Welcome to MekoramaForum

An introduction to the fan-based online forum, mekoramaforum.com,
dedicated to the game Mekorama, developed by Martin Magni.

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DOCUMENT OBJECTIVES

This document you are reading now, "**Welcome to MekoramaForum**", serves as an introduction to the biggest and most organized forum for the game Mekorama: www.mekoramaforum.com. The document will answer some common questions, link to additional information, and define some key terminology and principles that have been in common use to communicate well in the forum.

Another document that has been written is a quick guide to the Mekorama game: "**Introduction to Mekorama**." It covers some terminology and game mechanics that are frequently encountered that can help in conversations as well. The next step would be to design and upload your own levels. There are some design suggestions below in *Level Design Best Practices*, and when you're ready, there is a handy guide on "**How to Share a Mekorama Level**." All these documents can be found in this linked forum thread.

Some members have been around since the launch of Mekorama (in late May 2016), and with the addition of over a thousand newcomers, have been building on a huge collective knowledge. This includes ways to design levels beyond the mechanics found in the original 50 levels. Of course these are still a moving target, but the latest collection of advanced topics can be found in the "**Advanced Level Design**" document.

FORUM RULES / BEST PRACTICES

Family Friendly: The members and visitors of the MekoramaForum are of all ages. The forum is thus being kept as a friendly environment for all. Please help us in keeping it that way. Of note, there are also some designers that have created levels for kids and kids that have created levels for adults (see the *FAQ* section for more).

Rating: Besides "like"-ing a card and commenting, leaving a rating is one of the best ways to encourage designers and tell others whether they should also give the level a go. It is asked, however, that ratings be posted by those who fully understand all the parts of the level. The only way to control for that is to ask that you **only leave a rating if you yourself have completed the level**. Factors to consider in ratings include its gameplay, artisticness, efficient use of blocks, repeatability, theme or story, etc., but most of all, its fun factor. Be aware that once submitted, a rating cannot be deleted, it can only be updated (see *Known Issues*).

Flooding: Please do not post more than one level a day to the level section of the forum. Posting many levels at once crowds out the levels of other authors, so they are not easily seen. That's not fair to other authors. And posting your levels gradually over several days makes it more likely that your levels will be played and rated. Any feedback on your levels can also be better incorporated into future uploads this way.

Checkmarks: Please only post levels that can be completed. By this we mean a level where a win block can be triggered and thus be able to receive a checkmark. The Levels section should contain only final versions of playable levels. You do not need to upload a screenshot proving that your level was completed. In fact, some would argue that simply uploading an image of the card using the in-app share button results in a more attractive upload. We'll trust you to upload only levels that can indeed be completed.

Uploads - do NOT edit cards: Please do not upload edited cards. Editing can distort the QR code and could lead to difficulties in scanning it. Only upload using the share button on the level card or by uploading original screenshots. If uploading a screenshot, it should include the checkmark, be in portrait mode, and be saved in PNG format. If you're experiencing issues with the QR code, see the *FAQ* section for help on what to do.

Levels for show: If you have a level that you want to share simply for demonstration purposes, which is not a polished and play-worthy level, please do not post it to the Levels section. Instead, post it to one of the other appropriate subforums/threads as an image along with a description of what you would like others to understand and hopefully discuss. For example, if you want to share a level that demonstrates a bug or some other concept or effect, please upload it as a card image into a thread in the [Bugs and Feature Request](#) subforum. **The [Levels](#) section of the website is reserved for full fledged game levels.**

Version control: If you want to release a newer version of your level, you'll need to upload your updated version as a new level (You cannot edit/change out the card you already uploaded on the site). It's prefered that you add a version number after the name of your updated level on the level page. Also, please remember to clean up after yourself by deleting duplicates to keep the website tidy. (You can read about more options in the *FAQ* section.)

