

# **/late/-tan proposal**

Design document

v1.0

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### Font

Chaparral Pro  
Forum  
Quicksand  
Sinkin Sans  
AvantGarde LT Medium  
AvantGarde BK BT  
Anonymous Pro

### Use

General  
Title  
Sub-title  
Header  
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Sub-sub-header  
Index

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# Conceptual Outline

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Below follows an overview of the project, intended to give an impression of what the project is meant to achieve.

## Pitch

The creation of a mascot for all of /late/ - a /late/-tan/ - and a /late/-universe (or ‘/late/verse’).

## Goal

Create a recognizable face for all of /late/ and its future endeavours, provide users of and contributors to /late/ with a generic, established lore to build upon and make /late/ more recognizable outside of the /late/ community.

## Premise

A mascot to represent /late/ in all forms – not just the board, discord or any one project, but anything related to /late/. The project establishes the personality, background, visual design and musical theme of the character, as well as an associated universe/setting and lore which may be used as null-point by the /late/ community.

The universe and its lore is innately intertwined with the mascots background, encapsulates the /late/ board-tan (Stolas) and provides a setting to be expanded upon. The universe offers a setting for both established and flourishing mascots to occupy, provides in the personal necessities of any character and includes all narrative requirements. Finally, the universe is modular and open, so future characters and events have a space to inhabit.

The mascot is created through collective contribution (outside of the originary push) and is meant to be used freely (free-as-in-freedom) by anyone interested in associating with /late/. (See ‘Technical Outline’ for legal assumptions.)

# Technical Outline

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## Description

The project has two, major components:

The **character**, which in turn consists out of:

- *A written character: their background, desires, personality, quirks, etcetera;*
- *A visual design for said character: how they look;*
- *A bot (program) based on the character, to be used as automated assistant and on the board and also as conversational AI in the discord chat;*
- *A musical theme: a musical representation of what the character is and feels like.*

An associated **universe**, which contains its own building blocks:

- *A setting, a fictional space for characters and events to occupy;*
- *A narrative theme, something to tie any story or character to /late/;*
- *A set of guidelines for appending a story or character to the /late/ universe.*

## Preliminary

It is necessary to build an understanding of the terms used in this document, what /late/ is and the legal assumptions the project functions on.

Throughout this outline various terms are used that may appear similar, but are distinct from one another. Theme/aesthetic, design, style/thematic styling are all different concepts.

### Theme and aesthetic

Theme or aesthetic refers here to the overarching concepts necessary to capture the feeling of /late/. These can be expressed – what it feels like to go out on a walk at 3 am, the experience of reading a book while rain gently taps on a nearby window, the feeling of staying up for 40 hours before passing out while doing something you love – or denominated – abstraction, darkness, isolation, etc. Together these concepts express the experience of /late/.

These concepts are the innate components of /late/ and are always (and necessarily) abstract. They are not concrete parts of a work and, instead, are represented by informing design elements. An example would be expressing the concept of loneliness by isolating design elements: a single, white streak on a black lay-in is unmistakably solemn.

(Note: to avoid a long-winded and unnecessary ramble on aesthetics and /late/, I have focussed purely on providing the minimum of information necessary to understand later passages. For the sake of this outline, I believe it is more expedient if everyone considers for themselves: what the concepts that capture the /late/ experience are, if they are intuitively recognizable or entirely subjective and if they can be expressed to an audience not already sensitive to the /late/ theme.)

## Design

As used here ‘design’ refers to the concrete elements of a work and their composition. Text writing, character writing, (visual) character design, software design and music all have design elements, although the different fields employ different terminology to describe design.

In text writing, design elements consist out of rhyme schemes, inter and intra sentence rhythm (word and sentence length), word choice, punctuation and more. Character writing, related, makes use of a character concept, character traits, archetypes, descriptive language – among others. Character design, in turn, uses colours, shapes, depth, space and layers to name a few. Software design concerns itself with user freedom and responsiveness. Finally, music uses a vast array of concepts, not limited to: duration, loudness, pitch and timbre.

The above barely scratches the surface of each field: it is only meant to provide an idea of what the term refers to when used below. Regardless of field: ‘design’ relates all elements *necessary* to elicit a specific feeling, experience, thought or state of mind. The individual composition, or placement, of these elements is just as influential and crucial: an arpeggio played at a quick rhythm elicits a different experience than a series of lone, whole notes.

## Style and thematic styling

‘Style’ refers to personal expression: the creators personal tastes as expressed in the work. Where design refers to ‘the minimally required elements necessary to elicit a feeling or state of mind’, style refers to those elements that are not necessary and are only present by grace of the creator.

Style, just like design, influences the audience’s experience of the work. However, design solely refers to what necessarily needs to be present and is further differentiated from style in that the creator chooses which design elements to utilize. ‘Style’ is only partly under the control of the artist: the artist has no control over their subconscious tastes and desires, nor their handwriting – the effect their physique has on their works.

Experienced artists, writers and musicians can canalize their style (and adjust for their handwriting) in favour of a certain aesthetic. This is what ‘thematic styling’ refers to: the syntheses between ‘theme’ and ‘style’.

Imagine a writer, who has a penchant for highfalutin speech, setting out to write a children’s book. At face value, it seems it is for the best to suppress any grandiloquent tendency. However, our writer chooses to instead utilize their expansive vocabulary: each paragraph is written in such a way that any new word gains its meaning through the semiotic context provided by previous paragraphs. By using constructive sentences our writer ensures anyone can understand their story, while maintaining, even utilizing, their style.

For the /late/-tan project, each contributor is advised to consider where their preferences lay and how to best utilize them to achieve the /late/ aesthetic. If you are stuck or desire further dialogue contact the project lead/art director.

## Story, plot, narrative

Each; story, plot and narrative; is distinct and refers to a different, but much confused, concept.

