This is a guide for flipper fanfiction recommendation engine which can be downloaded here
General questions about the application should be directed there
Video version of this manual can be found here (relevant for version 1.0.0)

A little preamble

A lot of avid fanfiction readers at some point in their fic reading life arrive at the point where finding new stuff to read becomes a chore. All the filters they can use on fanfiction.net, output fics that they've mostly already read and recommendation lists they can find just aren't catering to their tastes all that well. Finding new and good stuff to read gets harder and harder and they have to jump through progressively elaborate hoops to get a decent recommendation.

Does it need to be that way? Of course not. A lot of the popular websites nowadays have recommendation systems that offer you stuff based on your tastes. Honestly with how much traffic FFN gets it's a crime they haven't implemented something like that already. Which is where Flipper comes in.

Among all the annoyances that searching on FFN entails, let's highlight the most egregious ones in order of importance.

1. Lack of any fic discovery or recommendations mechanism.
2. No way to exclude individual fics you are not interested in from search.
3. Het and Slash are not separated in search results in any way.
4. No way to search on word count in descending order.
5. Lack of meaningful sort orders in general.
6. No way to exclude certain fandoms from crossover pages.
7. Lack of meaningful tracking for the fics you've read.
8. Genre miscategorization is a common thing.
9. Wildly jumping fic metadata that makes it hard to see just how long each fic is at a glance.
10. Category separation is too convoluted and makes searching within a fandom harder when it's split into multiple subsections for TV/Games etc...

These are the issues that Flipper is aimed to address. Let's get to that in order.

/////////////// IMPORTANT NOTICE ///////////////
FFN is currently broken and doesn't display more than 500 favourites on user pages, the fix has been promised but has yet to appear.
What it means is that Flipper will read top 500 of your faves and feed everything else into your rec list.
Just click on quick taggers for stuff you've already read to make it vanish from your recs next time you search/make a list
/////////////// END NOTICE ///////////////

Read below for actual guide.

Recommendations mechanism.

Let's start with the juiciest part. Flipper comes with recommendations built in.

Feed it the **URL of your FFN profile**, name the new recommendation list and press "**Get Recommendations**"
Give Flipper a bit of time to communicate with the server and you will see something like the picture on the right.

Do you see that scroll bar? Do you see that 1 of 742? That is thousands upon thousands of suggested fics to read sorted in order of likelihood of you liking them.
❤️388 is a score that fic received based on how many people liked it, how similar their genre tastes are to yours and how much matches does their favourite list have with yours.

These are quick controls for the fic. They are respectively:
- Trash
- Liked
- Disliked
- Dead
- Interested but need more
- To read
- Reading
- Finished
- Gems
- Loved
- Part of a series

Clicking any of these will assign the respective tag to the fic and from now on it won't appear in default searches. You can click any number of these at the same time.

Flipper helps you keep track of what you've already read. You won't have to read the same fic summaries over and
over If you tag fics upon reading.

If you don't have an FFN profile, it's not a problem. **Advanced Mode** button hides detailed list creation controls. As you an see, you can just drop a bunch of links in and make it work off of that.
Fill in the list name, drop a bunch of urls and use **Create Recommendation List** button if you go that route.

Note: Flipper's recommendation results are fandom agnostic unless you explicitly tell it to display just the specific fandom. This massively helps finding new fandoms and fics to read where you'd have normally wouldn't.

Detailed controls are a bit more fine-grained than the default "Use FFN Profile" button. If you untick *Automatic* you can adjust how Flipper picks favourite lists to base your recommendations on. It goes like this:

Given the list of fics below, find users that have favourited at least X of them AND have at most Y unmatched fics in their favourites to 1 matched OR have at least Z matches with the list below.

TLDR: more minimum matches or lower pick ratio means recommendations will suit your tastes better but there will be (far) less of them.

"Always pick at" is more or less unnecessary but you can play with it to filter it a bit more. Sufficiently high value like 9999 means this param won't influence your results.

To help you fine tune your recommendations *there is an invisible splitter handle* below the search results that you can drag out. It looks like the screenshot to the right. As you can see, when the latest recommendation list was created:

531 users were found that match with 6 fics
423 users with 7 fics
321 users with 8 fics
… etc

And so on. If you want you recommendations to be more relevant set a cutoff of more than default 6 in the *"Minimum Matches"* section. In this particular case a starting cutoff of 12 will still produce a big enough list for you to explore and this list will probably be of better quality.

Note that after you've created your recommendation list it is saved locally and you can just press **Search** next time you launch Flipper as long as the correct list is selected in **Rec List combobox** at the bottom.
Also, Rec Count should be selected in Order By:

Updating recommendations

Flipper's fic database is updated once every 2-8 weeks. When that happens, new favourites are pulled from userlists that you might want to take note of.