Terminology: Over time, it is hoped that all forum users use a common set of terminology when talking about blocks, bugs, exploits, theories, etc. Please consult the other documents for some recommended terminology. For a start, it would help to read the **Introduction to Mekorama** document for a list of the block types and their official names. Additional initial terminology can be found later in this document under the section *Key Terminology*.

Using spoilers: Using a spoiler block in comments to a level or a thread is a great way to hide any information that may spoil the enjoyment of solving a level. Usually this includes any hints, solutions, or concepts that would make the level easier to solve. Another great use of the spoiler block is to shrink the size of images shared. By placing the link inside a spoiler, the image will appear in the thread only when the spoiler block is clicked to open. For help on how to insert spoilers, see the *Rich Text Editor* section, or this [thread](#). **Usage of spoilers is highly encouraged.**

Avatar: members are also encouraged to personalize their profile avatar, which by default is a neutral gray icon representing their gender. Since members are unique and special, they deserve a more attractive way to appear on the forum. It also makes the place more welcoming and friendly to others.

LEVEL DESIGN BEST PRACTICES

Labelling: Probably the most important thing you can do when creating a level is to identify it. By default, each new level is labelled with "New Level" and "by Unknown Author." Obviously a card labelled as such beyond your device can be quite problematic for others. To edit the two fields, simply tap on each of them while viewing the card in the Make Levels section (page 3 in the app). This will allow the cards to be identified uniquely, discussed, shared, and perhaps even featured.

Reliability: The vast majority of players prefer levels with stable, repeatable gameplay. Stable means that there are not too many objects competing with each other leading to unpredictable behaviours or even game crashes. Repeatable gameplay is such that taking certain actions consistently results in the same effects. Experimentation with different block combinations is encouraged so long as thorough testing is also performed. The physics engine can be quirky and lead to novel mechanisms, but in the spirit of the game, final results worthy of publishing should be smooth and polished. Before then, the best place to publish draft ideas is in the [Level Creation Help](#) subform where you can request some initial feedback.

Falling off: If a level is designed where it's possible for B to be bumped off the gamespace, it is generally appreciated if the design also includes a way for B to be brought back onto the gamespace so that the level can be continued or at least restarted without having to manually restart the level. Sometimes, all that is required is the addition of a set of stairs back onto the platform. This little touch may go a long way towards the enjoyability of a level.

Puzzle factor: There are many different Mekorama game types/genres, but the predominant ones are puzzles. A puzzle level is where there is only one solution and the objective is to figure out that one solution. If designing such a game, it is strongly advised that thorough testing is completed to ensure that there are no possible shortcuts or alternative ways to complete the level. The enjoyment is in the challenge and fulfillment of discovering the sole solution.

Theme: Whether designing a puzzle level or one of a different genre, it is still highly recommended that a consistent theme be used throughout the level. You can still mix and match genres, but there should be some underlying theme to connect all the parts. You can do this using a story for B to follow - sort of like an adventure - or using some art to set a scene that has different parts. The point of all this is so that players can understand what the level is about and thus gain enjoyment from it. Keeping it simple also makes it easier to be pleasing to the eye. And having a unified theme can allow even very large levels to have artistic merit.

KEY TERMINOLOGY

Common Terms

App: the software application as found on the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.
Game: the installed Mekorama app.
Level: a level is a game instance. Some may call it a map or stage.
Card: a visual representation of a level in the installed app, on the forum, and elsewhere.
Gamespace: the core playing area within a level - usually contained to within the furthest corners of blocks laid out. In other words, the white space beyond these corners is usually considered outside of the gamespace.
Draggable: a term used to describe any set of blocks that can be dragged. Sometimes it is used to describe the single block that is brown in colour with a circle imprinted at the centre of each of its sides - as this is **what that block is called in the level editor**. In fact, any set of draggable blocks must have at least one "draggable" block in its set by which to drag it by. If you want to differentiate between a draggable block and a draggable set, then you can use those terms. What is important to differentiate is whether you are talking about a regular draggable that is restricted in its movement (e.g. attached to a slider or motor) or a free-draggable that can cause problems.
Free-draggable: a single draggable block or a set of blocks connected to a draggable block that is not attached to any motor or slider, thus allowing it to be moved freely about, including being pushed by a standard draggable, another free-draggable, a ball in motion, gravity, or B bot. Due to the unpredictable nature and difficult alignment of these types of movable objects, they are generally frowned upon.
Movable: a generic term used to denote anything movable such as draggables, free-draggables, or budgeables (see Advance Level Design document). It is preferred to use one of the more specific terms for clarity.

