COME FOR THE STICK DEATH, STAY ANYWAY

STICKMANSTICKMAN

{ Home } { Archive } { The StickManStickMan Universe } { Fan stuff } { Gallery } { The Making Of } { Banners } { Email } { AIM }

Stickman Stickman is one of the many webcomics that are out there. Beginning around five years ago, webcomics have increased exponentially in number and popularity.

I started following the comic around the 300th strip. As of the time that this issue comes out, the comic will have just hit its 1,000th- and final- strip. This makes it a very easy read; to go through the archives takes a fair amount of time, and now that the comic has ended, you are not rushed to do so. This doesn't mean that you'll take your time; on the contrary, you can very easily lost hours of your life as you get caught up in the crazy antics of these two stick figures.

The pure insanity of the strip doesn't hurt, either. One of the first cohesive plotlines involves the two main characters forming a band, the Chocolate Coated Bullets. They have one hit single, "Chips for my Tea" (it becomes obvious within the first fifty or so comics that Sam Hughes, the creator of Stickman Stickman, is from England). Other magical strips are ones such as "So this guy walks into a bar… ouch! Haha-" He then walks into a lamppost. "Ouch!"

You might be wondering why the creator decided to go with stick figures. His answer? "Firstly it's because it's quicker… I have a vast buffer of comics, making the comic almost immune to the effects of me being lazy, sick, busy or on holiday." Sounds good to me. All to may webcomic updates are postponed for one of these reasons. "Secondly," he continues, "the quality of humor and story and characterization is far from high. I'd find it very difficult to spend so long every day drawing a complex comic just for a dumb exploding computer gag. Thirdly, I wanted to show everybody that a comic doesn't have to be drawn incredibly well to be entertaining. Finally, and most importantly, I wanted to show the world that a stickman is by no means as limited as many people think." I'm a convert. After a while, you look past the fact that you're watching stick figures and can really get into the storyline. (If it doesn't become apparent to you that there is a cohesive storyline, don't worry. It'll show up… eventually.)

Sam is also very geared towards his fans. At one point, he had a system in place for reporting buried references that many fans tried to do. For 817 comics, there were around 200 "BuRs" to be found. Some people passively noted them and sent them in, but some people really got into the idea. First place on the rankings is Jymbob with 91 BuRs found, followed by Jim Miles with 76 and Boter with 44. "In the end, I think the overall winner simply had the best knowledge of my kind of pop culture," admits Sam, which is one reason that he closed down the contest. He still has the records up on his page, though.

The layout of the site changes a lot. I forget how many iterations of the page that I've seen. However, the layouts are always intuitive and easy to navigate. Sam, as of this writing, has the inside links across the top in an easy-to-find frame, and has other things scattered around the page. The "Link Aquarium" contains almost thirty links to outside sites; sort of a "People who like Stickman Stickman may also like…", and the "Chatterbox" is a script that allows the fans to talk to each other about the comics. The internal links go to the Archive of past comics (where you can look at them by date and download them), The Stickman Stickman Universe (which includes a Cast listing, a Timeline, and a Power Level meter for the characters), some Fan Stuff (including the buried reference search, the brief Illuminati webpage puzzle, and fan art), a Gallery of more of Sam's art (believe it or not, he's not just limited to stick figures), a page on The Making Of (having submitted some fan comics, I can attest to it being much harder than it looks), and various bits of contact information.

Stickman Stickman is a work of genius, pure and simple. The comic is simple yet very entertaining. The extras provided by Sam add all the extra dimension it needs- how they're made, proof that Sam can actually draw, and work from the fans. All of it coming together into a wonderful ensemble that Has kept me on the edge of my seat, three panels at a time, for two years. It's been a riotous trip, and I'm sorry to see it go. But now that it's all finished, there's just one thing left to do:

Read through the Archives again.

Navigation: Everything is accessible and easy to find. There is one broken link in the off-site navigation- impressive, considering that there are 27 of them he has no control over. **29/30**

Content: As of the ending date of October 26, there are 1,000 comics, plus a couple extra, as well as some fairly good art in the Gallery. Fan comics are a definite plus. The lack of stunning art in the comics themselves is mostly made up for by the humor found within the strips. **25/30**

Aesthetics: A basic setup in non-offensive colors. The present scheme is rather safe, and not visually exciting. Other iterations are better, but can also turn some people off. Changing schemes are a double-edged sword. The newest strip is front and center on the home page, without having to look for it. **16/20**

Fun Factor: Worth coming back to every day. Now that it's ended, I can still enjoy looking through its archives, which I've downloaded onto my computer. Unfortunately, the BuR hunt is off, taking away a bit of the reader interaction. Fortunately, you can still look for them and enjoy knowing that you're the same kind of geek that Sam is. **9/10**

Addictiveness: I want a hard copy of this, so I can take it wherever I want to go. It's just that fun. Very easy to lose hours while catching up on the archives. **10/10**

☺**89%**☺

Reviewed by: Andrew Hookway
Andrew uses the Mozilla FireFox web browser
http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/