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At the end of each of my columns is a poll. Sometimes these are there just as "talking points." Other times I include them to help settle an argument here in R&D about what our players like or don't like. Once in a while, the poll is there as a data-gathering device to help us make decisions about what direction some part of the game should go.



Earlier in my stint as the Latest Development columnist, I used to put a brief bit of commentary in each article following the results of the previous week's poll. I've gotten out of the habit of doing that, which may have some people thinking that I/we don't really care what people think. I got an email from a fellow named John Koziar asking me to elaborate on the polls like I used to, and there was a post on our boards by "Demonpoet" (who may or may not be the same person) basically saying the same thing.

So I'm going to review all my polls from this year, go over what the thought process was behind each question, and tell you how I would have answered them. Note that if a poll was put forth to get information that may influence a future decision we make, I can't really point that out here. Hopefully I'll remember to do so once each particular decision is final and public.

On to the polls.

## January 21

What was your favorite Magic release of 2004?		
Champions of Kamigawa	4427	55.5%
Darksteel	1541	19.3%
Unhinged	1188	14.9%
Fifth Dawn	815	10.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7971</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*InQuest* magazine usually does a "best of" for each year, so I was curious as to what my readers thought. This was right after *Champions* came out, so I expected it to do well (shiny new things always rate highly).

My vote would have gone to *Fifth Dawn* for purely personal reasons—it was the first set I worked on. I was saddened to see it do so poorly; hopefully part of its low score was because it was completely overshadowed power-level-wise by *Affinity*. Now that *Affinity* is gone, the Standard environment looks a little more like the one we developed *Fifth Dawn* in internally, and the set is making the kind of impact on constructed we had hoped for.

## January 28

Which group of cards from <i>Betrayers of Kamigawa</i> has you most excited?		
Ninja	8974	56.0%
Shoals	2793	17.4%

Genju	2485	15.5%
Patron Kami	1776	11.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16028</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The ninja result was not surprising at all... in fact, this whole poll panned out as we expected, even once the full set was released. The Shoals—and possibly the Genju—have had more relevance to constructed play, but that doesn't keep the Ninja mechanic from being cool.

My vote goes to Ninja as well. Too bad there weren't any more in *Saviors*.

## February 4

<b>Did you already know the correct interaction between Kiki-Jiki and Genju?</b>		
No never thought	6205	67.3%
Yes	2326	25.2%
No played wrong	686	7.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9217</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

As I explained in the previous article...

*"Say you activate Genju of the Spires, making a Mountain into a 6/1. You then copy that Mountain with Kiki-Jiki's ability. Is the token a 6/1 creature with haste? No.*

*"The token is a copy of Mountain, with haste. It is a land and can be tapped for mana, but it is not a creature and cannot attack. 'Copy effects' copy cards as they are printed. Things like +1/+1 counters, type-changing effects (like the Genju), or temporary effects (like Jump) are not copied. So if you target a Mountain with Kiki-Jiki, regardless of what cool modifications you have made to that Mountain, you will get a token copy of a boring old Mountain, and you'll still have to sacrifice it at the end of the turn."*



Looks like most of you are pretty rules-savvy. For those of you that still don't get it, check out section 503 in the **Magic** Comprehensive Rules, specifically Rule 503.2. If you still don't get it, time to write to Carter.

## February 11

<b>Do you like the new Invitational voting process better or worse than the old way?</b>		
Don't care	3155	57.1%
Better	1787	32.3%
Worse	585	10.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5527</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This was obviously not a hot-button issue. The number of votes is really low compared to the other polls I've run—in fact, it may be safe to say that the number of "Don't care" votes is really in the 13,000 range as opposed to 3,000, it's just that 10,000 of you didn't care enough to vote at all.

I may be remembering things incorrectly, but wasn't high-level organized play a bigger deal to the casual **Magic** player several years ago? Was it because of stuff like *The Duelist* and *The Sideboard* magazines giving people easier access to that kind of information? Or did people not *ever* really care? Food for thought on the boards, my email, etc.



Magic Invitational Champion

Anyway, I'd vote for better. I like that good results alone aren't enough to get you invited—your best chance is to do something that imbeds yourself in the consciousness of your peers and fans. This invitational was certainly entertaining, especially since our pick won.