Game Objects

The Mekorama game consists of block-constructed worlds. There are 21 different possible blocks (in the official version 1.1 of the game). Their official names and descriptions are listed in the **Introduction to Mekorama** guide (along with how they could be used).

Just as a note, it would be worthy to repeat the fact that there are two main colours for many of the blocks. These are grey for "**stone**" objects and brown (or perhaps brass) for "**metal**" objects. Stone-coloured objects include: **stone**, **stair**, **stone pillar**, and **wedge**. Metal-coloured objects include: **metal**, **metal pillar**, **metal half pillar**, **draggable**, **slider**, **rail**, **motor**, **ball**, and **win**. Other blocks are **zapper**, **grass**, **brick**, and **fence**. Finally there are the **bot** body and **eye** objects and **water** colouring.

Forum Terms

Alert: alerts are system notices to events such as when someone "likes" your message. There are many events that you can receive alerts for and they can be managed on your profile's Alert Preferences page. Alerts are briefly displayed as a pop-up window in the bottom left of your screen while viewing the website. There is also a location marker icon at the right end of the top menu that will display a number in red when you have unseen alerts. Clicking on the icon once will list recent alerts in a menu window. Clicking the icon twice will take you to Your Alerts page, which will list all alerts from the past five or so days.

Notification: notifications are notices of events sent to you via email. These can be managed in your profile's Preferences page.

Forum: the Mekorama website has three main forums: "Welcome," "Mekorama," and "Off Topic."

Subforum: each Mekorama forum has several subforums such as "Introductions," "Level Help," and "The Lounge."

Thread: within each subforum, members can create discussions around a topic that can then optionally be replied to. The initial message and all replies are collectively called a thread.

Message: a message is a post in the forums.

Conversation: a conversation is the term used for a private/direct message from one member to one or more other members. There is a system imposed limit of a total of six members per conversation (but moderators/administrators can invite more than six).

Comment: a comment is a post made on a level.

Levels: the Levels section of the Mekorama website is where all playable levels should be posted to. Only members can see and use the "Add Level" button, but anyone (including visitors) can view these levels (as long as they have not been marked "private"). The Levels section can be reached by either the top menu button labelled "Levels," or from the Home/Forums page using the "New Levels" link (above the latest uploaded media) or the "User Levels" link (listed in the "Mekorama" forum).

Gameplay Terms

Red herring / False trail: something included in a level by a designer that may look like it may be pertinent to solving the level, but in fact is not. Some may use the poor translation term "detour." Textbook definition: "A clue or information that is or is intended to be misleading, that diverts attention from a question."

Feature: some intentional behaviour(or that has been adopted as intentional);

Bug: some unintentional behaviour;

Exploit: taking advantage of a bug;

Trick: the performance of an exploit;

Glitch: some unstable/random unintentional behaviour (similar to a bug, but not a reliable one).

RICH TEXT EDITOR / BBCODE

There are several places on the website that you can communicate with others using Bulletin Board Code (BBCode) - a form of markup code / rich text. It is available to use in "**messages**" on forum "**threads**," "**messages**" on private/direct "**conversations,**" and "**comments**" on levels. Unfortunately, it is not available when "**posting"** on profiles or commenting on these profile posts.

BBCode is great for formatting and adding things like smilies, spoilers, and images. In order to make this code easier to use, the platform includes a rich text editor that automates much of the code.

