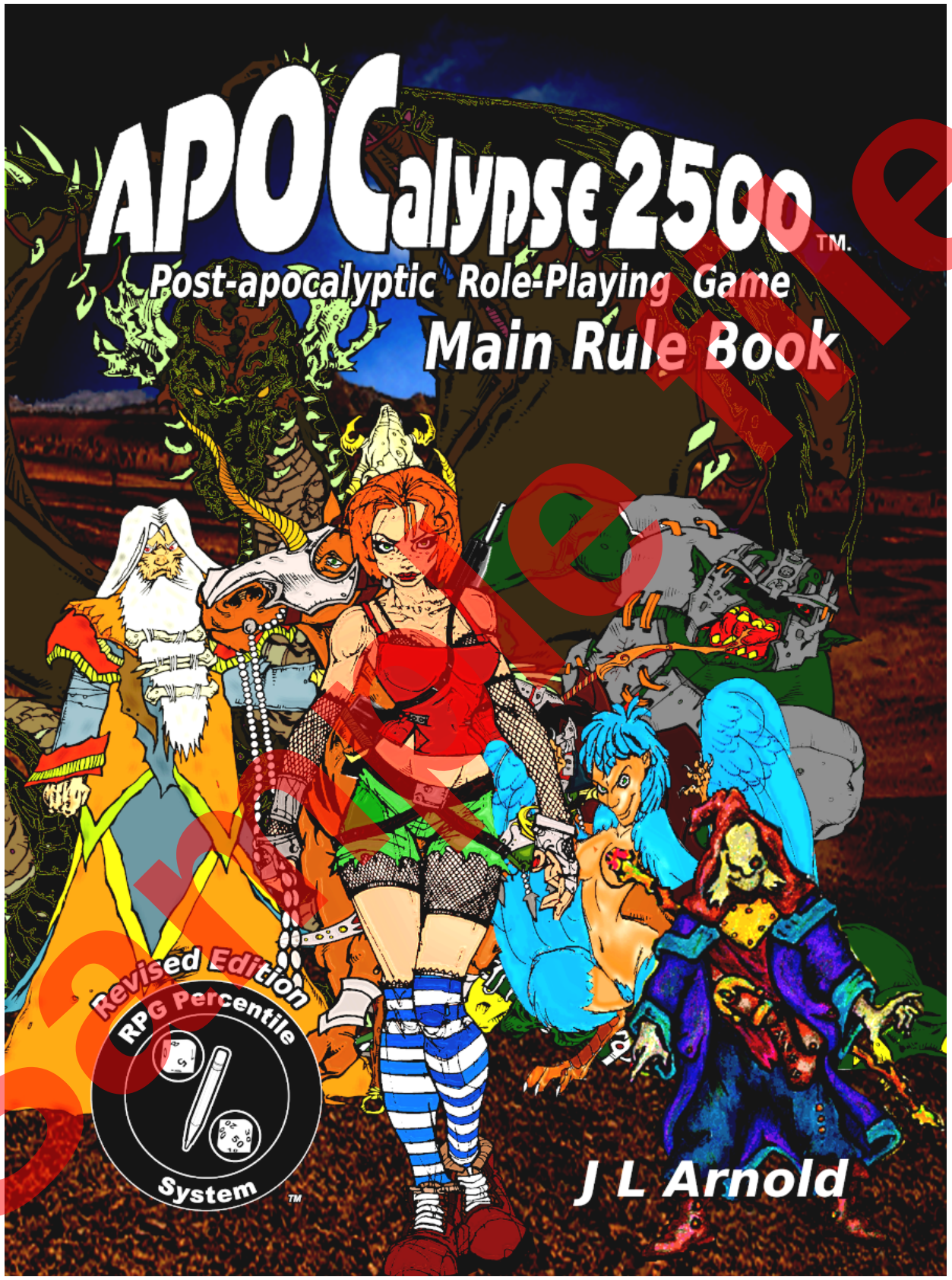

APOCalypse 2500 ™.
Post-apocalyptic Role-Playing Game
Main Rule Book
Revised Edition
RPG Percentile System ™
J L Arnold

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APOCalypse 2500™ Main Rule Book

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APOCalypse 2500 RPG Percentile System ™



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Preface

What is a tabletop RPG?