The simplest, or plainest, of these terms is 'plot': the sequence of events within a story. The plot are all the major beats of a story: the events that influence one another, the various plot points. It differs from the story, below, in that the plot points influence the characters, events and so on in the story. (Mind that it is possible to write a story without a plot, but it is not possible to write a plot without a story.)

The story contains both the plot and the events in between the plot points. Character development, although often incorporated into the plot, is part of the story. A typical plot point is the 'call to adventure': something happens; the death of a loved one, a looming disaster, settling in a new place; that motivates the main character/protagonist to begin their adventure. If the plot point is the 'call to adventure', say the death of a loved one, the way this event affects our hero in the short term is the story: they might mourn the death of their beloved before setting off.

A narrative is the loosest of the three concepts and is likewise very broad. 'Narrative', as used in this document, refers to any form of communicating a fictional event or sequence of events. The narrative does not need to be chronological or even coherent: as long as it the narration of an event or events, it is a narrative. (Not to be confused with 'Grand Narrative'.)

## Legal Assumptions

### **/late/ as legal entity**

The proprietor of the /late/-tan project at large is designated as 'the /late/ community'. In practise this refers to the moderation team of /late/, made out of moderators from both the [board](#) and the [chat](#).

This claim of ownership is only valid if, A) the moderation team adheres to the wishes of the community and B) is not in conflict with itself<sup>1</sup>. If either is applicable, the ownership of anything attributed 'the /late/ community' is in jeopardy and ownership may not be claimed by any one entity until the situation is reversed<sup>2</sup>.

### **Licensing**

All non-programmatic content will be licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#). Legally, this means others may reproduce the work and derive works from the original, as well as sell both, as long as appropriate credit is given to the licensor (i.e. the '/late/ community'). This is to ensure maximum reproducibility and to motivate adaptation.

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By contributing to the /late/-tan project you acknowledge that your contribution will be licensed under one of the above licences and transfer your intellectual ownership to the '/late/ community' (as defined above). Therein you willingly revoke your right to claim ownership of, right to copy and right to sell your contribution not within the scope of the CC BY 4.0 license or NPOSL-3.0 license.

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning: if the moderation team experiences a schism or conflict of interests it is no longer a unity and therefore can not claim ownership.

<sup>2</sup> The power to jeopardize any claim of ownership attributed to the '/late/ community' is hereby vested in /late/ posters and lurkers at large.

## The character

The production of the character comprises four, interlocking parts. Each part requires a different skill and so each part is produced by a different person: the writing is written by a writer, the visuals are designed by a visual artist, the bot is written by a programmer and the music is composed by a musician.

The contributors are given as much freedom to determine their part as is affordable. The limitations on this freedom are described below: this document constitutes the minimum of what needs to be available to realize the goals of the project. This ensures that any contributor knows what is expected of them and of their fellow contributors, in turn ensuring cohesion and consistency between the separate parts.

For the sake of development, contributors are to work from the following assumptions:

The character is a girl called:

**Nyx**

(after the Greek primordial Goddess of night)

She is a humanoid.

She and Stolas are familiar.

She is represented in the 'moé' (or anime) style.

## The writing

We need to establish who Nyx is before anything else can be done. Where does Nyx come from? How does she think? What does she like? These are some of the questions that need to be answered.

Essential components to include are the characters concept and personality.

The character concept is flexible: is Nyx a conventional human, or is she of divine origin (like her namesake)? Is Nyx all that she seems, or is her appearance a façade? Does Nyx only represent the /late/ community, or is she the embodiment of something more kernel and abstract to /late/ itself?

An example would be Nyx as representing the stillness of absence. What kind of being would best capture such a concept? A divine being would be tempting, but maybe the fragility of it is best portrayed by a (mere) human. If we were to go with the latter: what kind of character best encapsulates the concept?

In any case, the concept should directly relate to the /late/ theme. It can be philosophical; as mentioned above; it can be more overt like a jazz aesthetic, but it should relate directly to /late/ in all cases.

Personality-wise Nyx should capture the /late/ community on some level. As /late/, like any community, is not a hivemind, what personality traits best represent /late/ is not absolute. Thus, there are a myriad of traits to choose from... but one is definite: Nyx is not an extrovert. Reticence fits well with the /late/-theme and is tangible for the greater majority of community.

Aside from capturing the community, it is necessary for Nyx to have a distinct persona she presents. This may be her real personality, but it might also be a fabrication she merely feels compelled to present. In any case the persona needs to be distinct and easy to comprehend: few, but strong, character traits are a must.

This persona is necessary, as it will help later writers to pick up and expand upon the character, regardless of their individual skill at writing. It makes it easier for the character to be used by others in their project and by outsiders for their own use.

Optional, but preferred elements include Nyx's background, her likes and dislikes and goals and dreams.

Where does Nyx come from? The character's background describes her history: where she has been, who she has met and what she has done. It is essential to first understand who Nyx is – how she think – before we can discuss her background: it gives an end point to work towards and informs us what actions the character might have taken. At the same time, how she acts now might not be how she has always acted: there might have been an important event in the past that changed how Nyx behaves. The character is as static as the writer decides to make her.

Nyx's background is invariably connected with the universe and setting. As we are dependent on the material conditions around us, so is Nyx dependant on the material conditions surrounding her. At this stage of writing the character will be merged with the universe – and so contributors of each part are dependant on the other.

In the process of formulating Nyx's background the characters strengths and weaknesses will be codified. What mistakes has Nyx made and what mistakes she keeps making, how she handles the consequences of her actions and how she deals with others, are all caught within the characters background.

Nyx's tastes and dreams are informed by her character and actions. It is entirely possible she has tried to fulfil one of her dreams but failed, changing her dreams and tastes. The writer is given clemency to write these parts as they see fit, as to ensure they are not needlessly constrained.

The other parts of the characters are open for the writer to fill in or – neglect entirely. This includes anything from Nyx's hobbies and daily routine, to her friends and affiliates.