To recreate you recommendation list click refresh button next to list's name [🔄] [recs ▾]

This will regenerate the list with new fics from the recent database update.

Fun with lists: Random Mode

In addition to just reading through the list sequentially you can have a bit of fun with filters to help you find stuff.
A little context: not everything good is popular. More than that, not everything good is hugely popular.

There's a fair amount of stuff on FFN that went largely unnoticed. But the point is: even among unpopular
all the fics in the recommendation list are picked from users with generally same tastes as yours

So, they have a higher than normal chance to be to your liking even if they are not very high on the list.
Here's where random browsing comes in.

By ticking the Random Fics checkbox you enable random mode. After that all the presses of green **Search** button
will bring up sets of 6 random fics from your recommendation list. Just read the summaries and decide if you want to dig in or not.

Mostly the lower priority fics will be average, but I've seen more than enough fantastic stuff browsing like that.
Some of my greatest finds had just one match in the recommendation list andI was extremely unlikely to ever find those if not for random mode.

Admittedly this mode tends to also produce a big amount of trash, same as reading random stuff from fav lists on FFN, really,,
but steps have been made to reduce it to manageable levels.
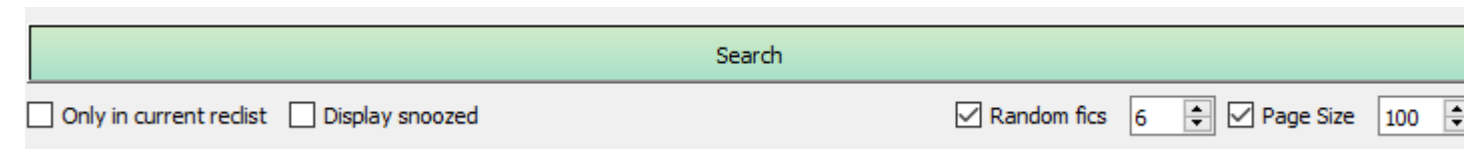

Fun with lists: decent new stuff.

As already said: flipper updates its database regularly and you should refresh your recommendations occasionally.
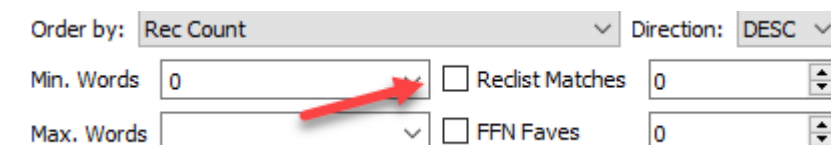
By default, Flipper displays the most relevant fics first in your list. But you can also make it show the most recent stuff.
To do that, check **"Reclist Only"** checkbox to the right of the list name, change the sort mode to "**Publish Date**" and press **Search**.

The result will be fics only present in the current recommendation list sorted by how new they are. Normally fresher stuff with more
than one ❤️next to it is something you probably want to check.

You can additionally set the minimum heart amount in the **Minimum Matches** to the right of **Reclist Only**

Fun with lists: fics by the authors whose fics you've already liked

Sometimes the sheer size of the recommendation list can be a bit intimidating and you want to be more in your comfort zone. In these cases you can filter your recommendation list to show only stuff from people whose fics you've already liked.

To do that, you first have to have tagged some fics as "liked", "rec" … whatever. Even thumbs up on the fic sheet works.

To filter in a suggested way:
Navigate to **Tags** section of the filter, select the tag you are interested in,
Tick the checkbox "**Show fics from the authors with selected tag instead**"
Press green **Search** button. This will make a merged list of such fics for you.

