

**Terry Pratchett – Live Q&A**  
**Second Life, October 9<sup>th</sup> 2008**

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Hello everybody! Sorry, I'm new at all of this kind of stuff and so can anyone tell me how to get the rocket launcher?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** ...and I'm not really into all of this YouTube into MyFace kind of stuff!

**Michaelx Beerbaum:** Question is if Second life will appear in one of the books?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** As far as I am concerned, my books are Second Life.

**Matty567 Dallagio:** Why was "Nation" not set on Discworld?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Good question; for one thing, the fact of it being on Discworld would change all kind of things that I could do. After all, Nation is hardly full of laughs. Setting Nation on a thinly disguised "alternate" world does, I think, give it more power and urgency.

**Matty567 Dallagio:** Why a slightly alternate Earth instead of the real one?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Because the real one has already happened. I wanted this world, but with a few interesting alterations. One detail I'm sure you will have noticed is that Carl Sagan is still alive in that alternate earth.

**ImmortalitySou Ballinger:** What was the inspiration behind the book?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** I came up with the idea in 2003 and it was not long before I was going to do a talk and signing in Folyes in London. I was so excited that I told Sarah Lefanu and I'm glad that I did because she is one person who can vouch that I came up with the idea before the big Asian Tsunami.

**ImmortalitySou Ballinger:** Q: Hi Terry, how does it feel to be in a virtual world where everything is possible and weird is accepted as normal?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** I think I've lived in one of those for the past 60 years :o)

**SignpostMarvMarvin:** Have you any thoughts on how your characters (from Nation, Discworld, Carpet People ) might react if they found themselves in Second Life ?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** I think Sam Vimes would be very annoyed, whereas the witches would just deal with it. I have to say that I quite like the idea of Second Life, because it is a totally human activity. Monkeys wouldn't be able to join.

**Dedric Mauiac:** What are you views on people in second life creating people, places, and things from your books and either giving or selling them to other players?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** It would be interesting to see what the law could do about Second Life! Regrettably for you, copyright and trademarks exist everywhere, but in reality I see this sort of thing as fan activity.

**Jo Sapeur:** I noticed that religion was a major topic in "Nation", how did the response from readers look so far?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Religion; fantasy writers like religion. It's so interesting to play with and it is a great forum for asking questions.

**Ciaran Laval:** Do you think Moist Von Lipwig would have managed the banking system better than those currently in charge?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** It seems that, primitive as it is, the Discworld economy is considerably more stable than the one here. And, come to think about it, Moist's solution to the problem was not a long way from what has been done over here...

**Trago Mills:** Terry we know you are a fan of computer games like Alien vs Predator, what do you make of Second life which doesn't appear to have a plot or goal?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Oblivion is my current computer game of choice, specifically because we (me and Rob) discovered modding, and I get a thrill from the thought that thousands of people write some wonderful mods and distribute them at no cost.

**April Kohl:** Was there any novel you found particularly difficult to write?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Probably it was Nation. Probably because I wrote the first draft in six months and then spent the next six months wrestling it into the right shape.

**Kelli May:** I hope this isn't too morbid, but a lot of the characters in Nation question why fate or the gods have inflicted various trials on them. Is this a question that's on your mind these days?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** For obvious reasons, mostly because I am the poster boy for the battle against Alzheimer's, there have been quite a number of days when I have been unable to write a word.

**Jo Sapeur:** How long does it usually take you to write a book?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** For Unseen Academicals I won't even hazard a guess. But for the last several years I have only done one book a year because of all the other distractions placed on an author's life. Put it another way: Don't ask a man to reply to every email AND do a full thousand words a day :-)

**Carl Blue:** Which of your characters do you feel is most like you?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** There is probably a bit of me in all the major characters. I would like to be like Sam Vimes, but deep in my heart I know I am Rincewind.

