

An overview of the Westeros.org Forum as of July 2014

Andrea Nevitt, July 2014

Glossary

For the purpose of my fieldwork I am using **Forum** to refer to the Westeros.org forum as a whole, and **forum** to refer to individual forums on the Forum.

Pinned threads are discussion threads that have been permanently fixed at the top of the list of threads within each forum. Threads are usually pinned if they contain important information or if they are popular. Threads can only be pinned by moderators.

Moderators are users of the Forum who have the necessary access privileges to edit or delete other users' posts and threads and block users when necessary. They follow the rules of the board when making decisions and participate in discussions along with other users.

I refer to a thread being a **live thread** if it has had a reply in the last 2-3 days, although this is a loose definition at the moment.

Information

Announcements

The only poster active in the Announcements forum is Ran (Elio). All threads in this forum are locked, which means that they are one-to-many communications aimed at giving information to members of the forum. New threads are infrequent, and tend to be about changes being made to the Forum (for example the design or the disabling of certain user functions) or user guides for new members.

Help

This forum is open to all posters to create new threads and reply to existing ones. It is a place to start threads to ask other users questions about how to use the Forum, to point out any problems on the Forum, or to make suggestions. The longevity of threads in this section is relatively limited, with most threads receiving only 0-5 replies. Views per thread is, on average, around 20-100.

Game of Thrones: The HBO TV Series

Game of Thrones News

This forum is open to all posters to create new threads and reply to existing ones. Thread topics are based on news about the TV series that users of the forum want to share and discuss with other users. Points of interest include footage from on-set, interviews in the media, press releases from HBO and episode guides. The ratio between the number of replies and the number of views of each thread appears to be high, with frequently over 1,500 views to around 15 replies. Usage rates of this forum fluctuate with the airing of new episodes and the build up towards production of new episodes.

General GoT

Within this forum is the sub-forum **Casting**. This sub-forum is for all threads that discuss current, potential and past casting. Some live threads have been in existence for several years and the only pinned thread was started by Benioff and Weiss in 2008, which was to thank the Forum users for their casting suggestions following a request they made in the early days of production.

As the title of the General GoT forum suggests, the topics of conversation are varying, including "[Favourite Original Line?](#)", "[Music from the HBO show trailers](#)" and "[Kit Harrington appreciation thread](#)". It is a fast-moving forum, with the first page of threads (approximately 15 threads, excluding pinned threads) all having been active within the last 3-4 days.

Season 4

There is no general area for discussions about Season 4, instead every episode has its own sub-forum, each of which are created at the beginning of the series. Each episode sub-forum follows a similar format, with certain thread types being repeated in each one, for example a thread to rate the episode by taking part in a poll and discussion, a thread for general discussion about the episode, best lines of the episode, "nitpick without repercussion" (for those who want to complain about details of the episode without having to defend their opinion against those who don't agree), "positive nitpicking" (for those who love certain details of the episode and don't want to defend their opinion against those who don't agree), the non-reader thread (for discussing what users' non-reader friends thought about the episode). Among these standard threads are others that focus on particular details of the episode – examples include specific scenes, the acting, direction, or plot points.

Each sub-forum has on average 30 topics, with the number of replies per sub-forum increasing throughout the season and peaking in the sub-forum of the last episode of the season. Activity is generally high while episodes are airing, and trails off after the end of the season.

Dothraki

Dothraki is a fictional language that was developed for the TV series, using words and phrases created by GRRM in the novels. This is generally a slow-moving forum with only three or four live threads that discuss the use of Dothraki and other languages in the series. The forum has a high ratio between the number of replies to a thread and number of views, [one example](#) having 122 replies and almost 40,000 views.

Previous Seasons

As per **Season 4**. This is where threads are archived once a new season is airing.

A Song of Ice and Fire: The Novels

General (ASoIaF)

Within this forum are the sub-forums **The World of Ice and Fire** (to discuss a companion book being written by GRRM, Linda and Elio) and **Re-read Project** (for group re-readings and analysis about the novels, usually about specific themes, characters and plot developments, occasionally formally organised in groups).

The General (ASoIaF) forum is particularly active, with all threads on the first pages having been active within the last 15 minutes (excluding pinned threads). It is a

forum in which to discuss theories about what may happen in future books and to analyse what has already happened in the published books. Many threads cover topics that have been under discussion for years and which have required several iterations of the thread title to keep up, for example "[R+L = J v 86](#)" for discussing a theory about the parents of Jon Snow.

A Dance with Dragons

This forum contains three sub-forums. The first is a read-only archive of threads from before *A Dance with Dragons* was published. The second is for those users who haven't finished reading the book yet and don't want to be spoiled by other discussions on it. The third is for discussions about the next novel in the series, *The Winds of Winter*. The threads within the A Dance with Dragons forum are largely speculations and theories based on events in the novel.

Still reading

This forum comprises sub-forums for each of the books that has been published. Usage of these sub-forums is light when compared to the other novels forums. Threads cover speculation about events that have been read so far, as well as questions from users who are confused about plot points and descriptions.

[Related projects](#)

Most of this forum isn't being studied as part of my research, but it is useful for me to be aware of what happens in the other areas of the Forum.

Blood of Dragons MUSH

A forum for discussing the text-based role-playing game enjoyed by some users of the forum.

Brotherhood without Banners

This forum is used to organise meet-ups of forum users across the world.

Objects of Ice and Fire

For discussions about merchandise, collecting memorabilia, text-related tattoos and 'wish lists' of items that forum users want to be able to buy.

Wiki of Ice and Fire

Discussions about the maintenance and editing of the A Song of Ice and Fire Wiki.

[Miscellaneous](#)

General Chatter

As the title suggests, everything that doesn't fit into one of the other forums belongs in this forum. This area is often used for more personal discussions about wide-ranging topics like politics, dating, and current affairs. Several of my research threads have been posted in this forum and some have received a relatively high level of replies.

Literature

A forum for discussing literature other than ASoIaF.

Entertainment

A general area for other cultural areas than literature, such as television and film. At the time of writing a sub-forum was active for discussion of the 2014 world cup.

Forum Games

A very fast-moving forum for playing text-based games in which posts do not count towards a user's post-count.