Back in the days when only Cpt. Kirk and NASA had computers, role-playing games (RPG) were played very differently from the way most experience them in the Internet / videogame age. Role playing games were the purview of the kitchen table and the local hobby shop; played in a universe in which the monsters and heroes find their courage flowing from uniquely numbered dice and the pages of a book. Since the proliferation of the personal computer, the term " tabletop RPG" has been adopted as a way to differentiate those that use printed books, from role-playing videogames. Tabletop RPG's, like APOCalypse 2500, are games in which the participants assume roles, as fantasy characters in a scenario with much greater flexibility than is currently possible in computer driven games. The first widely known tabletop role playing game, released in the 1970's, was set in a mythical medieval world. Today the genre encompasses a wide variety of games in an endless number of settings all with one similarity; you don't need a computer to play them. The universe this game takes place in is both a magical fantasy and a post-apocalyptic science fiction world, where just about anything is possible.

What makes up a tabletop RPG?

The first is the "game universe," which is a unique fantasy time period governed by specific fantasy realities. The second is "game mechanics" and refers to the system of rules and die rolls. The APOCalypse 2500 game universe and game mechanics are detailed in this book. The third is the Adventure Scenario which is a supplement to rule and reference books and contains the adventure details such as back story, maps, lists of hazards, treasures, characters and goals relative to its unique situations. There is a basic beginner adventure scenario included in this book.

How do we play?

Tabletop RPG's are run by a moderator called a Game Master (GM) who is the administrator of game rules and story teller. The GM uses this book and possibly other APOCalypse 2500™ reference books, along with an Adventure Scenario which only they read, to lead a group of 2-6 player characters, on an adventure while maintaining the fantasy of the game universe. Although GM's will take on the roles of monsters or villains that may attack players it is not the GM's overall role to be player adversary. The Game Master is rules moderator, story teller, bit player, and game referee. While this book is the core rule book of the game, there are many additional resource books and Adventure Scenarios available through www.apocalypse2500.com, which cover a wide range of game related subjects from fantasy beasts to magic and zombies.

Player's Characters

The players, guided by the GM, take on different fantasy personas based on possibilities presented by the game universe. Utilizing the game mechanics, players create a "Player Character"(PC) then equip them in preparation for upcoming adventures. The goal of the player in any RPG is to advance their character in ability and wealth through the undertaking of hazardous quests. The same PC will have many adventures within the game universe becoming more able to face greater challenges for greater reward as time goes by. Players determine the actions of their characters based on their characterization and die rolls according to game mechanics; however, may improvise freely within the boundaries of the fantasy reality and game mechanics.

As to the different roles, many people who play these types of games will be both; as GM's will be invited to play as a player and many experienced players will sometimes host games as GM's.

Aspiring GMs: It is essential you read through this entire book before running an adventure.

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The Universe of APOCalypse 2500

How it all Began

Archive Cheyenne Mountain
Office of National Scientific Adviser DC
Project Transit #AJT-36879
Personal log entry Dr. Steve Johnson PHD
Discovered 350 AV (2450 AD)

The current date is May 15 2130 and I am one of the few left here in the Cheyenne Mountain complex. I feel it necessary to create this log in hopes that a historical understanding of what happened on Friday September 13th 2115 may be maintained. At this point national security concerns seem to be outweighed by the need for future generations to know what actually happened in the Arizona desert fifteen years ago. So I guess I will start at the beginning...

Wednesday September 11th 2115...
It was weeks since they announced the plan to expedite the Project Transit test. Many on the staff here in DC were concerned about possible ramifications of the incomplete systems effect on the fabric of the universe. I have received, to date, no less than a hundred well thought out requests, urging this office, issue a recommendation of postponement for further study. Since the untimely and somewhat questionable accident that took our national science adviser things had gotten a little strange around the office. I had been approached by no less than four different senatorial aids requesting, unofficially of course, that I hold off passing-on such requests until after the 14th.

