to community support and improve the lives of over a hundred people I now call my friends. By taking steps towards creating the world you want to see, you too will irrevocably change the course of the lives you touch.