**Salaamata Afarensis:** my wife Ab (sadly at work) asks: it seems from reading the early Discworld novels that you grew to respect characters like Granny Weatherwax and Sam Vimes the more time you spent with them. These two characters, in particular, have come to represent standards of ethical behavior. Do you find that your relationship with the characters in the books has changed over time?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** That is a good question. It seems to me that if you get a character just right, they start doing the work for you. It is as if they become a subroutine in your own brain and you are right when you point out the similarity between Granny and Vimes; you might notice that both of them seem at every stage to be fighting some internal demon.

**Ciaran Laval:** Would you like to see more of your books reproduced on film in the fashion they have been by SKY?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Yes, but I don't have any particular hopes for Hollywood. Besides, I like the British stuff, even though the budget is much lower than it might be in the States, I can get involved at just about every stage in the production. To an author, that is worth a great deal.

**DeutroJesaja Gothly:** I know you don't believe in gods, but do you mind if books or quotes from your books is used in Christian teaching for young people?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Not at all. I have no problem with the existence of Jesus Christ, who I think was very probably a wise man and a compassionate teacher. It's just that I don't believe in the same god that he believed in :-)

**Carl Blue:** Whats you fave book, not your own?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** I have a whole library shelf of favourite books. However, I still think that one of the funniest and best works of fiction was the "Evolution Man" by Roy Lewis. My favourite bedtime reading at the moment is "Feeding Nelson's Navy" by Janet MacDonald. Believe me, it's considerably more thrilling than the title might suggest.

**Charis Parx:** If you had a day with no demands on you at all, what would you do with it, BESIDES writing. :)

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** What do you mean, besides writing? Believe it or not, I seldom read a novel these days. Nearly all the books in the 3ft pile beside my bed are social histories or the biographies of intereting, if not important, people. I'm also a sucker for the kind of books with titles such as "Picky – The History of 500 Years of Snot in Britian".

**Samantha Poindexter:** Any chance we'll ever see Esk of Equal Rites again?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** I think that if the last Tiffany Aching book, which will be called "I shall Wear Midnight", gets finished it will probably re-introduce Esk.

**DeutroJesaja Gothly:** How come everybody knows a Granny and a Nanny?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Because they are a widespread social sterotype and I am an observant author.

**April Kohl:** Many writers and publishers in modern magazines talk about how much more difficult it is to get a first novel sold now than it was even ten years ago. Do you think you had it easier than the new kids on the block?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** I don't think it was all that easier when I started, but the parameters have changed. If you can go on a comedy show and are on the telly long enough, and sometimes not for all that long, getting a novel published appears to be very easy and sometime you don't even need to write it.

**SignpostMarv Martin:** Would Terry consider a Discworld-based MMO, perhaps using something like OpenSim as the underlying tech ?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** What is an MMO? What is OpenSim? Can we accept for a moment that I'm not that engrossed by online activities?

**SignpostMarv Martin:** Massively Multiplayer Online game.

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Then no. Early in 2003 we had approaches from about 5 or 6 games developers. I told them all to go away and knock up something that would show me that they had a grip on what Discworld would be about, and none of them came back. I'm not unhappy about that. Certainly I would require a new Discworld game to be as immersive as Thief II and with the sound and graphics suitable for the times.

**SignpostMarv Martin:** ooh. that's a good answer. Especially taking into account that Terry is a fan of Oblivion, I think we can rest assured if there's a new game, it would be really good :-)

**Jo Sapeur:** Is there a chance that you will return to SL for another Q&A session? I have several friends who are mourning because they couldn't come after the the sim was full.

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** I think you're going to have to improve the graphics considerably before I come back to Second Life. The graphics in Oblivion allow you to see the graphics in the bottom of a pond and I think that came out in 2002.

**Dedric Mauriac:** Have you ever dreamt that you were in one of your novels?

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** No, but I have often dreamt of scenes, usually just before I wake up.

**TerryPratchett Morpork:** Folks. We are now overtime on this chat and so I'm off to hang about on Nation island for a bit. Cheerio.