If you also set **order by: Rec Coun**t this will show fics only from such authors in order of importance as they appear in the currently selected recommendation list.
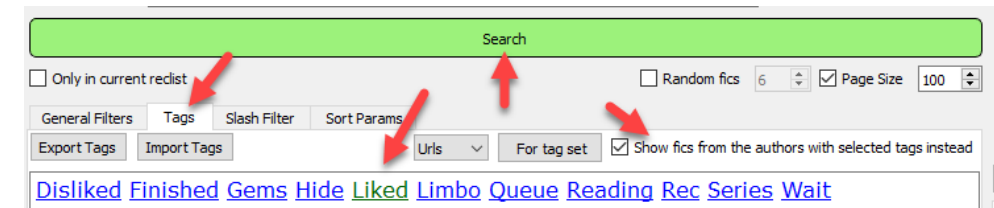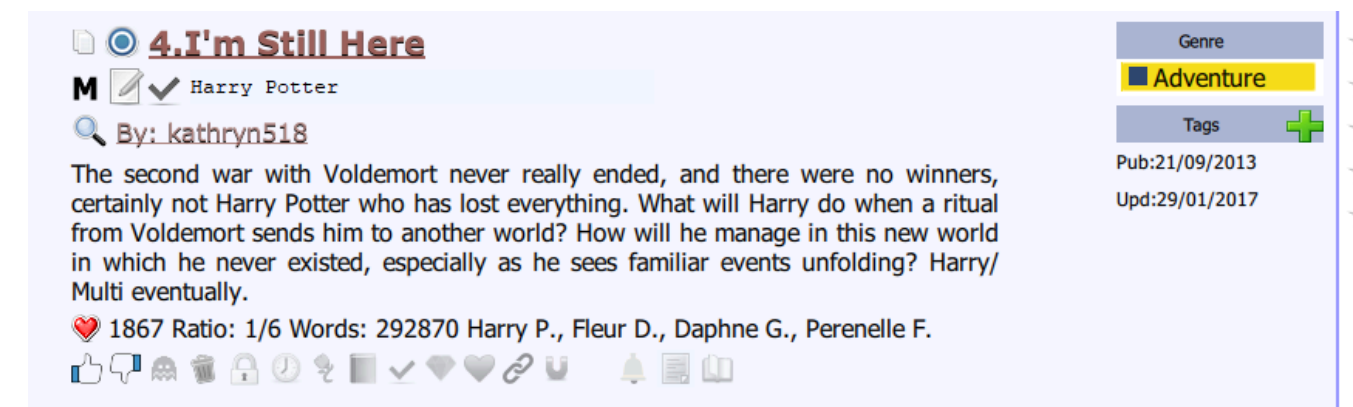
Excluding fics from searches

Or *one of the biggest annoyances on FFN*. You have to read through fic summaries times and times again because everything is always displayed. *This is totally not the case with Flipper.*

These are quick controls for the fic. They are respectively:
- Liked
- Disliked
- Dead
- Trash
- Not trash, but also not interested
- Interested but need more before starting reading
- Very interested and willing to read even in current state
- To read (aka read queue)
- Finished
- Gems
- Loved
- Part of a series
- Custom user tag

Clicking any of these will assign the respective tag to the fic and from now on it won't appear in default searches. You can click on any number of these at the same time and with the exception of like/dislike they will all be assigned to a fic for later referencing.

Green plus button on a fic sheet contains more detailed tracking mechanism. Clicking it produces a dropdown menu in which you can select more than just stuff present in quick controls. The contents of that list can be adjusted on the left in the **"Tags"** section by using Add Tag. / Delete Tag

Point 1: none of these tags go anywhere, those are stored locally to help you track your reading.

Point 2: like, dislike, trash are just shortcuts for tags so fire away, no one will ever see what you've tagged fics as.

Point 3: each fic can have a multitude of tags assigned to help finetune later searches..

Note that "Magnet" tag works somewhat differently, it's a shortcut for a custom user tag you want on a quick panel.
To assign a custom tag to it, create a custom tag with "Add Tag" on the Tags tab of the filter and click on a gray magnet next to it in the dropdown menu. The tag will become red and from now on (and until the next time you select something else) pressing the ,agnet on a quick tagger toolbar will assign this tag to a fic. You can hove over a magnet to check which tag it currently represents.
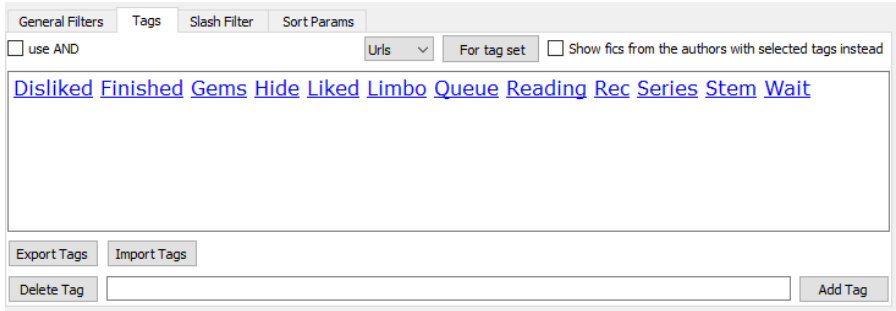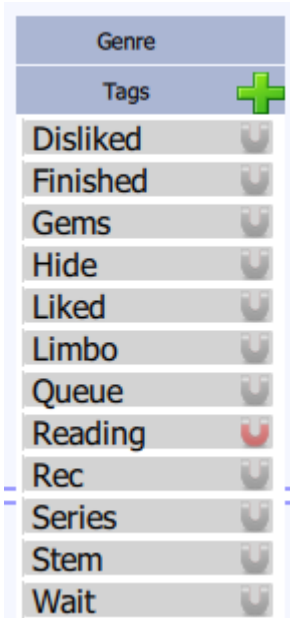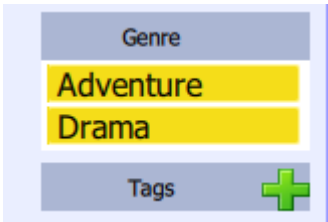
Fic ratings

On the right of the fic sheet you will see 5 half transparent stars. Clicking on those will assign a rating to the fic.