## The design

Once the character concept and personality have been established, the character designer can begin working on the characters visual design.

Before detailing the connection between the writing and the visual design, we first need to address various technical caveats necessary to achieve the goals of the project. The major one of these is the character reproducibility: the character needs to be easily copied and expanded on by others down stream.



It is necessary for the character to be easily reproduced by others. As the /late/-tan represents /late/ in all endeavours, it needs to be possible for others to use her in their project – regardless of the creators skill or affiliation with /late/. To this end the characters silhouette needs to be recognizable and their design constructive.

A recognizable silhouette is a silhouette that is, foremost, easy to comprehend: it only consists out of a few shapes, lacks sudden extremities and makes a cohesive whole. Secondly, the silhouette needs to be something the audience can easily remember: a humanoid shape is far easier to remember than that of an eldritch horror. A recognizable silhouette ensures the character is easy to reproduce as the form of the character sticks in memory.

Constructive design refers to composing design elements in such a way that they build on top of one another to make a cohesive whole. Wearing a white shirt below a black suit makes sense: contrasting colours are layered and smooth lines contain textured wrinkles – it is easy to imagine how the different elements fit together to make the whole. Just like the silhouette, a humanoid is easier to remember than a multi-limbed mechanoid; a sweater and jeans is easier to comprehend than a five layer dress-shirt-neckerchief combination. For Nyx the design needs to be composed out of distinct, bite-sized design elements that all fit together.

As with the writing, there are certain questions that need to be answered. What design best captures Nyx's concept? What is the leitmotif of the character? (Do they even have one?)

Considering her personality... how does she dress? How does she do her hair? How do her activities and background affect her look (do they have an impact on her physical well-being)?

The two, main, writing elements to be incorporated into the visual design are the character concept and the characters personality. Other elements, like Nyx's background, tastes and routine are informative, but not conclusive.

The character concept determines the characters overall design and informs the thematic styling: a divine being needs to be expressed differently from a mortal, while a mysterious loner is distinct from an ambivalent bartender. We already know the character concept is intertwined with the /late/ theme, thus the characters design must adhere to the /late/ aesthetic as well. Light/dark contrast, minimal abstraction, dark colours and vertical lines are all to be included in the character's design.

At this point it is also worth determining a leitmotif, or recurring design element, to include. This leitmotif, if present, is considered the characters logo: something to represent her when the figure is absent. A moon, a lily, a musical note, arcane symbol, or anything else is valid, as long as the motif falls within the /late/ theme. (Character design in animation and Japanese media tend to favour distinct motifs and provides us with plenty of examples: Mickey Mouse has his ears, Mario has his moustache and hat, Hatsune Miku her massive twintails, Daft Punk their helmets...)

Nyx's Personality is best used to nuance the characters design. The character concept might determine that she wears a dress, dresses black and has loose hair. The characters personality, however, determines what dresses she would wear, if she would only wear black and the way she styles her loose hair (if it is intentionally loose, or by neglect).

The nuances applied to design will focus on fleshing out the character and make the personality immediately apparent to the viewer. Where the overall design expresses what sort of the character Nyx is, the nuances in the design inform the audience about her personality.

The remaining elements; background, tastes, routines, etcetera; will help the designer, but need not necessarily be incorporated into the design. For example: Nyx may have had an accident in her past and the designer might choose to include this in the design as a scar. Likewise, if Nyx likes to exercise, making her look muscular would work this into the visual design. This is, again, entirely up to the designer to determine.

## The bot

The bot is distinct from the other elements as it is not wholly dependent on the writing. Although the writing is indispensable in later stages, during early development it is not required.

The 'bot' is a program designed to, foremost, assist moderators on the board and in the chat. Secondly, the bot has various ease-of-life features and, finally, is equipped with suite vanity features for fun. These three categories have been detailed below in three categories: necessary, preferred and optional features. Each of these are further split into sub-categories: core, administration and ease-of-life.

## Necessary features

Necessary features are those features that need to be present, demand development and, together, constitute the 'beta' version of the bot.

### Core

IP and input recognition system:

The IP recognition system is the most fundamental of all systems. This is what allows bot to recognize commands (and comments) aimed at it and respond to the person who addressed it.

The bot will process the data stream for messages addressing it. Once a string with a relevant command is found, the bot reacts by storing the IP (if new) and responds to the message accordingly. If the IP is not available or obfuscated the bot will instead look for a username or nickname. If both of these fail, the bot will instead mark the IP with a generic username (with unique identifier) and use that as referral point. (This is necessary for later features.)

Querying system:

To be able to interact with servers and services, the bot needs to be able to send instructions to external addresses. The querying system allows the bot to do just that.

The querying system will focus on the OpenIB environment (as ran by 8ch.net) and the Discord runtime, as these are the primary server systems the bot will be addressing. Other systems, like IRC, may be included at a later point outside of beta development.

User Interface page:

This is an interactive page hosted on the same server as the bot, to be used by moderators to access certain features of the bot.

## **Administration**

### Text filter:

Perhaps the most potent feature of the bot is its text filter: this allows it to recognize unwanted content and react appropriately. The bot recognises and utilises two different text filters, as is fitting with the context: one for the board and one for the chat.

Both filters will focus on removing junk input, like spam and incomprehensible text. Through the use of a sorting algorithm, the filter recognizes surrogate symbols (a '3' for an 'e', or an '!' for an 'i') and is so able to combat the more common flavours of spam.

We have no interest in censoring users, and so will not use the filter to remove unwanted terms. Instead we may instruct the bot to explain to the user the term is unwanted and why that is the case.

On the board it will look for repeated words and known cypypasta. As repetition of text is less likely on the board than in the chat, the bot will be more aggressive and quicker to revoke someone's posting privileges.