I must admit I had some personal misgivings as to the validity of the science where project transit is concerned. The concept is straight forward enough and micro scale lab tests all seemed stable. I had read the data and they successfully got electrons to enter one event and exit the other. I must admit I was impressed, however, in the world of quantum interactions things can change dramatically when you increase the relative mass and necessitated power. I had been provided with gigabytes of data that display the stability of what they propose and the computer models bare it out; none the less my colleagues in the purely academic community were singing the doom-song, with unnerving unison.

All I could have done was made recommendations to my superiors, unfortunately I couldn't reach them. Since the death of the national science advisor, the deputy advisor had been squirreled away by the secret service at the president's request. At this late hour my only option was to report directly to the joint chiefs who were overseeing the test in three days. Unfortunately the pentagon rout always dead ends in the email box of one of the countless aids that screen the joint chiefs from direct contact and seem only to exist to maintain the bureaucratic bottleneck.

Perhaps I should provide a little history at this point. It all started about six years ago during the last Trans Atlantic Transportation convention. They called themselves the Colberg Group, a conglomeration of scientists and physicists from America and Europe bent on using wormholes as a means of ultra high speed transportation. The Colberg's reasoned that one could create a set of portals and between them establish a stable space-time corridor through which to travel. Most physicists scoffed at the idea calling it pure science fiction. However, they brought with them reams of supporting data and a massive computer model.

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While much of the scientific community in attendance might have scoffed, the politicians and venture capitalists took the Colberg science a little more seriously. As if they had put something in the coffee or narcotics in the air conditioning they captivated audience after audience of lay folk and politicians alike. They actually pulled it off, leaving the convention with the US, UK, France and Germany and about a dozen corporate sponsors fully sold on the idea of wormholes across the Atlantic, which according to a Colberg spokeswoman was only a first step to trans-galactic travel.

After some political wrangling the Arizona desert was chosen as a location alpha where both the research and building of the first gates would take place. The basis of the technology relied on two inversely-polarized quantum-synchronized structures to act as anchor points for the wormhole. It was made quite clear in the Colberg's research that with a single anchor, being the initiator of the wormhole, the other end could open up to literally any point in space. In fact there was some limited data to suggest alternate points in time might also be achieved. (I digress) A massive facility was built to house the scientists and to do the final research. The first was built in the open about one hundred yards from the facility; and was done, they told me, to allow for all the cargo traffic that would be using it. Somewhat of an optimistic view I thought...

The first gate was completed July 20th 2115 and was a massive ring shaped structure about one hundred feet across, big enough for freight trains to pass through. Unfortunately for the Colberg group, the grumbling among investors had already started. By this time delays and cost overruns meant they were billions over budget and had only completed one of two gates. Government funding had already begun to divert to more conventional transportation projects. Many once enthusiastic investors began doubting the technology would produce anything other than a financial black hole.

So this is where it stood Thursday September 12 2115 as I boarded a plane to fly from DC to Arizona. I guess the Colberg Conglomerate had way more pull with the politicians and possibly the military than anyone in my office could have imagined. The decision to turn it on, to activate the single gate to see if a wormhole would form, was made at the highest levels, they told me. This is what started the scientific panic, in the first place. It's too late now; the bean counters project managers and a chorus of politicians, concerned with investors and wealthy constituents obviously had the president's ear.

Friday September 13th 2115 09:30 hours PST...The day the world changed. I remember thinking what a nice morning it was, just a few clouds in the sky and a cool breeze across the desert. I also remember the excitement that filled the air as hundreds of VIP's and reporters from around the globe looked on as the technicians made the final preparations to switch it on. At first nothing much happened, the device began to glow as power surged through the superconductive ring. In the center among stray electrical discharges and flashes of color a tiny black spot began to grow and grow. As the apparition formed colored streams of light began to course inward and out. A snake like tunnel of light was beginning to form; it must have been a wormhole because it certainly matched the computer predictions, at least in this beginning stage it did.

