



It started in early 1997. Steve Winter, Creative Director at TSR, told a few of us designers and editors that we should start thinking about a new edition of the world's most popular roleplaying game. For almost three years, a team of us worked on developing a new rules set that built upon the foundation of the 25 years prior. Released in 2000, 3rd Edition started a new era. A few years later, a different set of designers made updates to the game in the form of 3.5.

Today, the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game carries on that same tradition as the next step in the progression. Now, that might seem inappropriate, controversial, or even a little blasphemous, but it's still true. The Pathfinder RPG uses the foundations of the game's long history to offer something new and fresh. It's loyal to its roots, even if those roots are—in a fashion—borrowed.

The game's designer, Jason Bulmahn, did an amazing job creating innovative new mechanics for the game, but he started with the premise that he already had a pretty good game to build upon. He didn't wipe the slate clean and start over. Jason had no desire to alienate the countless fans who had invested equally countless hours playing the game for the last 35 years. Rather, he wanted to empower them with the ability to build on what they'd already created, played, and read. He didn't want to take anything away from them—only to give them even more.

One of the best things about the Pathfinder RPG is that it really necessitates no “conversion” of your existing books and magazines. That shelf you have full of great adventures and sourcebooks (many of them very likely from Paizo)? You can still use everything on it with the Pathfinder RPG. In fact, that was what convinced me to come on board the Pathfinder RPG ship. I didn't want to see all the great stuff that had been produced thus far swept under the rug.

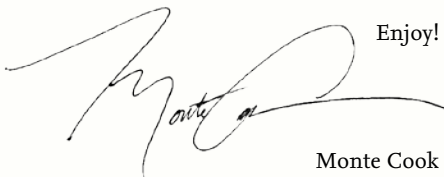
Now, my role as “design consultant” was a relatively small one. Make no mistake: the Pathfinder RPG is Jason's baby. While my role was to read over material and give feedback, mostly I just chatted with Jason, relating old 3rd Edition design process stories. Jason felt it valuable to know why things were done the way they were. What was the thinking behind the magic item creation feats? Had we ever considered doing experience points a different way? How did the Treasure Value per Encounter chart evolve? And so on.

It was an interesting time. Although I sometimes feel I have gone on at length about every facet of 3rd Edition design in forums, in interviews, and at conventions, Jason managed to ask questions I'd never been asked before. Together, we really probed the ins and outs of the game, which I think is important to do before you start making changes. You've got to know where you've been before you

can figure out where you're going. This is particularly true when you start messing around with a game as robust and tightly woven as 3rd Edition. The game's design is an intricate enough matrix that once you change one thing, other aspects of the game that you never even suspected were related suddenly change as well. By the time we were done hashing things out, we'd really put the original system through its paces and conceived of some interesting new ideas. Jason used that as a springboard and then went and did all the hard work while I sat back and watched with a mix of awe and excitement as the various playtest and preview versions of the game came out.

The Pathfinder RPG offers cool new options for characters. Rogues have talents. Sorcerers have bloodline powers. It fixes a few areas that proved troublesome over the last few years. Spells that turn you into something else are restructured. Grappling is simplified and rebalanced. But it's also still the game that you love, and have loved for so long, even if it was called by a different name.

I trust the gang at Paizo to bear the game's torch well. They respect the game's past as much as its future. They understand its traditions. It was my very distinct and sincere pleasure to play a small role in the Pathfinder RPG's development. You hold in your hands a truly great game that I've no doubt will provide you with hours and hours of fun.



Enjoy!

Monte Cook

ADVENTURE AWAITS!

Welcome to a world where noble warriors battle mighty dragons and powerful wizards explore long-forgotten tombs. This is a world of fantasy, populated by mysterious elves and savage orcs, wise dwarves and wily gnomes. In this game, your character can become a master swordsman who has never lost a duel, or a skilled thief capable of stealing the crown from atop the king's head. You can play a pious cleric wielding the power of the gods, or unravel the mysteries of magic as an enigmatic sorcerer. The world is here for you to explore, and your actions will have a profound influence in shaping its history. Who will rescue the king from the clutches of a powerful vampire? Who will thwart the vengeful giants who have come from the mountains to enslave the common folk? These stories wait for your character to take center stage. With this rulebook, a few friends, and a handful of dice, you can begin your epic quest.

The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game did not start out as a standalone game. The first draft was designed as a

series of house rules for the 3.5 version of the world's oldest roleplaying game. In the fall of 2007, with a new edition of that game on the horizon, it seemed only natural that some gamers would prefer to stick with the rules they already owned. It also made sense that those same gamers would like some updates to their rules, to make the game easier to use and more fun to play. When design of this game first began, compatibility with existing products was one of my primary goals, but I also wanted to make sure that all of the classes, races, and other elements were balanced and fun to play. In other words, I endeavored to keep all of the great, iconic parts of the game, while fixing up the clunky rules that slowed down play and caused more than one heated argument at the game table.

As the rules grew in size, it became apparent that the changes were growing beyond a simple update into a full-fledged rules system. So while the Pathfinder RPG is compatible with the 3.5 rules, it can be used without any other books. In the coming months, you can expect to see a number of brand-new products, made specifically to work with this version of the rules, from Paizo and a host of other publishers through the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility License. This license allows publishers to use a special logo to indicate that their product works with the rules in this book.

Making an already successful game system better is not a simple task. To accomplish this lofty goal, we turned to fans of the 3.5 rules, some of whom had been playing the game for over eight years. Since the spring of 2008, these rules have undergone some of the most stringent and extensive playtesting in gaming history. More than 50,000 gamers have downloaded and used these rules. Moving through a number of playtest drafts, the final game that you now hold in your hands slowly started to come together. There were plenty of missteps, and more than one angry debate, but I believe that we ended up with a better game as a result. This would not be the game you now hold without the passion and inspiration of our playtesters. Thank you.

In closing, this game belongs to you and all the fans of fantasy gaming. I hope that you find this system to be fun and simple to use, while still providing the same sort of depth and variety of options you've come to expect from a fantasy roleplaying game.

There is a world of adventure waiting for you to explore. It's a world that needs brave and powerful heroes. Countless others have come before, but their time is over. Now it's your turn.



Jason Bulmahn
Lead Designer