In the chat it will look for repeated words, but not for cypypasta. As cypypasta are occasionally shared facetiously or for discussion, there is no need to remove cypypasta entirely. Repeatedly spamming the same cypypasta will still trigger the removal behaviour and so remove any cypypasta spam regardless.

### Auto-moderation:

This feature encapsulates a number of mechanics intend on maintaining the board and chat when no moderators are present. These include timing users out, removal of posts and so on. All mechanics will be controlled democratically.

### Clientnote system:

This is a per client notekeeper that allows moderators to set a note for each user separately. Upon request by a moderator, the bot adds a note to an IP in the database. Any later notes will be appended at the end of the database entry. Each entry can be requested individually by anyone with sufficient authority. Notes can be retrieved both in the chat, board and through the bots user interface.

At this point no removal system is planned, though IPs will always be masked and substituted by a (randomly generated) username. Only the server administrator can see the IPs in the database and they are also the only person able to remove database entries.

Tor users and encrypted/obfuscated clients will be labelled with a generic username; a generic username which is exempt from certain measures as to ensure no clients will be unfairly targetted.

This system allows moderators to set notes informing others of indiscretions by users. It is an expedient way for moderators to keep each other up-to-date and also a good way to, both, catch persistent rule-breakers and expose moderator biases.

## **Ease-of-life**

### Universal memo system:

A memo system which eases communication between the board and chat moderators. Moderators can send one another a memo, regardless of their availability, or their ability to access the 8ch moderation panel. Chat moderators will be pinged by the bot in chat, while board moderators will receive an automated message in the mod panel.

There are a few caveats to this: the memo has a character limit (to be determined) and a time limit (no more than a month, a measure that is only relevant for the chat). This is to ensure the memo system does not take up unnecessary space.

## Preferred features

Preferred features are secondary in the development pipeline. Once all of these features are present the bot reaches the 'gold' stage of development.

### Core

Conversational AI:

A conversational AI allows the bot to respond to user messages that do not contain commands. As creating and maintaining a conversational AI is outside the scope of this project, we will instead make use of one of the open source, conversational AI frameworks. (A.L.I.C.E., RasaAI, etc.)

Before a decision can be made numerous systems need to be tested. The goal is to provide the AI with non-meaningful, casual conversation capabilities. Thus, for our purposes both retrieval-based and generative systems are applicable (openness is variable and tricky).

### Administration

Alternative chat commands:

These chat commands allow moderators to do certain things by asking the bot to do it for them. The focus is on actions that are otherwise time consuming or tedious to complete, like changing roles or moving posts between channels.

Mystery Box topic generation:

On midnight monday/tuesday (UTC 0.00), the bot automatically and randomly picks a topic from an array of topics. Once a topic has been chosen it will change the Mystery Box description to include the topic and remove the chosen topic from the array. Once the array has been emptied it will be reconstructed to include any new entries and the process will begin anew.

Conference automation:

Right now the conference sequence is done by hand. Many of the steps in the sequence can be automated however, making the whole process faster, and also easier for moderators.

The conference sequence is as follows:

- *The conference channel is opened;*
- *Users sign up for the speaker role and are added to a list of people to get the speaking role;*
- *The conference is closed again. Users sequentially get the speaker role assigned to and stripped from them;*
- *After everyone has had a chance to speak, the channel is opened and users get a chance to discuss what was mentioned previously;*
- *Users get a chance to nominate others for the patron role;*
- *A poll is made with the name of every nominee in it and users assign points to the nominees;*
- *The person with the most votes/points after a variable time span is made the new patron;*
- *The conference is closed and the channel topic is updated with the date of the next conference.*

By providing users with conference specific commands several steps can be automated: opening the conference, signing up for the speaker role, ending a speaking turn and nominating someone can all be done automatically. For example: a user has the speaker role and has no more to say. They enter the "!endturn" command, instructing the bot they are done and it is time for the next user. The bot strips the user of the speaker role and gives it to the next person in an array of users wishing to speak.

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The voting can also be automated and completed without external applications: A moderator tells the bot the nominations have been closed and feeds it the nominees. In response the bot posts the voting format and asks users to tell it how they assign their points. Users are then able to send the bot a private message with the relevant information. After a certain time frame the bot closes the nominations, announces the winner(s) and automatically assigns the Patron role.

### **Ease-of-life**

#### **Music player:**

Albeit a much used feature, the bot will instead play the /late/-radio channel (once available). Retaining and maintaining the feature would be redundant and a waste of effort. The YouTube API and Soundcloud API will be integrated into the board, but will output the request on the radios audio stream instead. See the /late/-radio project for more information.

#### **IRC Bridge:**

The bot is present in both the discord chat and the IRC and copies posts from one service to the other. Unlike other systems used for this feature, Nyx is dedicated to /late/ only as she is ran by the /late/ community rather than an external group.

#### **Welcoming messages and user instructions:**

The bot welcomes newcomers and provides them with information about the chat. This includes an overview of: the various channels, the rules, /late/ projects and so on. Once the conversational AI is in place, it is possible for the bot to organically address concerns and questions brought up by users.

### **Optional features**

Optional features are features wholly outside the development pipeline and to be added after the gold release in the form of updates.

### **Core**

#### **Text-to-speech:**

It is possible to give Nyx her 'own' voice by composing a collection of separate audio files. Each audio file contains a phoneme, a sound associated with the construction of a word, which can be combined to create words and sentences. Once these audio files are present it is possible to compose them together to create speech (using third party software). If both the phonemes and composition system are present, it is possible to make Nyx translate her written responses to speech.

To create the audio files we first need someone willing to donate their voice to the project. Although the voice can be changed during production, for all intents and purposes Nyx will have the same voice as the person donating theirs.

We will hold an audition for those interested in donating. The person that gets the part will be asked to record a set of phonemes and stay in touch in case further editing or contributions are necessary. The phonemes will then be edited and prepared to be composed.

