

Guidelines

Etiquette

The etiquette we ask for in the bookstack is about what behaviours will make the best of it. It revolves around **5 key principles**:

[1\) Be Bold](#)

[2\) There is no intellectual property in a knowledge repository](#)

[3\) Prove it](#)

[4\) Don't be a problem](#)

[5\) Don't break the bookstack](#)

1) Be Bold

Stated very broadly, this is the idea that it's better to ask forgiveness than permission. Don't be precious about upsetting people or making "bad" content. More is the ask: more content, more collaborating, more involvement. Write the way you write, don't worry about how "nice it is. You can always ask someone to look at it after you've gotten the important stuff down, but if you don't do it assume no one else will. Err on the side of adding to the bookstack rather than leaving it alone.

Best reasons to BE BOLD:

- It's content you wrote.
- You want to make a minor change like spelling or grammar.
- Your change is additive, like citing a source or giving more detail.
- The information doesn't exist anywhere on the bookstack yet

There are some caveats to being bold, which you'll find under Don't be a D— and Don't break the bookstack.

2) There is no intellectual property in a knowledge repository

Unfortunately, individuals claiming dominion over sections of content is not healthy for a knowledge repository, especially one belonging to a community organisation such as LSH. As mentioned above, the bookstack needs to grow to be healthy and intellectual property stifles that.

Welcome others editing content you write and don't sign your name to anything. The bookstack records who made changes to a page and has that covered if it's important. Everyone has something valuable to contribute to our knowledge repository.

3) Prove it

This principle is mostly about being wary of misleading anyone who might not know any better. In circumstances like LSH, it may sometimes be impossible to back up your statements, but do try to avoid including any information that doesn't come with some kind of supporting source or framing opinions as fact.

Because the bookstack is essentially anonymously written, most readers will not realise who has written certain content, and as a page ages, the authorship becomes muddled. Don't expect anyone to know that you wrote it. Don't even expect anyone to know who you are or that you're actually an expert on the topic.

As with knowledge repositories, the information becomes reasonably reliable because *many* people have had influence on it and because it includes sources.

4) Don't be a problem

This one is mostly about respect, which is a thing you continually demonstrate by doing things that make others *feel like you appreciate them and what they do*. But how you make people feel this way isn't always obvious, particularly in the context of a knowledge repository. So here are some ways to not be a problem on the bookstack:

- Thank and praise others for the work they put in
- Prioritise being additive over being corrective.
- Before you change content, think twice about making significant or subtractive edits to existing work, even factual corrections and clarifications. Take your thoughts to a conversation space, such as page comments or Discord.
- Look at the revision history for the page you want to change. If it's long and goes really far back, think extra carefully about making changes.
- Search for existing content before you add new content to prevent from duplicating information and so that you are capable of writing *in context* instead of in isolation.
- Behave the same way in online interactions (comments, discussions) as you would in person. You may not have ever met that person in the space before, but you just might... tomorrow.
- Find a way to reach consensus in a dispute, or find a way for all competing ideas to live respectfully in the bookstack at the same time.

5) Don't break the bookstack

Luckily, almost everything you can do in the bookstack is reversible, so don't spend your time being fearful that you might mess things up. "Breaking things," in this context, typically means that a small change of the wrong thing can temporarily affect the entire site negatively. On the bookstack there are two things it's possible to edit that will "break" the site: templates and shelves. Avoid editing either of these without explicit authorisation and you're golden. These are largely the territory of admins (a bookstack specific volunteer role) or the original authors.

Best Practices

- Include correctly attributed photos & PDFs
- Include sources whenever you're being factual
- Mark incomplete information as such, either with a warning or "WIP" in the title/heading
- See a problem but don't want to/can't edit it right now? Make a comment on the page suggesting an edit.
- Empty and incomplete pages are GOOD things. They prompt dialogue and contribution.
- Wiki pages should be accessible:
 - Avoid walls of text, request a post-draft editor if you've got something to share but writing isn't your strong suit. Use the structures available to break up the text into manageable chunks and to signpost readers to the right information. Structural formatting also helps screenreaders (tools for visually impaired people to access computers & the internet) navigate the page.
 - Always write alt text for images
 - Don't rely on colour as the only way to convey something, double that up with text or icons
- Avoid link shorteners, but do try to fit links smoothly into the text by using link text.
- Tag every page, chapter, book with as much as you think is relevant
- Keep content relevant to the Hackspace, we're not documenting the universe, just our corner of it
- Never present someone else's content as your own, always attribute the original author/creator/maker
- Never rely on AI for fact or accuracy. If you don't know it yourself, find a trustworthy source for evidence. Ask someone else to confirm the reliability of the information if you aren't certain.
- No AI created images, not any, not ever.
- Don't include identifying personal information anywhere on the wiki, not even your profile.
- Don't add any information it is illegal to disseminate to the public
- Absolutely no NSFW content
- Don't use the Markdown editor unless you know what you're doing, and always use the "stable content" option to swap to Markdown for editing existing content.

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