## February 18

How did this article make you feel?		
Cautiously optimistic.	4159	40.2%
I'm smiling!	3271	31.6%
Wary and/or confused.	1206	11.6%
Angry!	931	9.0%
Somewhat annoyed.	785	7.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10352</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

"This article" refers to the one in which I hinted that there would be some sort overhaul to the Standard banned list. This was right about the time that Ravager Affinity was at its obnoxious worst, and it was good to see that over 70% of my readers were at least somewhat happy with the potential for change. We were pretty worried that the bans—and the idea of a premature "leaked" announcement—might not go over well.

Me? I was smiling.

One thing that the announcement did that was negative was rattle the secondary market. We heard from several dealers that the market on Standard cards "froze" for a few weeks as players waited around to see what the format looked like. We had anticipated such an occurrence, but felt we had to move forward anyway, as faith in the format was dwindling quickly. I hope all affected have recovered by this point.

## February 25

How hard to pronounce do you consider card names in the Kamigawa block?		
Not difficult to pronounce	6517	63.6%
Somewhat difficult to pronounce	2987	29.2%
Very difficult to pronounce	739	7.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10243</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Maybe this wasn't exactly the right question to ask. I guess what I was after was something along the lines of "How much are the names in the block a barrier to understanding and enjoying the cards?"

Most of you marked that you could pronounce them, but as the block has come to a conclusion, one of the recurring anecdotal complaints we've been hearing about it is the card names (not the only complaint, mind you—most blocks have several characteristics that some group of players doesn't like—but it is the complaint most relevant here). The names are a little strange—maybe too much so. It was an experiment we had to try, however, and everything we learned from it will be put to good use in the future.

## March 4

Which cycle of dragons is the coolest?		
<i>Kamigawa</i> (ex: Yosei, Kokusho)	4016	41.4%
<i>Invasion</i> (ex: Rith, Dromar)	3572	36.8%
<i>Legends</i> (ex: Nicol Bolas, Palladia-Mors)	1570	16.2%
<i>Mirage</i> (ex: Mist Dragon, Catacomb Dragon)	541	5.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9699</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This particular poll was to settle an argument. At least one other member of R&D was arguing with me that the old *Legends* Elder Dragons (the ones reprinted in *Chronicles*) were considered cooler by players than the *Invasion* ones. My point was that a large percentage of current players cut their teeth during *Invasion*, and therefore would have great memories of Rith and the gang but no real experience with Nicol Bolas and his pals. And even if they did, can an 8-mana Dragon with an upkeep cost be cooler than the very playable 6-mana ones from *Invasion*?



The secondary market prices are close—one site has Rith for \$6.00 and *Chronicles* Nicol Bolas for \$5.00—so we decided to put it to a vote. We tossed in the other two cycles just to mix it up a bit.

*Invasion* beat *Legends*, no surprise to me (I'd vote *Invasion* myself). The good news here was how well the *Kamigawa* Dragons did in comparison. Granted, new and shiny should always fare better than old and busted in polls, but we were glad to see that our new cycle could hang with some of the most popular cycles of all time.

## March 11

### What is your opinion on the legalization of *Portal* and *Starter* in Vintage and Legacy?

Good move.	7084	50.6%
Don't care.	5342	38.1%
Don't like it.	1586	11.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14012</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The jury is still out on this decision, but I still think it is a good one. What good are **Magic** cards that can't be played in any format?

One big downside to this decision was that Imperial Seal's secondary market value went through the roof into the multiple hundreds of dollars range overnight. As one dealer at Pro Tour—Atlanta put it, "It is now a piece of Power." I only hope now that the card is as good as advertised!

We're still mulling around the possibility of banning/restricting another card or two from these sets as part of the fall announcement. Stay tuned.



## March 25

### What color do you foresee as the most powerful in post-Affinity Standard?

Green	2861	26.9%
Black	2780	26.1%

Red	2122	19.9%
Blue	1893	17.8%
White	994	9.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10650</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

We now know what the answers were. Green is in the right place, as it has proven to be the best color by a mile, even without needing to flex its muscles by blowing up tons and tons of artifacts.

Why black came in second here I don't know—I believe it actually turned out to be dead last heading into the release of *Saviors*. Perhaps the allure of Cranial Extraction and Kokusho, the Evening Star had visions of Swamps dancing in players' heads.

Red is the real #2 color, with blue coming in third and white in fourth. Hopefully the printing of *Saviors* as well as a few late metagame shifts (black Rats deck, anyone?) will shake the order up in time for US Regionals (which is, by the way, the weekend of my birthday—June 25).

## April 1

Have you ever drafted one-on-one?		
No	4567	62.3%
Yes	2762	37.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7329</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This was just a “let's see how people play” kind of question, and some of my coworkers were stunned at how many of you actually *had* one-on-one drafted. I guess we were thinking something along the lines of 10%... but again, the total result number is a little low for this one, so I guess 38% isn't really accurate either.