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Once all phonemes are present the means to compose them need to be devised. The UTAU (synth) software is an open source program, similar to vocaloid, that has numerous, beneficial features like pitch shifting, bending, and more. By interfacing the bot with the software, it can send its text responses to the software which outputs it in an audio stream. Streaming the audio through an audio channel makes the bot audible on any service that supports audio channels.

Firefox plugin:

The firefox plugin is similar to the interface page, except it is integrated into browser to make it accessible on every page. Any features on the interface page will be present in a menu and the plugin will load modules on certain webpages, like the 8ch moderation page, for ease of use. It will also feature an alert system comprised out of push and desktop messages, intended to notify moderators about memos and reports.

## **Administration**

None at this time.

## **Ease-of-life**

Quote system:

An entertainment feature: write a quote and add it to a name. The bot can repeat the quote upon request.

Dice rolling, 8ball and other randomisers:

Randomisation features for the benefit of users. Dice rolling simulates the rolling of a set of dice, like 2d20, 1d100, etc. It will be modular so any combination is possible. 8ball randomly picks between a set of preset responses. Other randomisers include a randomised option picker.

Random facts and searches:

Random facts searches the internet for facts on a certain topic and replies one at random. Searches provide users with the means of searching the internet through the bot, which returns the first search result.

Planned integration is currently limited to google, ixquick, youtube, soundcloud and the booru network.

Polls:

Users can create a poll upon command by writing the relevant command followed by a question. The bot will then repeat the question and ask for emote replies. After a certain timeframe it will count the emotes and give the result.

Integration with the /late/ radio project:

Nyx will load and output the /late/ radio audio stream on the servers default audio channel, making it always present whenever she is in a voice channel. Furthermore, she is a DJ in her own right and responsible for the automated playlist and may speak on the radio upon request from someone with sufficient authority. Nyx also has her own block in which she plays user requests.

Integration with the /late/station project:

Nyx's voice will be borrowed for the default voice of the /late/station announcement system. The bot itself will mention the start and end of rounds in a dedicated chat channel, as well as round information and the number of players. For game moderators she will relay any adminhelps in the relevant chat.

## The theme

The theme follows the writing and design and takes cues from both. Although the composer is free to make their contribution as expansive as they like, they are foremost instructed to write a theme specifically for the character. As with the other components, the character theme is subject to certain requirements that are necessary to achieve the projects goals.

One of the main goals of the theme is reproducibility. A pronounced motif and repeated scale provide composers with elements to use in their own work. The motif can be adopted by musicians to make music that sounds wholly different, yet has a thematic connection, while the scale gives musicians a starting point and ensures consistency in new compositions.

When it comes to the thematic elements of the theme, it is important to emphasize the fringe music tastes of the /late/ community. Jazz chords, uncommon progression and experimental instrumentation are all encouraged. At the same time, to encapsulate the stillness and solemnness of /late/, a slower tempo and a muted mastering are preferred.

Both the writing and the design inform the composition. The character concept in particular is important to encapsulate within the theme. A suave charmer requires a vastly different song than a rough rogue – the former is more suited with a slower, minimal piece, while the latter benefits from an up tempo and loud cacophony.

Nyx's personality can be informative when determining the vibrancy and warmth of the song. If she is troubled, the theme may be served with sudden shift in vibrancy. In contrast, if Nyx is happy-go-lucky, her personality can be represented in the theme with a warm harmony.

The character concept determines the structure of the theme, while the personality informs the sound. The composer is free to incorporate other elements of the writing; like the characters tastes, dreams goals and so on; as they see fit.

Making the theme connect to the visual design can add significant weight to both. The colours and shapes of the visual design are instrumental when adopting the visual design. Notes themselves have a colour to them and can be arranged to accompany the warmth, saturation and chroma of the visual colours. Likewise, the shape of the silhouette can be adopted into the mastering; a sharp shape can be represented by sharp changes in the theme.

To avoid needless limitations, the composer is free to adopt the visual design as they think is best.

## The universe

Aside from the creation of a mascot, the project also includes the creation of a universe for the /late/ mascots to occupy and future /late/ projects to use. The universe is meant to establish a setting, a narrative and a set of guidelines: the physical reality Nyx and other characters reside in, an overarching story that binds later projects, stories and characters to the universe and instructions on how to ensure consistency in one's own contribution to the /late/ universe.

Unlike the mascot, the creation of the universe is handed over to one person. As the worldbuilder has a broader field to cover, yet has more requirements to meet, they will be assisted by narrative directors – senior team members, who ensure the necessary elements are present and the mascot and universe make a cohesive whole.

## The setting

The setting is the place and time the characters occupy. Think of Lord of the Rings: it is set in the setting of Middle Earth; a cross-region, medieval fantasy world with its own geography, people, politics and more. The project requires its own setting, which will be fitting with the /late/ theme.

Some concerns in regard to creating the setting include: the time, place and people that are part of the universe. When is the setting situated – in the future or in the past? Where does it take place: a realistic setting or something entirely fictional? What entities exist and who does Nyx meet? If there are any societies, how (technologically) advanced are they? What kind of cultures are present and what makes them unique? Etcetera, etcetera.

As shown above: the scope is broad. The worldbuilder has considerable freedom to write the setting as they see fit. This freedom comes with a caveat, however: the first and main concern is to ensure the setting is recognizable.

Just like the character, the setting needs to be designed in a way that makes it easy to utilize by creators in- and outside of /late/. The setting differs in that it need not be adopted to be used. Creators need to intuitively recognize and understand the setting, but they are not required to copy the setting for use in their own projects. Instead they may alter, nuance or append the setting, as is necessary for their goals. The setting needs to account for this possibility.

To this end the setting needs to be easily recognizable and modular. Recognisable so creators do not struggle to comprehend the setting or add ill fitting elements, and modular so creators can add or ignore elements as they see fit.