While this *can* be used as a rating like on any other website, the true intention of this feature is something entirely different. Ratings in Flipper are meant to work in concert with tags to prioritize stuff. So, if you have a Queue of, say, 200 fics and some of them you are more inclined to read than the others, you can now assign a rating to those to quickly bring them up in search when you do a search on Queue tag with "**Your scores**" sort order.

Notice that this allows you to essentially have different priorities for different tags if you keep things separate. You can totally have Queue rated for priority and Liked rated by how much you've liked something and even Trash can have ratings assigned to it, possibly to mark just how awful a fic is.
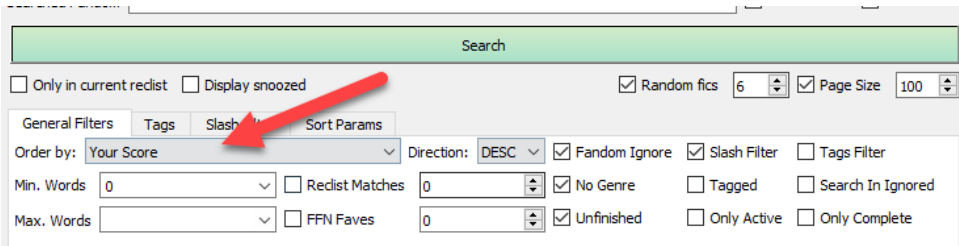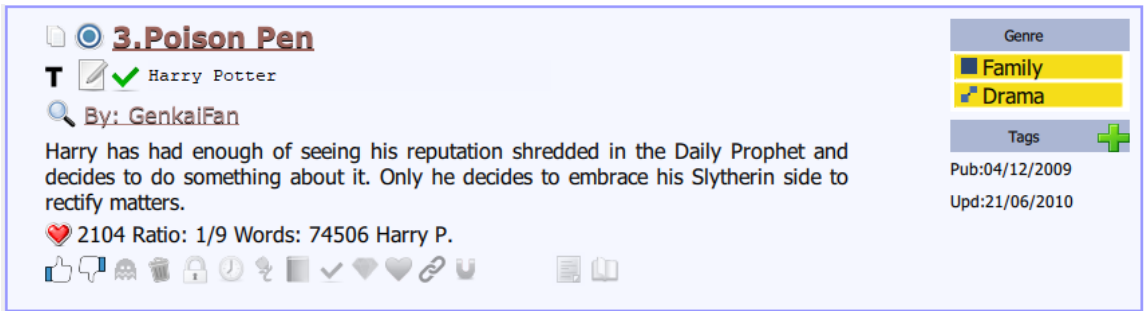
Fic Snoozing

Lets you temporarily hide fics from searches on tags until they update or finish. Basically, this is needed for "Queue" and "Reading" because normally while your are searching on these tags there are fics in there that you have seen times and times again and, possibly, have already read to ongoing. Normally, these will pollute the "Reading" list even though you temporarily have no interest in them.

Pressing Bell icon on a fic sheet will snooze those until flipper has detected a new chapter for them. Optionally in the dropped down menu you can click on "Next Chapter" two times and also choose between "Until Finished" and "Until Chapter X". Note that DB updates happen ~once a month and that's when new chapters will be detected.

Once the snooze has expired the fic will both reappear in search results and will be displayed with green background instead of blue. To toggle off the green highlight - press Bell icon again.

To display snoozed fics in tag searches, tick new "Display Snoozed" checkbox below Search button Snoozing controls aren't shown on finished fics except those whose snooze just expired.

Fic notes

You can add custom notes to fics. It's done by pressing "page" button on a quicktagger toolbar. Notes can serve multiple purposes.

- You can write a review in them.
- You can write where and when you've last read the fic and what's been happening (useful when you know you will skip a couple updates)
- You can just store your thoughts about the fic.

Just generally, this is yet another tool to organize your reading. Personally, I am using it for all those fics I know for sure I will lose my memory of wtf's been going on the next time I enter them (hello, vimesenthusiast).