I've done a couple more Winston drafts here at the office lately, beating the tar out of Paul Sottosanti, and losing an agonizingly slow match to Brian Schneider. Fun format!

## April 8

The next large expansion was codenamed “Control.” Do you think there will be control cards in it?		
Yes	5853	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5853</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Almost 6,000 of you clicked that button. Good job.

How do you like them apples?		
Mace Windu	1971	24.1%
Grilled	1681	20.6%
Arcbound Ravager	1011	12.4%
Land destruction	697	8.5%
Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar	675	8.3%
A-J suited	527	6.5%
Sliced	417	5.1%
Baked	335	4.1%
Yes	325	4.0%
I don't like apples	305	3.7%
No	223	2.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8167</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Mace Windu by a hair over Grilled. Not what I would have expected. (My vote? Baked.) The one interesting tidbit that came from this poll is that Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar is slightly less popular than land destruction. Poor guy.

## April 15

How many original "dual lands" (Tundra, Taiga, etc.) do you own?		
0	6147	56.7%
1-4	1652	15.2%
5-12	1081	10.0%
21-40	663	6.1%
13-20	543	5.0%
80+	407	3.8%
41-80	342	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10835</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This question was part of our ongoing research on how much high-level support we can give the Legacy format. Those of you that scour the gamer websites may have seen that there is a Legacy event listed in the GenCon schedule—we'll be announcing the details of that later on here on the site.

Even though the results of this dual land poll don't look particularly promising, we have more planned for the format as well. I actually think there are some decent decks out there with no (or very few) dual lands, so hopefully the barrier to entry isn't *too* ridiculous. All will be made clear shortly enough!

My answer would be "41-80." I started playing during Revised and put together playsets of all ten, and then inherited several more as my college roommates quit playing (what was wrong with them?) and gave me their collections. Last man standing wins, I suppose.

## April 22

### Which of the following deck types do you least like playing against?

Counterspells	4886	33.6%
Land Destruction	4021	27.6%
Fast Combo	2679	18.4%
None of the above	1073	7.4%
Weenies	967	6.6%
Discard	923	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14549</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Counterspells are still the "bane of fun" it appears, followed closely by LD.

While I respect these opinions (and am inclined to agree with them), don't think we're not going to make good cards for these strategies just because people don't necessarily like playing against them. In fact, one of the top three decks in Standard right now has a large land destruction element, and one of the other top decks is jammed full of counterspells. Both mechanics fill roles in the game, roles we will continue to support.

It seems that discard is no longer the fearsome force it once was. Maybe we should look into reinvigorating that strategy a little in the future...



## April 29

<b>Which of these Organized Play programs do you attend at least once per month?</b>		
Neither	4393	51.8%
Friday Night <b>Magic</b> only	3236	38.2%
Both Arena and Friday Night <b>Magic</b>	583	6.9%
Arena only	262	3.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8474</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Wow, I didn't expect Arena to be such a dog here!

Out OP department actually keeps very good numbers on the attendance of all our programs. This question was merely to see how well my audience compared to the whole of all players. (Don't worry, you're quite normal.)

I played tons of Arena leagues back in the day, racking up quite a collection of oversized cards. I only went to Friday Night **Magic** once, where I won a very exciting foil Mind Warp. ./

## May 6

<b>How many different Magic-related websites do you read regularly?</b>		
2-4	4428	53.2%
Just this one.	3371	40.5%
5-8	359	4.3%
9+	104	1.2%
None.	65	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8327</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

To the 3,371 of you that voted for "Just this one," your loyalty shall be rewarded! Look for your gold brick in the mail any day now.

There are a lot of good sites out there—personally I'm in the "5-8" camp. Most of you know which are the good ones, so I won't play favorites. I would like to point out a couple little-known gems, however. UGMadness and Manascrewed are indy webcomics about **Magic**. The humor is sometimes a little risqué, and they both take their fair share of shots at R&D and Wizards in general, but I enjoy them. Check them out at your own risk.

## May 13

<b>Have you ever played in a Pro Tour Qualifier?</b>		
Never.	7063	68.4%
Yes, occasionally.	1181	11.4%
Yes, once.	1105	10.7%
Yes, regularly.	970	9.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10319</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Another result that both surprises and saddens me! I can understand going once and deciding it's not your cup of tea, but for two-thirds of you to have never ever given PTQs a try... wow!