The rich text editor is turned on by default, and you can find the setting in your "Browsing Preferences" page. You can also switch between the two entry modes by clicking on "Use Rich Text Editor" below the entry box or clicking on the "Use BB Code Editor" icon, which is the rightmost icon in the rich text editor menu.

Here are some examples of using the editor:

Posting a picture - use the image icon: In a level comment, your only option is to link to a web addressable picture. In other words, you have to use a third-party supplier like having an account at imgur.com. To upload a picture then, first click on the image icon ( ), then specify the **full** Internet address of the picture in the pop-up window.
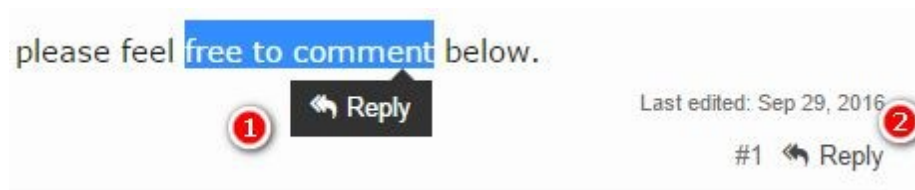
Posting a picture / file in a forum message: In forum messages you can also (alternatively and simply) upload an image/file using the turquoise "Upload a File" button (near the bottom-right of the entry box).

Adding a spoiler - use the '+' symbol: To add a spoiler, simply click on the '+' symbol in the rich text editor menu and chose "Spoiler" from the pull-down menu. This will pop up a dialog box asking for the title of the spoiler (which is optional) followed by adding the BBCode to the cursor location. If you highlight some text first, that text will be placed between the bracketed code. If you didn't, you can enter the text you want to hide between the start and end code. The BBCode, if you want to write it out directly, is `[SPOILER="Title"][/SPOILER]`where "="Title"" is optional and "Title" is any title you choose. Note that spoilers can also be nested.

Quoting others - using the Quote feature: Using the reply feature in level comments simply starts a new comment with a username tag of the author that is being replied to. Unlike in messages, where the reply also quotes the author's text, in level comments one would have to do this manually. Thus to do so, simply click on the '+' symbol in the rich text menu and choose "Quote." This will pop in the following BB code at your cursor location: [QUOTE][/QUOTE]. Then go back and select and copy and paste the text you want between the start and end quote code. When you submit your comment, the quote will be displayed in italics on a gray background.

Quoting others - using message "Reply": This, unfortunately, only works in forum (and private conversation) messages. If you want to quote a part of someone's earlier "message" then first highlight the text by selecting it. A pop-up will appear that reads "Reply" (see (1) in the attached screenshot). Clicking this will automatically insert the needed BBCode with the quoted text at your cursor location. If you want to quote the entire text of someone's message, then you can simply click on the "Reply" at the bottom right of that person's message (see (2)). Both of these methods can be repeated more than once in a message. Here is an example with the respective BBCode below the screenshot:


```
[QUOTE="nGord, post: 1629, member: 988"]free to comment[/QUOTE]
```

Tagging (mentioning) other users: Using the @ feature before a member's username can be a way to alert them to your messages. When using the @ feature, an autocompletion algorithm is used to help you find the appropriate username. Using tags is not only useful in notifying those users, but for highlighting their name for credit or attention to specific text. Note that in level comments, the tagging works to highlight a username, but it does not alert that user (see *Known Issues*).

An interesting bit is that when tagging someone, the system inserts BBCode like [USER=882]meko[USER]in for the tagged name. The number represents the order of registration to the website. This number can be found by going to a member's profile and looking at the profile page URL. It can also be viewed after the fact if you go back and edit the message/post after submitting it.

Embedding links: Of course, if you want to leave a link to another web page in a message/comment, then you can just paste its URL in your text - but this could clutter things. There is an easy way to hide the URL within a word or phrase. Simply select the word(s) first and then click on the "Link" button (🔗) in the rich text edit menu. This will pop up a window asking for the URL you want to include, paste it here and then click on "Insert." If you have highlighted some text first, it will turn that text turquoise and embed the link with it. Otherwise the whole link will be pasted at the cursor location.