Keeping track of the chapters

If you press a Reading tag on a fic, it will display an edit where you can mark which chapter you're currently on. Once you do that, upon the next click on the title fic will open at that chapter.
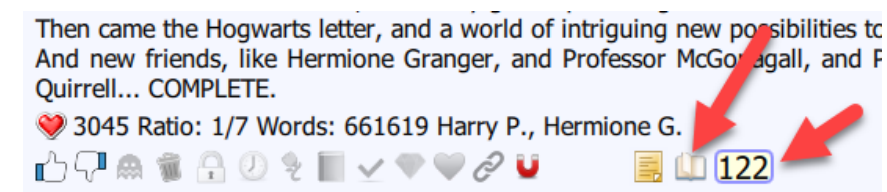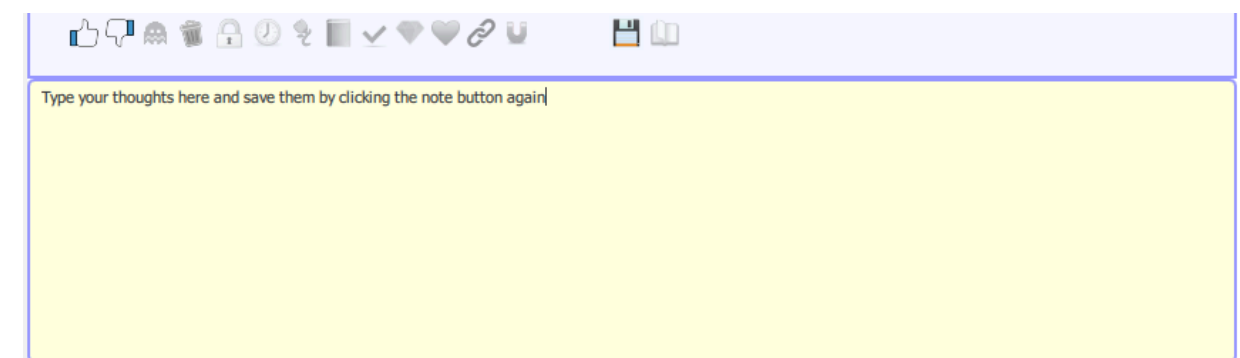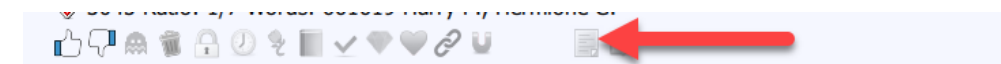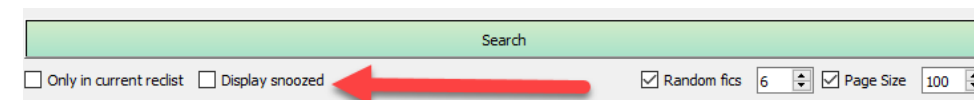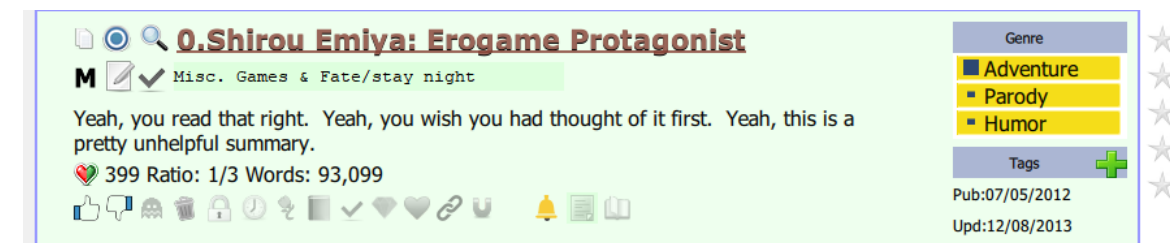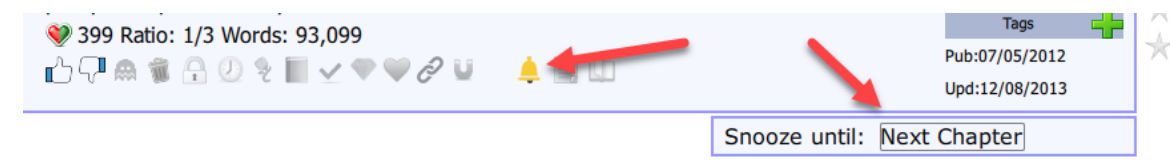
Similar fics

In addition to recommendations Flipper can search for fics similar to the one you are interested in.
This is basically an isolated case of creating a recommendation list with 1 fic as its source and Flipper has a shortcut for it.

Pressing the blue circle will replace your current search with "fics similar to this".
Just make sure to toggle off any filter than can narrow down the results before hitting that button.
It's a bit of an annoyance to remember to do it, but it will be fixed in the next version I put online.

Filtering (out) slash

Flipper doesn't have a full solution to that, no one does, but it's the damn best attempt I know of.

The **Slash Filter** checkbox in the main filter toolbar enables filtering of slash content.

On the lower screenshot you can see that you can adjust if you want to see No Slash, Only Slash and also set filter aggressiveness.

To explain: Slash filter in Flipper consists of multiple stages.

First, common words in summaries for a couple fandoms are used to identify slash
such as HPSS, HPDM, slash, yaoi etc... The set is rather limited but that's just the first stage.