Using a few, common tropes often and explicitly makes the setting more recognizable. As the tropes are common, it quickly informs the audience what the setting is about – it communicates: “you have seen this before, it is (...)”. By limiting the tropes to a few, the worldbuilder avoids convolving that message with too much information.

The worldbuilder is free to pick the tropes they think are most fitting for /late/. Cyberpunk, alternate history, near-future, animism and other tropes are all fair game, as long as the combination adheres to the /late/ theme. Likewise, the worldbuilder is both free and encouraged to nuance the setting once the main tropes are in place – the framework could even be exploited for secrets hidden in the setting or twists in the narrative.



Modularity refers to the separate tropes and components of the setting. Something that can be removed without toppling over the proverbial jenga tower that is the universe. Modular elements can be tropes, say cyberpunk, or components, like a faction or location within the setting.

Tropes can be made modular by incorporating them into a specific place, person or group. There could be a faction which is staunchly religious, but this does not make the entire setting theocratic. By ignoring the faction, the religious elements are ignored as well. Likewise, components are modular insofar as they can be ignored without altering other components.

Although modularity is required, the backbone of the setting can not be modular and is not expected to be. This refers to all those elements *necessary* to make the /late/ universe what it is.

The shape the setting takes is largely free. The only restrictions are that the setting should accommodate the mascots and should harken back to the /late/ theme. For the former the worldbuilder will need to wait for the character to be finalized, but we can plan ahead for the /late/ theme.

Starting with the /late/ theme: a few elements that are much preferred are urban environments, night time, avant-garde/fringe culture and solemnness. Where, and to what extent, to include these is free. The setting could be an alien world ran by a cult that worships Nyx. Another is an isolated city, near the sea and removed from the rest of the world by numerous mountains. Again: the specifics are open.

When it comes to accommodating the character, it is important to understand the character concept and have access to the characters background. The character concept is best served with a setting that enables and enhances it: a detective character is more pronounced in a populated and accessible area. The characters background, on the other hand, will be hugely informative for determining the history of the setting and establishes a minimum of locales that need to be present. If the character grew up underground, the setting needs to accommodate this claim.

The setting needs to accommodate both Nyx and Stolas, the board mascot. The latter has a similar, but diminished influence on the setting: Nyx's personality and background; hopes and dreams, likes and dislikes; will all be made available by the character writer. Stolas on the other hand is more abstract and so requires less planning. Where Nyx is grounded and entwined in the universe, Stolas is only situated within the setting due to his proximity to Nyx.

## The narrative

There are numerous fictional narratives one can refer to as an example of an overarching narrative. 'Warhammer' and its 40.000 sibling, the 'Detective Comics' universe or 'Marvel' universes, the 'The Elder Scrolls' lore and even the various 'Space Station 13' servers' specific lore.

An overarching narrative is one that hangs above other, smaller stories. The overarching narrative determines the background and informs the plot of the smaller stories, but the stories themselves only take place within the narrative and are further separate. These stories need not be small: they could be world changing campaigns, but they are always part of the overarching narrative.

The narrative within the /late/ universe is the same. Where the setting determines the main geography of the world, the time period and the various cultures and factions that inhabit the setting, the narrative determines the major events that are part of the setting.

Who is going to do what – what are the end goals of the various factions? Is there a conclusion the narrative is converging on? Was there an event in the past that created the setting or the factions in it? And so on.

When writing an overarching narrative, it is important to keep the details light, but punchy. The narrative needs to be broad, to encompass the history or lore of the setting, and should indicate a direction the universe is heading. Too much detail and it will be difficult for future creators to append their own stories, but if the narrative is too vague it will fail to provide same creators with the information they need. To avoid both, the narrative needs to focus on specific, major events; leaving the details open; and give clear and coherent motivations for all factions.

The first can be achieved by planning out major events and connecting them. Limiting the narrative to major events makes it clear what effect the events had and why they are important: it explains to other creators why they should adhere to the history of the universe. Connecting the events ensures coherency, but more importantly gives the story a forward thrust: it seems the story is moving somewhere.

The second can be achieved by giving each faction distinct, opposite motivations and connecting those motivations with the history of the universe. The more distinct the motivations are, the easier it is to understand the faction and their goals. (It also encourages the audience to pick a side, which may be preferable.) Connecting the motivations to the history of the universe makes them understandable, maybe even sympathetic, and grounds them in the interior logic of the universe, making the motivations seem more grounded in reality.

An example would be a creator deity creating the universe and its inhabitants with the explicit motivation of pinning the factions against one another. The different factions deal with this existence in different ways: some choose to obey and revere the demiurge, others reject it and carve their own path, while others still seek to destroy the deity entirely. In the end they ultimately come into conflict regardless.

Although simple, this example provides major events for other stories to originate from; the creation of the universe, the growth and timespan of the different societies and their eventual conflict; and gives the factions clear motives and end goals; the adherence to, rejection of or destruction of the demiurge.

The narrative is dependent on both the setting and character background. The former determines where and when the narrative takes place and who it affects, while the character background determines what events need to be present and informs the (local) history of the setting.

As the setting is intertwined with the /late/ theme, so too does the narrative express the /late/ theme. The same solemnness should be present in the narrative. This does not mean that the story should be 'all bad, all the time'; or should converge on some cataclysmic, downer ending; but it is preferable for the story to be stark and laid back.

The influence of the character background is limited to what events need to be incorporated in the narrative. Dependent on the characters concept this can be universal to local. Things like a character living somewhere or learning something about a culture, need to be worked into and be accounted for by the narrative.

## The guidelines

Unlike any other component, the guidelines are optional (though preferred). The guidelines are to ensure that creators intend on using the universe have a set of guidelines they can refer to. Likewise, the guidelines are meant to inspire anyone interested in utilizing the /late/ universe.

An important element to the universe is its internal logic/internal consistency. The more consistent this interior logic is, the easier it is for the audience and writers to understand how and why things happen. It provides context for events and the actions of characters.

