

While we wanted to leave Disaster Den on a high note, we need to be clear about why our server is shutting down. The initial reasoning included how busy the Head Staff are - this is true. Real life hits, and it hits hard. Much of the people who grew up with dden are moving on with the next stages in their life, and the time and effort that is required to maintain a solid experience with the server is not something we could guarantee to provide going into the future - which is why the plug is being pulled today rather than down the line when things may get worse.

The main reason we have shut down is due to our relations with Northwood as a company. We cannot in good conscience continue to host servers for their game. There are individuals on the team who have been kind and sympathetic, while others have been blunt and rude. But while the company seems to be embroiled in one controversy after the next, all that we can go off of is personal experiences of our staff team.

Disaster Den has been an official server since 2018. While Official was only a sort of endorsement, we were given a lot of flexibility in terms of rules, plugins and how we treated the community. There were specific restrictions which were agreeable - we were still the ones that had to provide hosting and staffing on our end completely.

This changed with the passage of the "Official Server Agreement" in late 2021, where Northwood imposed a bunch of rules for the sake of it. Not all official hosts agreed with it and it especially clashed with the ideals of dden - this snowballed into multiple staff retirements on our team and a general disdain for the unwillingness to communicate from Northwood themselves.

A glimmer of hope appeared, as one of the Northwood reps was able to organize a meeting where official hosts were able to properly communicate their grievances with the current system, and this Northwood member was able to communicate with us and even find the middle ground on a few situations. It seemed like things weren't going to be so bad after all.

However, this was short lived as Hubert shortly decided to shut down all this progress. He said that this Northwood member overstepped their bounds and had no position to make these changes, and that *everything* discussed was being shot down/reverted. This was devastating to hear, however the worst part about it was Hubert's approach - he was extremely rude and blunt with Kira and the other server hosts.

More than anything, Hubert made one thing clear.

We are replaceable.

If we dislike how Northwood runs things, we should just leave as Official.

Our hands were tied - The majority of our playerbase was official only at this point. But Hubert made sure to reiterate this multiple times, if we disagreed with the OSA, we should just leave.

Official hosts should be viewed as a valuable resource - not only as a group of people willing to train staff and host servers in an official capacity, but as a great way to parse feedback and discussion on how the servers can be run. But the exact opposite was made clear, in a clearly unprofessional manner.

We've had some unfortunate encounters apart from this, where if things are even slightly out of place, Northwood is quick to threaten official warnings and the sorts. Diplomacy is their weak suit through and through. These encounters were numerous in occurrences, and while each were small on their own they added to an overall bigger narrative - we have to treat officials as some sort of privilege that we're lucky to have, as other communities would gladly line up to take. It's a toxic relationship of constantly walking on eggshells, anyone who has to go through this would want out too.

While Hubert stated there would be another meeting after the aforementioned conversation, one never came. Instead we were greeted with an updated OSA that required every official host to sign that binded us - some even struggled to get their official status back right away. But the message was clear. There was no room for discussing, only obeying. As a community who put years into helping support this game, this was not only a sign of disrespect but a sign that we were no longer a welcome sight.

Major issues also sprouted from the development process. Northwood rolls out updates with very short notice to devs. 12.0 is the best example of this where the update was dropped right before Christmas, the devs went on holiday and we were told that we couldn't have plugins for a week that were essential to our servers' upkeep. Every update negatively hurt our servers' experience, but this one especially stung. 13.0 broke our queue system, 13.2 broke our bans yet again with little forewarning these updates would come.

It was also not so simple as just "following the OSA", when the decision to strictly keep player slots to 25 max hurt our patron system forcing us to remove reserved slots, an integral part to the upkeep of our server. While some rules clashed with how we ran things, decisions such as the player slots and no plugins significantly hurt the quality of the experience our server could provide. These concerns fell on deaf ears.

Kira stepped down from dden for a multitude of reasons, but frustrations with Northwood was certainly one of them. Joker has recently stepped down from heading EXILED, citing his own experiences with unprofessional behavior. These sentiments were not exclusive to them but were apparent within all of the head staff, weariness from having to deal with Northwood.

Disaster Den has had its ups and downs but has always tried to give a great experience to its users. With our busy staff, plugins that are no longer allowed and very negative experiences with Northwood, we can no longer say that we are giving a great experience, which is why we formally pulled the plug. Thank you for your support.

Let's strive for better.