Then, among the user favourites that Flipper knows of, lists are detected that contain a large amount of fics, that are detected on stage one. In those lists Flipper tries to find fics that are present *only* in such lists, but not on ones without homosexual content. These fics are the stage two.

This iterates once more the same way into stage three.

Above said loosely translates to:

Set light filter to filter out almost certain slash, medium for very likely slash and strong if you want to be extra safe.

Now, Flipper's slash filter is not a panacea because it only works off of the limited selection of user profiles, and therefore can't catch stuff that it doesn't have enough statistics for but most of the relatively popular offenders it *does* filter out.

Also of note: slash filter works with varying success between fandoms. Harry Potter/Naruto/Bleach and other more popular ones it covers rather well. Others not so much.
If it seems to you that some fics that should not be filtered out are - you can disable the slash filter and/or ping me in discord with key words for your fandom to train the filter better next time I go about updating it.

If you are someone who actually reads slash you can either untick the filter or even set the filter to display ONLY slash
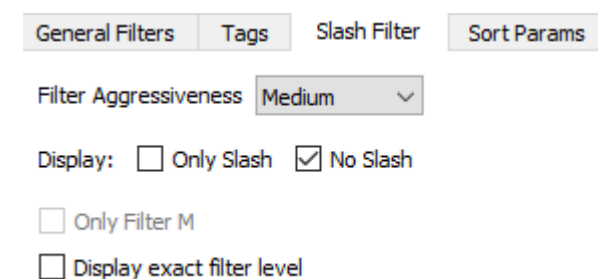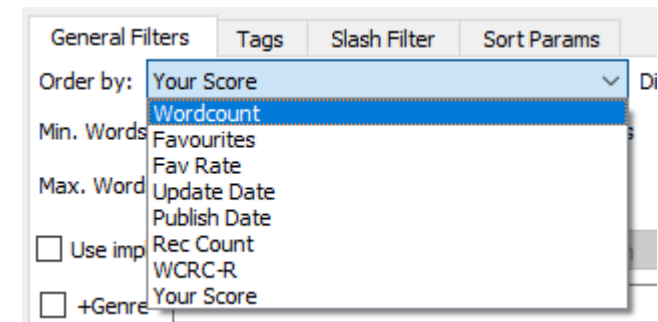
Sorting fics

Flipper allows you to sort fics in a way FFN doesn't. The current list of available sort orders is displayed on the right. Some of them don't need explanation. Those that do are:

WCRC-R aka wordcount to review count
Fav Rate which helps find popular new stuff
Rec Count which descendingly sorts recommendation list on relevance.
Your Score sorts fics on the scores *you've* assigned to them. Note that you probably want to use this with Tagged checkbox checked.

Note: you can adjust what to consider "popular and new" for "**Fav Rate**" sorting in the Sort Params tab.
FavrateCut is what's considered new.
FavRatio means "Favourites to days running"
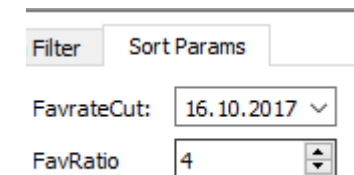
Excluding fandoms.

Since Flipper's recommendation queue is fandom agnostic, it's doubly important.

If you don't want to see them ASOIAF crosses everywhere you can just ignore whole fandom.

Flipper offers to ignore just pure fandom fics or also crossovers. Just type the fandom name below Ignored Fandoms list (there's autocomplete), check if you want to ignore crosses and press **Ignore Fandom.**
You will not see these fics again.
If you did something wrong right click on a fandom in the list lets you remove it from ignores.