An example would be the rules and mechanics behind magic. Defining what magic is, and establishing rules for how magic can be drawn forth and used, ensures consistency. If magic is an abstract power that is always-already present, it establishes the rule that magic is everywhere. Appending the rule that magic can only be drawn forth by uttering certain phrases, indicates characters need to have knowledge of these phrases to use magic. The audience intuitively understands that characters who are magical have knowledge of the phrases and vice versa.

The risk when working with explicit, interior logic is that of convolving the rules: too many rules can make it a daunting task to adhere to the canon of interior logic. Therefore a few, but explicit rules are most suited to our goals: it imbues the actions of characters with context, while allowing other creators to append stories that adhere to the interior logic.

Guidelines detailing the creation of places, characters and factions are useful as well. Each informs creators of elements they should keep in mind, ensuring consistency, and, hopefully, providing the creator with ideas.

Each component is dependent on the setting. This is where using distinct tropes comes into play: tropes can be used to establish rules for places, characters and factions. For example: if the setting has a strong cyberpunk theme, it would be served by characters that fit within that setting. Establishing rules about characters belonging to different strata, or which group has access to military training and which does not, helps creators create characters that are consistent with the narrative.

## Elements

### **The character**

#### Writing

- Description of the character concept;
- Description of the characters personality and an overview of the characters personality traits;
- Detailed overview of the characters background;
- Overview of the characters strengths and weaknesses;
- Overview of the characters goals, dreams and tastes;
- Description of the characters day-to-day live.

#### Design

- (Visual) Character design concept;
- (Visual) Character design concept alternatives;
- (Visual) Character design overview;
- Character design works: annotated character design overview.

#### Bot

- IP Recognition system:
  - IP database;
  - Querying and storage system;
  - Querying and storage system interface for other features.
- Command input system:
  - Database;
  - IP database querying and storage system interface component for recognizing IPs.
- Querying system. Aimed at...
  - Discord;
  - OpenIB;
  - IRC (to be determined);
  - /late/radio (to be determined);
  - baystation code (to be determined).
- User Interface page:
  - HTML file containing all visual elements;
  - JavaScript file functioning as input controller.
- Text filter:
  - Database of unwanted terms;
  - Post and comment tracker;
  - Temporary storage system;
  - Querying system interface component – see below.
- Querying system interface for administrative functions;
- Clientnode system:
  - IP database querying and storage system interface component for storing notes.
- Universal Memo system:
  - Memo database;
  - Storage timer;
  - Querying system interface component to deliver memo;
  - IP database querying and storage system interface component for delivering Memos.
- Conversational AI:
  - Dependent on source code (to be determined).

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Alternative Chat Commands:

- Extension of the command input system;
- Querying system interface component.

Mystery Box Topic Generation Script:

- Stored array containing topics;
- Stored array containing used topics;
- Automatic array generation/renewal system;
- Querying system interface component.

Conference Automation Script:

- Storage array for active speakers;
- Extension of the command input system;
- Stored array of objects representing candidates. (Automated survey)
- Querying system interface component.

IRC bridge:

- To be determined.

Welcoming Messages and User Instructions:

- Querying system interface component;
- Conversational AI interface component;
- Extension of the command input system.

Text-to-speech:

- Conversational AI interface component;
- Querying system expansion; (To be determined.)
- Set of audio files containing phonemes;

Firefox plugin:

- JavaScript controller;
- JavaScript viewer.

Quote system:

- Stored string array containing quotes;
- Extension of the command input system.

Randomisers;

- Dependant on randomiser (to be determined).

Random Facts and Searches:

- API interface for Google, ixquick, youtube, soundcloud and boorus;
- Extension of the command input system.

Polls:

- Querying system interface component;
- Extension of the command input system.

/late/radio Integration:

- Dependant on /late/radio code upon integration (to be determined).

/late/station Integration:

- Dependant on baystation code upon integration (to be determined).

Theme

- Annotated composition sheet for each composition;
- (Audio) Musical theme or musical themes;
- (Audio) Raw production version of musical theme;

## **The universe**

### Setting

- Description of the physical space of the setting and a description and overview of the locations within the setting;
- Description of the time of the setting and its significance;
- Description and overview of the inhabitants/factions of the setting;
- Overview of the relationship between the setting, time and factions;
- Description of the day-to-day live in the setting.

### Narrative

- Overview of the history of the universe;
- Description of the major events within the narrative;
- Overview and description of the history of the factions and their goals and relationships.

### Guidelines

- Description of the assumptions and overview of implicit rules the universe functions on;
- Overview of advice to future artists on:
  - Creating places;
  - Creating characters;
  - Creating factions.

## Estimated Timeline

### Month 1

#### **Week 1**

Team is assembled and instructed;  
Writer chooses character concept and begins writing the character personality;  
Development on the bot framework begins.

#### **Week 2**

Writer to write draft of the character. If deemed sufficient draft is handed to the designer and worldbuilder;  
Designer begins designing the character;  
Worldbuilder begins working on the setting;  
Continued development on the bot framework.

#### **Week 3**

Writer is instructed to finalize a production draft of the character to be used by the visual designer.;  
If not already working, the character designer begins working on the design;  
Designer is asked to present a sketch collection of possible designs. Further instructed upon evaluation;  
Continued development on the bot framework;  
Continued writing on the setting.

#### **Week 4**

Writer is told to finalize the character personality; (Soft deadline.)  
Designer continues work on the visual design;  
Deadline for the bot framework, i.e. necessary core features;  
Worldbuilder is asked to codify the location and time of the setting. Continues work on the factions.

### Month 2

#### **Week 1**

The writer continues work on the characters background and tastes;  
Designer is asked to re-evaluate the design with the now-finalized character personality;  
Work on the necessary, non-core features begins;  
Worldbuilder is asked to codify the factions and finalize the setting. (Soft deadline.)