Even if you have no desire to ever play on the Pro Tour, PTQs are a great way to get the competitive juices flowing, or at least get out of the house and meet more local players. Prize support is decent at them, and there are almost always side events going on later in the day. Please check the schedule for the upcoming round of PTQs (which will be played using *Kamigawa* Block Constructed) and try out the one nearest you!

## May 20

**What is the most money you've ever spent on a single Magic card (in US dollars)?**

\$5.01-\$10.00	3884	18.3%
\$10.01-\$15.00	3223	15.2%
\$15.01-\$20.00	2906	13.7%
\$20.01-\$30.00	2412	11.3%
\$2.01-\$5.00	2109	9.9%
I've never purchased a single card.	1359	6.4%
\$30.01-\$50.00	1181	5.6%
\$50.01-\$100.00	911	4.3%
\$200.01-\$500.00	692	3.3%
\$100.01-\$200.00	673	3.2%
\$1.00-\$2.00	580	2.7%
>\$1,000.00	535	2.5%
<\$1.00	454	2.1%
\$500.01-\$1,000.00	339	1.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>21258</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

First off... holy smokes does our traffic go up during preview weeks.

The results of this poll form a pretty predictable curve with the peak at about \$10—the amount most players consider reasonable for a top-end single. The number that leaps out at me is the 500+ of you that have dropped a G on one card. I hope that card was Black Lotus every time.

My personal high was \$90 for an Unlimited Ancestral Recall, a card I will unfortunately be discussing again when we get to the “stolen cards” poll.

**May 27****Now that you've had several months to play with the “new Legend rule,” how do you like it?**

Better than the old one.	11814	77.0%
The same/no opinion.	2217	14.5%
Worse than the old one.	1309	8.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15340</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

This result is encouraging, especially when you consider how up in arms people get whenever we tinker with game rules. If less than 10% of you don't like it and it solves all the problems Legendary creatures used to have, it worked like a charm.

I remember being at Pro Tour – Venice when Rosewater and Buehler told me of the idea (from the mind of player Zvi Mowshowitz) to change the Legend Rule in this way, and I instantly loved it. I shopped it around to a couple players—I recall Pat Sullivan liking it, and Billy Jensen hating it—but I'm glad we moved forward with it. It really has helped game play in the *Kamigawa* environment.

**June 3****Which of the *Kamigawa* block prerelease tournaments did you attend?**

None	5517	39.9%
All three	3148	22.7%
<i>Saviors</i> only	1225	8.8%
<i>Champions</i> only	1003	7.2%
<i>Champions</i> and <i>Betrayers</i>	932	6.7%

<i>Betrayers and Saviors</i>	786	5.7%
<i>Champions and Saviors</i>	704	5.1%
<i>Betrayers only</i>	528	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13843</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

I was hoping to find a pattern here, but one doesn't jump out at me. The bad blizzard earlier in the year put a dent in the *Betrayers* attendance, but other than that it's hard to deduce anything useful from this.

Of course, there were over 5500 of you that didn't go to any of them! Come on, they're fun! Meet new people, play with new cards, what's not to love? Stay tuned to this site for information on *Ninth Edition* release events as well as prereleases for *Ravnica: City of Guilds*.

## June 10

Have you ever had cards stolen?		
Yes	5615	61.5%
No	3510	38.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9125</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

I figured as much. People steal cards, the jerks. No denying it. I'm just sorry it has happened to so many of you.

At a store tournament several years ago, I had a plastic box stolen right out of my backpack. In that box was a Vintage control deck and an Extended "Fruity Pebbles" deck, and this was back when dual lands were legal in Extended. I lost a lot of those things that day, along with a couple Mana Drains, a Black Lotus, three Moxes, a Library of Alexandria, and the Power Blue. That basically marked the end of my very short Vintage career—in fact, the only card I've bothered to replace of those was the Ancestral, which I used in my 5-Color decks.

I was nailed by another thief at Worlds 2001 where my Extended Secret Force deck was taken. Goodbye Verdant Forces, Masticores, and Gaea's Cradles. I still don't have any Masticores left, and I love that guy. I hope whoever has them is enjoying them. No, really.

Anyway, guard your belongings. **Magic** is less fun with no deck.

## This Week's Poll:

**How do you feel about the number of new cards released each year?**

We release too few new cards per year.

We release about the right number of new cards per year.

We release too many new cards per year.

We release WAY too many new cards per year.

I promise to go over the results at the end of each article, just like I used to. Have a good week.