Alternatively you can click on the fandom name in the fic sheet to drop it into the edit above ignored fandoms button. If it's a crossover, clicking repeatedly cycles between fandoms
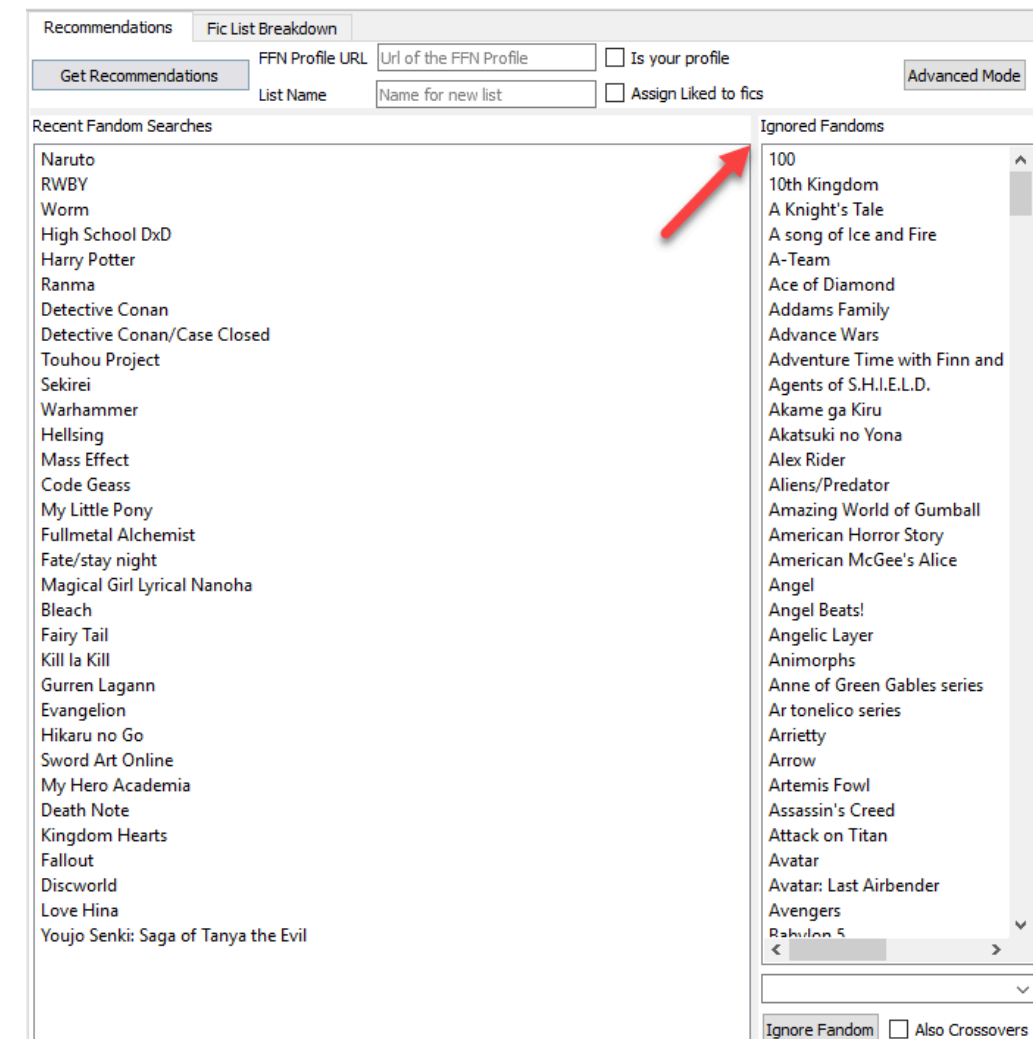
Automatic genre categorization.

Not everyone will agree with me, but there's a saying *"if it's tagged humor on FFN it's probably not funny"*.

All too often authors use genre that is barely present in the fic or not set one at all.
Furthermore, when something is tagged as double genre it's impossible to tell which is the main one.

I do not claim to have a 100% solution for it, but using a bit of userlist analysis I've come up with a system that suggests real genres for fics based on the kind of favourite lists it lives in. It looks like the screenshot to the right and is *activated by double clicking on the Genre word in the fic sheet*

Big rectangle means the main genre, it's sufficiently present to be the "meat" of the fic.
There can be more than one main genre.

Linked smaller rectangles mean genre is sufficiently present to be significant.

Small dot means fic has inclusions of indicated genre.

Automatically indicated genres may be different than ones the author have set
Now, the main question: how does it work?
The answer is: kinda. It's not 100% accurate but it's helpful enough that I myself leave it on.
Couple times it helped me notice the fics I'd have completely ignored because the author tagged those as Drama/Romance.

Note that it only works for more popular stuff as there needs to be enough data for Flipper to take a guess.

Searches on implied genres

This is done by checking "use implied genre for search", adding the required genre into +/- Genre, selecting desired genre presence (or lack thereof for -Genre) and pressign Search.

This will only leave fics in list with required parameters. So if you only want to filter "Humor", that is actually funny and not 99% romance, this is your option.

The example to the right only shows fics that are considerably funny and have at most "minimal" Drama in them.
Genres in inclusions/exclusions are OR'ed. Presence is set for the whole line.