#### **Week 2**

Continued work on the writing and the design;  
Completion of the necessary, non-core features (not finalisation);  
Worldbuilder begins work on the narrative.

#### **Week 3**

The writer is asked to finalize the background;  
Designer is asked to re-evaluate the design with the now-finalized background;  
Prep for beta launch of the bot;  
Worldbuilder continues on the narrative.

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#### **Week 4**

Finalization of the writing component of the character. (Hard deadline.)

The designer presents the final batch of designs. One design is chosen to be fleshed out; (Soft deadline.)

Beta launch of the bot. Finalisation of necessary features; (Soft deadline.)

Worldbuilder is asked to codify the narrative.

### Month 3

#### **Week 1**

Designer makes adjustment to the chosen design as informed by the now-finalized writing component;

Simultaneous development of preferred core, administration and ease-of-life features;

Composer is handed the character writing and visual design WIP, begins working on the theme;

Continued work on the narrative.

#### **Week 2**

Designer finalizes design; (Hard deadline.)

Continued development of preferred features;

Composer re-evaluates via the now-finalized visual design;

Continued work on the narrative.

#### **Week 3**

Continued development on preferred features and theme;

Worldbuilder is asked to finalize the narrative. (Soft deadline.)

#### **Week 4**

Estimated completion of the preferred, non-core features; (Soft deadline.)

Composer presents musical sketch of theme; (Soft deadline.)

Freeform development of the universe.

### Month 4

#### **Week 1**

Continued development on preferred features and theme;

Freeform development of the universe.

#### **Week 2**

Continued work on theme;

Completion of preferred features;

Freeform development of the universe.

#### **Week 3**

Continued work on theme;

Prep for gold version launch;

Freeform development of the universe.

#### **Week 4**

Finalization of theme; (Hard deadline.)

Gold version of bot launch; (Hard deadline.)

Finalization of the universe. (Hard deadline.)

#### **Post production(5<sup>th</sup> week)**

Project evaluation with the entire team and post-mortem.

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# Production Outline

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An overview of the material and skill requirements needed to facilitate the project.

## Material components

### Server

The place where the data will be stored and hosted, particularly the bot. A storage space is not enough as the bot makes use of queried commands and compute responses. The bot precludes the HTML page and various database

A physical (dedicated) server is preferred, but shared and cloud servers should be feasible depending on traffic.

#### **Estimated requirements:**

- 3GHz XPU multi core (Constant I/O.)
- 8GB/1600MHz DDR3/DDR4 RAM (Constant write.)
- 10GB storage (The bot consists almost entirely out of text files.)
- ~1TB Transfer (Hard to say, dependent on a myriad of factors.)

#### **Estimated cost:** (monthly)

Canada, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden based servers preferred.  
Avoid Germany based servers.

<b>Dedicated:</b>	<b>min</b>	<b>max</b>
inmotionhosting	\$218.99	\$299.99
liquid web	\$449	\$449
Rackspace	\$449	\$749
RamNode (VDS)	\$20	\$80
solidHost	\$279	\$499
thexyz:	\$329.95	\$329.95
<b>Shared:</b>	<b>min</b>	<b>max</b>
liquid web	\$159	\$209
No Support Linux Hosting:	\$1	\$1
PayPerHost	\$15.90	\$147.60
RamNode	\$87	\$87
Tuxis:	\$14	\$87
thexyz	\$99.95	\$99.95

### Domain name

late.moe and laterad.io preferred.

#### **Estimated cost:** (monthly)

lateradio.xyz	\$1	lateradio.org	\$15	laterad.io	\$39.86
lateradio.eu	\$10	lateradio.net	\$15		
lateradio.com	\$15	late.moe	\$27.95		

## Team Proposal

As detailed under ‘Description’ in ‘Technical Outline’, each part of the project is contributed by a different person. To ensure cohesion, three managerial positions have been assigned: the project leads, who oversee the entire project; the narrative directors, who ensure consistency in the writing and universe, and the art directors, who ensure consistency in the visuals.

The remaining positions are dedicated roles: contributors who spearhead a part in this crucial stage of development. The lead worldbuilder focusses on the universe and setting exclusively. The lead character writer solely dedicates themselves to writing the character. The character designer, in turn, expands their effort on the visual design of the character only. Finally, the theme composer throws themselves on the musical theme of the character alone.

We encourage **everyone** to contribute to the project: illustrations, music, stories – anything is welcome. /late/-tan can only live if *we* give her life.

Obsi	project lead, narrative director, art director, bot programmer, additional character design, additional writing; narrative director, system administrator; additional writing;
v e η u e	assistant lead, assistant narrative director, additional programming;
Yomuchan	lead worldbuilder;
[open]	lead character writer;
[open]	character designer;
[open]	theme composer;

**Project lead:** oversees the entire project and ensures the deadlines are met. Mediates between the different contributors and ensures everyone is involved and up-to-date.

**Narrative director:** oversees the /late/ universe during and after the project. Ensures all required elements are in place and further developments are consistent.

**Art director:** oversees the aesthetic contributions to the project and ensures they fit together. Has the final say in all design decisions.

**System administrator:** makes sure the server machine is running as it should, maintains the server system and grants system privileges to maintainers. Contacts the server provider if need be.

**(Lead) worldbuilder:** the first and main person to write the /late/ universe. Chooses the framework for the setting, plot of the narrative and writes the guidelines. Later worldbuilders are to refer and build upon to the lead worldbuilders contribution.

**(Lead) character writer:** the first and main person to write the mascots character concept, personality, traits and so on. Codifies the mascots character for use by later character writers and creators.

**Character designer:** creates the visual design of the character.

**Bot programmer:** writes the code for the bot and makes the non-executive programming decisions. Writes the framework, beta and gold release of the bot.

**Theme composer:** composes the characters musical theme.

**Assistant/Additional:** assistant positions to help lighten the work load of or provide advice for the lead/first contributors.