After about thirty seconds of operation things began to go wrong as the power requirements turned out to be well beyond predicted levels. Circuits began to overload as the wormhole began to lose stability as if it was going to collapse all together, this is when they made their mistake. The signal was given to switch in almost one million kilowatts of auxiliary power provided by an off-site reactor. As the new energy surged through the massive secondary supply lines and transformers the phenomena stabilized momentarily than began to grow. They immediately cut the auxiliary power but to no effect; somehow the growing vortex had found another power source.

Sample file

The now self sustaining phenomena grew beyond the device that had birthed it, swallowing it whole. The wind whistled as it was sucked into the vortex, which must have opened into a vacuum. The crowd began to panic as it began swallowing nearby equipment, power cables and just about everything else within fifty feet to the front of event horizon. Many panicked as I remember one onlooker proclaim the creation of a singularity and the end of the world. Many others simply had no idea what was happening, unfortunately neither did the Colberg scientists. Then all at once it was quiet, the wind settled, things stopped getting swallowed and everything got calm, real calm. The swirling vortex was still there and well over a two hundred feet from side to side. It was the strangest phenomena I have ever witnessed it was strangely two dimensional. I recall standing to the side, quite a ways away, and noticing you couldn't see it from behind at all and from the side only the glow that emanated from the event horizon; however from the front it was visible and appeared to have three dimensions in our space.

The brief calm was abruptly interrupted by something inexplicable, it reversed. Not by sending back the few pieces of equipment it swallowed. Something much more terrifying came through; a sort of thick darkness began to emanate from the phenomenon. It was a strange intangible darkness blocking out the daytime sun, creating a moonlit night. The region of darkness grew rapidly covering the assembled crowd and beyond to the horizon. With it came strange changes to the surrounding desert. Trees that were not there before appeared, so did swamps, insects, grass, and many strange sounds. The smell of rotting vegetation and swamp gases filled the air as people ran in all directions attempting to outrun this new terror, as I could hear scientist and layperson alike begin the panicked talk of divine retribution and a gateway to demons. The moon was up, or at least a moon, not like ours, it was as if I was standing on another planet. Panic and fear, often makes otherwise rational people think irrational thoughts. I myself wondered briefly if I had been drawn into the vortex and emerged on some faraway world millions of light years from Earth. As I began to take a more careful look at my surroundings I began to realize this was still the Arizona desert, sort of, and I was probably still on Earth.

Suddenly, I was aware of someone grabbing at my arm, no one I knew just a concerned stranger pulling me toward her hover car. In a state of shock I did not resist as she shoved me in the back seat. We lifted off and headed at considerable speed away from the vortex toward distant light and possible safety. Minutes passed as the land whizzed by below, then at once, we were back in the bright desert sunlight and apparently safe. The flying limousine I had been shoved into turned out to be none other than that of the Denmark delegation. I don't know why, except to think it was a moment of heroic compassion, when they chose to scoop me up.

Upon breaking free of the zone of darkness we beheld a scene that can only be described as one from the era of romantic fantasy. A medieval castle, complete with moat was under siege by an army of otherworldly beasts. This castle was certainly not in this desert when I arrived this morning, it somehow made manifest since then. We watched in dumbfounded amazement, as the limo flew slowly by, what one of the delegates called a goblin horde, storming the castle while its seemingly human occupants fought to hold them at bay. Above the mesas and painted cliffs an aurora raged in all its grandeur casting a kaleidoscope of color on the desert floor. I could only muse at what was happening around me as my thoughts turned to the many memos and emails that had crossed my desk, urging me to make the case against activating the single gate.

Sample file

The following weeks brought a media circus of accusations and wild crackpot theories as to what had happened and how. Many scientists from around the world appeared in video and wrote countless blogs chastising the recklessness of our "great blunder," but none of them, not one, could explain the strange happenings. Strangely enough the folks with the best theories were not scientist, but those often delegated to the fringe. Maybe the lunatic fringe was right and we had opened a doorway to a magical realm; that certainly was a more comforting theory than theological Armageddon as the religions of the world were proclaiming. As is typical when billions are involved and reputations are on the line and something goes wrong, everyone began pointing the finger at everyone else.

