

SPYSCAPE (spyscape.com) is an interactive museum whose headquarters are located in New York City, and which focuses on creating the ultimate spy experience. We are seeking original, intelligent crosswords that tie in with our brand, as detailed below.

Specifications and details:

- Puzzles should be themed, American-style, and approximately 15x15 – grids which are not quite 15x15 will be considered if the non-standard size facilitates the theme.
- Themes should relate in some way to our brand. This can take many forms: spies, intelligence, hacking, tech, movies, films, fashion, etc. We encourage constructors to be creative in their ideas. Constructors are strongly encouraged to query themes before gridding, since we receive many submissions of theme ideas that we have previously published.
- Standard rules for construction apply: puzzles should have some sort of symmetry, and should contain no unchecked letters or two-letter words (unless there is a compelling theme-related reason to break the rules). There is a soft cap of 78 words for a 15x15 grid, and a soft cap of one-sixth of the grid for black square count, but these caps can be exceeded slightly if necessary.
- Good, clean fill should be prioritized. In particular, one should avoid obscurities, variant spellings, uncommon prefixes / suffixes (and uncommon uses thereof, as with REDETECTERS and UNSPYLIKE), multiword partials, etc.
- Offensive entries, such as racist or misogynist terms, should be avoided entirely. In general, if an entry is likely to make the solve unpleasant for some solvers, there's a good chance it should be avoided; among other things, this includes hate groups, individuals who have been accused of sexual misconduct, and flippant references to addiction. Constructors should err on the side of caution, but should also feel free to query particular entries if they're unsure whether or not they're appropriate.
- Clues should be interesting and educational when possible, and should be at about medium difficulty. In addition, since the puzzle will be published primarily online, slightly longer clues than other outlets can be handled, especially if this results in fun facts, or if it helps the solver with an entry or crossing that may otherwise be difficult. Clues that are related to espionage in some way are particularly welcome.
- Puzzles should be sent to Will Nediger at spyscapecrosswords@gmail.com. Submissions are welcomed at any point in the construction process, including theme queries. Indeed, theme queries are encouraged, because we often have to reject worthy puzzles simply because we already have a puzzle with a similar theme in the pipeline.
- We specifically encourage submissions and queries from newer constructors and constructors from underrepresented groups. In particular, we work closely with new constructors at every step of the process, so constructors are encouraged to submit even if they don't yet feel confident in their ability to create a professional-quality puzzle.
- Across Lite (puz) and Crossword Compiler (ccw) files are highly preferred, although submissions in other formats (e.g. pdf or plain text) can also be accommodated. In any case, please include a brief summary of your theme and / or a list of theme answers and clues in your email.
- Response time to submissions, queries, etc. should be under one week; feel free to follow up if you haven't heard back from us in two weeks.
- Payment will be \$200 per puzzle, and will be made upon publication. Constructors must sign and return a contract assigning all rights to SPYSCAPE.
- Puzzles will appear weekly on our website via an online solver.