Note: searching on implied genres automatically filters out 9/10 of Flipper's database
because only 1/10 has enough statistical data to actually suggest what genre it is.
This doesn't mean that the mode is useless though, because the 1/10 that is left is mostly good and/or popular fics.
To put it into perspective: 1/10 = roughly 400k fics.
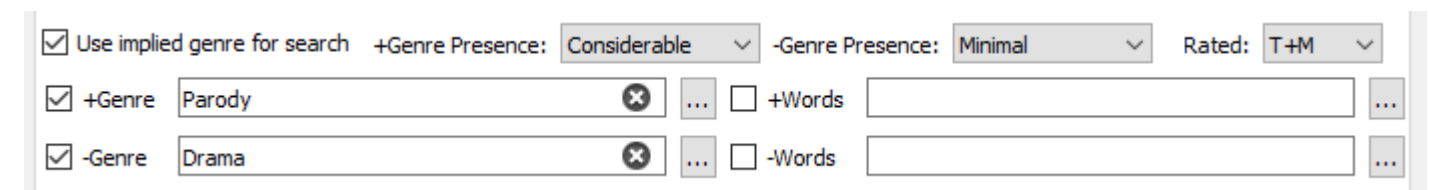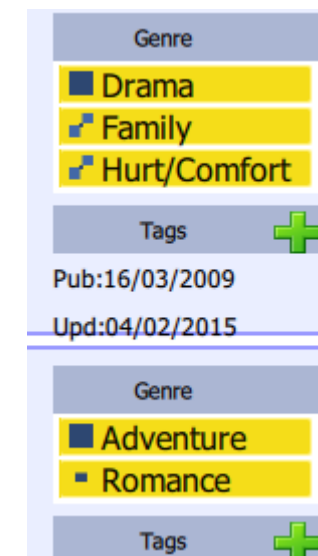
Metadata display.

Nothing fancy I've just reorganized fic display to be a little more consistent between subsequent fics,
so that stuff like wordcount is more or less always at the same place and easily distinguishable from other numbers.

Fixing convoluted category separation of FFN

I don't like the sheer amount of subsections FFN has for what is essentially the same fandom.
Take Star Wars for example: TV, Movies, Books, Games… crossovers for each of that..
Why can't it all live under the same page?!

This is essentially what I did. Fandoms in Flipper are merged and accessible under the same search mechanism.
If you want to filter out/in crossovers just tick respective checkboxes above the green button and press it.

*Fandoms in the list to the left are **not** all the fandoms Flipper can search in,*
these are just the history of your recent fandom searches. Typing in fandom name into "Searched Fandom" will

autocomplete for the whole list of fandoms on FFN.

Pure Searches

Flipper can also be used as a search engine over FFN with some limitations.

It doesn't have all of the fics from FFN in its database. Currently there are ~4 million
It doesn't have an automated updater yet. Updates happen once in 2-8 weeks and I currently don't scrape whole fandoms, just
reprocess user favourites.
You also can't do wide scale text searches, you will have to set a fandom first.

As a pure search engine you can do everything that you can see on the screenshot to the right.

Search the whole database or within a single fandom only
Exclude/include crossovers from search.
Set arbitrary limits on fics sizes
Search within fics with a least X favourites.
Exclude dead and incomplete fics.
Exclude fics for which the author haven't stated a genre.
Set genres that fics must have to appear in the results.
(Within a fandom) search for words within summaries.

The rule of thumb for using Flipper as a search engine:
If it's even relatively popular it's likely listed.
If it's by a popular author it's also likely listed.
If it's very new but good, it will likely appear within a couple weeks.
If it's not popular and the author doesn't have popular stuff it's likely it won't appear in the database any time soon.
If something is popular but you don't see it: either you've tagged it already or slash filter is interfering.

Interpreting search results:

Once you've selected the options to search with and pressed the Search button the search rsults will appear to the right.
The elements of fic sheet in order of appearance:

1)   Url copy button. Sends the url into your clipboard. Hovering over it also displays QR code for the fic URL

2)   Similar fic search. Clicking this will basically create rec list with this as a base and display it.

3)   Fic title. This is clickable and opens default browser

4)   Rating indicator (T,M...)

5)   Fic activity indicator

     Grey means fic hasn't been updated for at least a year
     Yellow is for stuff updated in the last year
     Green is for fics updated in the last 30 days

6)   Shows if the fic has been completed or not. Green is for completed ones

7) Fandom(s), this is clickable.
     Clicking is a shortcut for placing the fandom into the "Ignore" combobox.
     Repeated clicks cycle fandoms for crossovers.

8) The summary

9)   User favourites matches. At one time this was exact number of users that faved this fic and were used to
     generate your list. Now it's a complex score based on the amount of users, the amount of matches they
     have with your fav list on FFN and how close their genre preferences are to yours.

     If you see a   it means that the story is from the author who you have already

     either   Liked or   Recced

10) Wordcound.
11) Character list.

On the right of each fic page there is a block for genres and tags.
Display mode can be changed by clicking on "tags" and "genres" respectively.

Clicking on the green plus button   opens up tag selection interface where you can add one or more tags to the fic
to organize your reading. Note that every tagged fic will disappear from default searches.
There is a separate control option to see tagged fics (more later)

Under the Genre/Tag block are the indicators of how long ago the fic has been published and last updated.

Note: by default the search results are separated into pages of 100.
This can be changed by changing the "Page Size" in the filter options (or unticking the page size entirely)
Stepping forwards and backwards between the pages can be done at the top via arrow controls.
Note that yellow section is editable and you can set the exact page to go to and press Enter.