FORUM NOTES

Software Behind the Forum

The software that @NeoCHI chose to host this wonderful community is the XenForo platform. We are currently using version 1.5.10 with at least one known plug-in: the XenForo Media Gallery. There are certain settings that are configured for this forum, but for the most part it functions in default modes.

Usernames and Accounts

Usernames and accounts can only be changed/deleted with full-administrator privileges, i.e. by @NeoCHI. There is more discussion on this topic here.

Known Issues

When first launched, this forum was using version 1.5.4 of XenForo that had an issue such as not being able to tag members while using Chrome on Android. Although that has been fixed with the latest update, there may be new issues. A thread has been started to track and discuss these here.

One set of issues that have persisted, however, are those around the XenForo Media Gallery plug-in, i.e. the level pages and levels listings. For example, we know that if you edit the comment that is associated with a rating on a level, the rating seems to disappear while in fact it's just a browser display issue that can be fixed with a simple page refresh. Some issues are perhaps intentional like for example the inability to delete a rating - only updates to the ratings are possible. While other behaviours are not as logical such as the alerts for new comments that don't take you always to the new comment. The biggest complaint seems to be not receiving alerts for @ mentions in level comments. All the investigation and discussion into these behaviours is being tracked in this thread here.

Limits

The forum software allows for some limit setting. At the moment, the following are some limits:

5 - the number of people that a non-staff member can invite to a direct/private conversation.
140 - character limit in a profile post. There is a counter below the text entry box.
420 - character limit in a profile post reply.
300 - character limit in a level description.
10,000 - character limit in a thread message.
50MB - the upload/storage limit per user account.

Smilies

http://mekoramaforum.com/help/smilies

Trophies

http://mekoramaforum.com/help/trophies

User Title Ladder

"The user title ladder is related to the number of trophy points accumulated; the more points which are earned, the higher up the ladder they move, gaining the relevant user title as each threshold is passed. If a custom user title is in effect, then it overrides the trophy user title ladder." [Quote from XenForo Manual here]

- New Member - Less than 5 trophy points.
- Member - 5+ trophy points.
- Active Member - 20+ trophy points.
- Well-Known Member - 48+ trophy points.
- Sectional Moderator - Decided and appointed by the site owner: @NeoCHI
- Moderator - Decided and appointed by the site owner: @NeoCHI
- Administrator - Decided and appointed by the site owner: @NeoCHI

Note that @NeoCHI has for the most part allowed us to moderate ourselves.

FORUM FAQ

Q. How do I create a level?
A. The short answer is to turn to page three in the game and experiment from there. Some best practices are discussed above in the *Level Design Best Practices* section. And for more advanced features, you can find answers and/or ask questions on the Level Creation Help subforum.

Q. The QR code is not scannable; what can I do?
A. Assuming you're familiar with the options presented at the Mekorama FAQ and not achieving success, you can leave a comment on the level page below the card asking for help. If you are a level designer and you receive such a request, or if you have found that you are not able to scan your own level card, then there are a few options. The likely culprit is that the QR code is part of a screenshot with poor resolution, so best to go with the suggested route of exporting the card from the level editor and uploading it. Hopefully, no one tries to edit the card, as this could result in a distorted QR code (see the Rules section for more). The quickest solution would be to post just a closeup of the QR code as a

comment below the level. Alternatively, you can read this thread for a more involved solution.

Q. How do I get more levels?
A. Flip to page 2 of the Mekorama app and there you'll find two options. Click the camera button to capture the QR code while it's displayed on another device by taking a picture of it, or simply click the image button below it and scan the QR code from your device gallery (you'll need to download/screenshot the QR code first, though). There are plenty of levels in the Levels section of the forum and scattered elsewhere on the web.

