Notes for crossword editors on [Webapp1](#)

1. This is just a fun web application I developed for my own amusement really, not a serious competitor for the likes of http://www.crossword-compiler.com/ .

2. First try out my web crosswords page as a non-member, anyone can try the crosswords without logging in.

3. If you want to try adding a crossword of your own I can easily add you as a crossword editor who can log in – then you can develop your own crossword on-line. It won't become visible to anyone but you until you mark it as *published* – see below.

4. When you log in the Crossword List changes, from one showing ALL the *published* crosswords to one showing only crosswords *owned* by you, *published* AND *unpublished*. Also, extra buttons appear – to EDIT each listed crossword, or to ADD a new one.

Illustration 1: Crossword List for all-comers, not logged in

Illustration 2: Crossword List for logged in crossword editor, with edit and add buttons

In Illustration 2 a third crossword has appeared because as yet it is still work in progress and has not yet been marked as *published*. The previous two only appear in Illustration 2 as well

because I *own* all three. A new crossword editor would see no crosswords listed after logging in, only an *add* button – to get going. Be aware that the user name of the crossword editor, *John* in my case, is not the same as the *author* name of the crossword, *Algie* in these cases. The *author*, and *title* of each crossword is entirely the choice of the editor who created, and *owns* the crossword – they may be changed by the owner at any time during editing.

5. Before adding your first crossword you should browse the available diagrams shown in the Diagram List.

There are currently 47 diagrams and each may be inspected by clicking the *Select* button:

If you have a particular crossword in mind then you should be able to choose a diagram with an appropriate distribution of word lengths. At present I only do 15 x 15 grids, I'm conventional that way.

Now you're ready to add your first crossword.

6. Click on the *add* button to get:

Insert details of new Crossword

gridID	1
title	
author	
standfirst	
width	15
height	15
Save	Cancel

Then fill in the fields, beginning with the *gridID* of your chosen diagram. Insert the *title* and *author* name of your choice, and standfirst text in the *standfirst* field, if required. *width* and *height* are read-only just now, one day they might do something.

Then click *Save* and your crossword will be created. The web app inserts it into its database and creates placeholder clues that you will complete. Finally it creates the first PDF file. PDF versions of the crossword are important because many people prefer to download it and print a hard copy for completion with a pencil, rather than tackling it interactively, on-line. But the PDF creation process is quite complex for the webapp so you may have to wait 10 seconds after clicking *Save*.

Return to the Crossword List and click *Edit*, you should see something like this:

Change details of Crossword and SAVE THEM

ID	73
gridID	1
title	New crossword via Webapp1
author	Algie
standfirst	a simple cryptic crossword - try it on-line, or print the PDF
published	☐
width	15
height	15
Save Clues	Cancel Delete

This is where you change the *title*, *author,* or *standfirst.* You can't change the assigned crossword *ID* or the *gridID*. But you can click the *published* check-box, when you are ready (more later).

There is also a *Delete* button, allowing you to delete this crossword and its clues. But most importantly, there is a *Clues* button which leads to the clue editing page:

7.   Editing clues.

clueID	number	direction	answer	prefix	clue text
				Clue List for crossword id = 73	
				New crossword via Webapp1	
14658	5	across		5	5 across (6)
14636	7	across		7	7 across (8)
14654	9	across		9	9 across (8)
14648	10	across		10	10 across (6)
14643	11	across		11	11 across (12)
14639	13	across		13	13 across (6)
14649	15	across		15	15 across (6)
14645	18	across		18	18 across (12)

Illustration 3: Clue List (top)

14638	18	down		18	18 down (6)
14657	19	down		19	19 down (6)
14652	20	down		20	20 down (4)
73					

Save   Cancel

Illustration 4: Clue List (bottom)

This simply shows the clues related to your crossword which are saved in the database – and allows you to change the *prefix* and *clue text* of each one. The system has already inserted default values e.g. *5* and *5 across (6)* for 5 across. This will appear on the interactive crossword page as:

You can see the *prefix* is highlighted in red and the *clue text* follows in black. Occasionally you may need to alter the prefix, or the trailing word length in parentheses, for linked clues or multiple words. As in:

14 see 27

27,14 wind and frost combined in the white stuff (4,5)

and

13 not exactly an ice age ? (4,4)

Note that in Illustration 3 there is an *answer* column which appears blank. That is because the correct solutions (answers) to each clue are not normally stored in a readable form in the database, they are one-way encrypted, like passwords. So the system can tell if the answer provided is correct (by encrypting it and matching the stored value) but cannot provide the correct answer itself because the saved encryption cannot be decrypted. However occasionally, during development, the system does store the answer in plain text and shows it in the *Clue List* for the crossword editor's convenience e.g.

| 321 | 13 | across | COLDSNAP | 13 | not exactly an ice age ? (4,4) |

Any plain text answers are always removed from the database as soon as the crossword editor logs out.
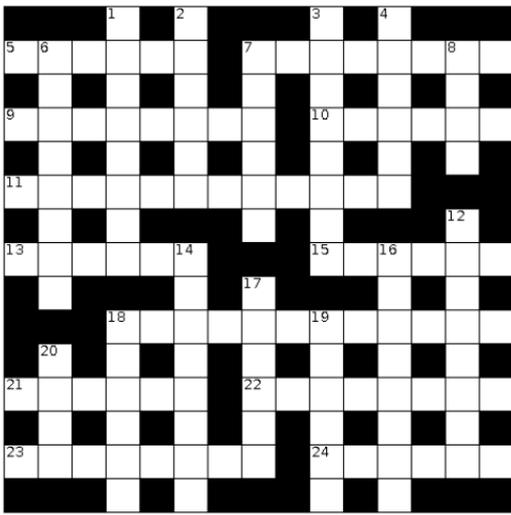
When the clues are completed, or just to save work in progress, click the *Save* button. Once again you might have to wait 10 seconds while the system regenerates the PDF file.

So far we have covered creating a new crossword and its clues, we have not discussed filling the grid with the required solution – which the crossword editor must do before writing the clues! http://www.crossword-compiler.com/ and its like can help you do this but my web app does not (yet). The method I advocate is that the crossword editor should print out the first generated PDF file and fill the grid 'by hand', choosing words that fit, and conforming to a theme if required. Easier said than done of course but I am sure most crossword editors are aware of many eDictionary 'tools' to search for words by pattern matching.

New crossword via Webapp1

Algie

a simple cryptic crossword - try it on-line, or print the PDF

across

| 5 | 5 across (6) |
| 7 | 7 across (8) |

down

| 1 | 1 down (8) |
| 2 | 2 down (6) |

Illustration 5: First generated PDF file, ready for development by crossword editor

Having done that, and entered all the clues, the crossword is (almost) ready to go. The next generated PDF file would be fine for printing and off-line completion. But if you want interactive on-line completion, and *Check...clue*, and *Submit Score* you must supply the correct answers to the web app. See next item:-

8. The crossword editor provides correct answers to the web app by *SELECTi*ng the crossword from the list, exactly as if about to attempt it when not logged in. **But if a crossword editor is logged-in the web app behaves differently.** Normally when a user clicks *Check...clue* or *Check All* the system encrypts the user's answers and compares them with the values saved in the database, reporting *[COLDSNAP] matched!* or *[COLDSNIP] didn't match!* As appropriate. But when the owner of the puzzle is logged in the system accepts what is entered as exactly correct, and if the encrypted value does not match the database value it updates the database, reporting *[COLDSNIP] is UPDATED!* or *[COLDSNAP] is UPDATED!* (to revert the demonstration).

   Similarly if the crossword editor completes the entire crossword and clicks *Check All* the web app saves the encrypted values of all the answers in the database.

   Crossword editors should remember this and be careful, it would be quite possible to inadvertently update the database with the wrong solution!