Q. How do I find "good" levels?
A. Well that's a pretty subjective question. Over time you'll find patterns in submissions from some designers. Of course you can try to sort the uploaded levels by one or more of the ways that the site allows you to. There are also some threads in the General subforum that discuss other level statistics and members' preferences. Maybe you have a new idea on how to sort and/or percolate the styles, difficulty grades, and fun factors to the top. Please let us know! We're also working on another document that may help - stay tuned!

Q. Are there any levels that could help me/my child learn the game more easily?
A. Yes! Here are 60+ levels of simplistic play easy enough for children and elegant enough to be appreciated for their instructional value by adults (thanks to @S. Nagy). For really young kids, @Chuckthulhu added some single-tap adventures for B here.

Q. I'm having trouble with some of these new levels, are there any tutorials?
A. But of course! Our member @Trids has started a thread here and it points to his tutorial album here. There are many other tutorials and resources throughout the site.

Q. Is there a way to freely change view orientation in a level?
A. Yes! On page 5 of the Mekorama app there is a menu item entitled "Free Camera," which you can toggle to "on" using the button. This can come in very handy or often even imperative to solving levels beyond the original 50.

Q. Is there a way to make my uploaded levels to the forum private?
A. Yes. When creating a new album, simply change the setting "People Who May… / View levels in album" to a setting that suits you better. If you want to change an existing album, just go to your album page, then click the box in the corner and change the privacy of the album. Note that you will still be able to see your private level in the display of all levels (general levels list), but only you and those who have permission will be able to see it there.

Q. Is there a way to share levels that can then be edited?
A. No, unfortunately not. Yes, It would be useful to make backups of levels that you're in the process of designing or want to make new versions from, but allowing this in the level editor would also allow editing of other people's levels perhaps without their permission. Thus, this feature is not available. It has been suggested, though, that more features and abilities be made available to designers within the level editor (MAKE LEVEL app page).

Q. I've found that my uploaded level has some problems; is there a way to replace it?
A. Unfortunately, no. Due to the website design, any uploaded media is tied to many other fields in the database including level comments and ratings. It would be unfair to change the media (card) after this fact. You essentially have three options:
1. If there are not too many comments/ratings on the problematic level, the best option is to simply delete it and upload a new version;
2. The easiest solution, particularly if the level in question is not actually problematic - and you just want to show an alternate version - is to simply post the alternate version as an image in a comment (and consider doing so in a spoiler so that it doesn't crowd out the other comments);
3. Lastly, if you want to preserve the feedback on the first level (and thus not want to delete it) and you have a newer version that should stand on it's own (and receive its own ratings, etc.), then simply post a subsequent version of the card, identify it as a subsequent version in both the **card title** and the **level page title**, and make a comment either in the new level page description, in the new level comments, or in the new level caption section referencing back to the original.

Q. I lost my device / I accidently deleted a level - is there a way to recover anything?
A. Unfortunately no, there is no backup feature or cloud syncing availability. Regrettably everything will be gone including checkmarks earned for completing levels. You will note that a checkmark does not get stored with a card's QR code. It resides only with the device on which the level was completed. If that card is deleted, so is the checkmark associated with it.

Q. Is there a way to create levels outside of the app?
A. The app was only coded for iOS and Android, so, no, at this time there is not. The only options are to use a tablet with a larger display or use an emulator like BlueStacks in which to run the app on a desktop computer.

Q. Is there a way to reach the game creator, Martin Magni?
A. Although Martin does have a profile on the forum and several levels submitted as well, he rarely has time to frequent the site or to respond to fans there. The best way to contact him is through Twitter. The official website for the game is www.mekorama.com and he has an FAQ of his own here.

Q. When will the next update come?
A. Martin is keeping all details about updates secret, so we don't know. There is, however, a subforum called Bugs and Feature requests where ideas and requests for improvements can be noted and discussed. Hopefully Martin will be able to hear all of our suggestions.