   When all the answers have been filled correctly the crossword is ready for publication. Return to the Crossword List, click *Edit*, and tick the *published* check-box. Then click *Save,* and finally *log out*. Now, if you re-visit the Crossword you should see that your crossword has joined the list of published crosswords by all crossword editors.
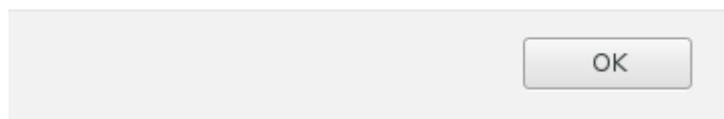
9. Finally, a note about *Welcome, Anonymous!* ,which controls how the web app records submitted puzzles. The *Anonymous* link leads to a pop-up which explains:

   Enter your NICK NAME or E-MAIL.

   If you submit your solution this name will be recorded with your score. If you use your e-mail address we might respond with congratulations, or maybe some advice!

   After a user clicks *Submit Score* he or she sees something like:

   hi nick.name@hotmail.com, mailing your result now
   you scored 1 out of 34

	OK

   and the owner (me in this case) receives:

   Subject: Dalriada Crossword 15
   Date: Tue, 12 Apr 2016 15:17:14 +0100 (BST)
   From: john.d.coleman@gmail.com
   Reply-To: john.coleman@bcs.org
   To: john@dalriada.me.uk

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nick.name@hotmail.com submitted the following result:
 8 a    null    0       force Yorkshire river measured in millibars (8)
 9 a    null    0       into the teeth of 30d or relax as second takes 2 steps
back (6)
10 a    null    0       sandpiper has the measure of 30a (4)
11 a    null    0       Shiite Muslims routinely heard (5)
12 a    null    0       what arrangement does for 16 and 27 ? (4)
13 a    COLDSNAP    1       not exactly an ice age ? (4,4)
16 a    null    0       cereal doesn`t begin to make frozen pendant
18 a    null    0       endless sorcery and regal pilgrims ? (4)
20 a    null    0       sounds silly, but quite 29 (5)
21 a    null    0       ski jumping raptor and 22 ? (4)
22 a    null    0       cause annoyance about pointless herb at Corryvreckan (6)
23 a    null    0       don`t just Be Aware, or Be prepared, Take action ! (3,
5)
26 a    null    0       fourth from the sun and Bringer of War (4)
28 a    null    0       Scots hill and partnership fit for tennis ? (5)
30 a    null    0       endless enthusiasm caused by downward result (4)
31 a    null    0       spectacular display involves paramour without politician
(6)
32 a    null    0       decided, determined, and completed this again (8)
 1 d    null    0       corn on the cob without techno arrangement in unbroken
mount (6)
 2 d    null    0       during stops, starts, want to know a secret? (4)
 3 d    null    0       not quite the season of discontent? (6)
 4 d    null    0       people suitable for everyone provide pick list (4)
 5 d    null    0       lack of hubris with fifty increased 10 times brings
dampness in the air (8)
 6 d    null    0       sounds like a nerd could be fatal for insect (4)
 7 d    null    0       imposed by necessity, a dateline disaster (8)
14 d    null    0       see 27
15 d    null    0       tailless bird by Italian river could be extremely cold
(5)
17 d    null    0       croupier`s announcement sounds excellent (5)
19 d    null    0       suitable for everyone in Mombasa, where cow`s stomach is
a speciality (8)
20 d    null    0       arrange bolt with apex to make a double fold (3,5)
24 d    null    0       confused believers cease (6)
25 d    null    0       riskier choice for breakfast (6)
27 d    null    0       wind and frost combined in the white stuff (4,5)
29 d    null    0       congenial with a heartless tup (4)
30 d    null    0       lead ore with not applicable not applied causes
crosswise result (4)

                scoring 1 out of 34
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10. That's it. Try it out if you like, just mail me at john.coleman@bcs.org for a user name/password to log in as a crossword editor. No doubt the web app is a bit buggy in parts but if you tell me where it's broke I might fix it.