More time passed and things just got stranger. We all looked on in awe as the cataclysm worsened and continental drift accelerated, volcanism flourished and tidal surges decimated most of the world's coastline. Nation began to blame nation, but mostly the US as if we alone had funded and built this catastrophe. I suppose someone had to ultimately take the blame, of course with a disaster of this magnitude blaming our little group of scientists wasn't nearly enough. As DC was swamped by successive tidal surges the government was moved to alternate locations, as I recall in some cases minutes before the city flooded. I was sent as scientific adviser to the joint chiefs off to Colorado. It came as quite a surprise, to be told in route, that Cheyenne Mountain had been recently upgraded and modernized; nearly half the plane thought it was still a museum...

From my perch in the gallery above the situation room I watched as the reports streamed in; that one nation after another turned against the United States and declared all of NATO at fault. This went on for weeks that became months as the world political climate steadily deteriorated. Congress and the president were in bunkers somewhere and martial law had been declared nationwide. All the while we received massive amounts of data on geological conditions as the planet was undergoing some sort of accelerated development. I myself, being somewhat of a pacifist, find it hard to understand the need to blame, and then go to war while the planet is literally trying to extinguish the human race all on its own.

New Year's Day 2117
It's been a tumultuous year and three months of political and geological upheaval; fortunately here in our mountain fortress we have felt little of it, although three months ago we had to, " lock it down," as they say and I have seen neither the sun nor the night sky since then. The first reports reached us here in our mountain, war, yes war finally happened as one by one the nations of the world turned against America and her remaining allies, seizing overseas holdings and expelling long standing military bases. In some corners of the world our assets and troops were outright attacked. All though no nation took credit the joint chiefs knew, or at least thought they knew who to blame. This, I suppose, was our second mistake as we failed to consider an otherworldly force might be operating. Diplomacy failed as denials flew and ultimately, from a state of hostility, came war as each nation sided with its remaining allies and fielded their armies. Although at this point I think the war started more over dwindling resources than who started it all. By now many nations had lost their capital cities and much of their infrastructure was in ruin. Worldwide the increased frequency and strength of natural disasters from earthquakes and volcanoes to mega tsunamis and unbelievably frequent and widespread tornadoes had wrecked much of the civilized world.
As the armies of man spread out across the planet reports of strange creatures began to filter into our situation room. By the hundreds, and in some cases thousands, strange mythical beasts were being reported and photographed in all corners of the world. Amazing reports crossed my desk of beasts and humanoids that were straight out of medieval literature. My staff by in large was in disbelief or perhaps outright denial, suggesting more comfortable alternatives such as nerve gas or LSD bombs. However it's hard to deny terabytes of video evidence provided by our own UAV's and satellites. The proof was undeniable, the fey had returned to earth.

Sample file

July 9th 2125
The world was beginning to look very different as the continents began slamming into one another massive earthquakes and mega tsunamis ravished the globe. The world wide economy was in ruin, massive atmospheric disturbances swept the globe, all the while war raged on. The cataclysm hand wrecked civilization and killed hundreds of millions while entire nations simply ceased to function. Centralized authority was all but gone and armies, with no support or direction and for many no nation to fight for, turned to survival holding the ground they stood upon. Here in Cheyenne Mountain we watched as the volcanoes and floods decimated the coasts. One by one our information sources faded and our communications with the field fell silent, we lost communication with the commander in chief and most of our nuclear assets five years ago. At last after nearly a decade of isolation we watched as one could actually see day by day movement. Satellite imagery showed clearly the astonishing speed with which the continents drifted ever closer. Many simply went into a kind of denial driven depression, as they simply could not handle the situation. Suicide became somewhat common but never reached epidemic proportions. Others simply went numbly about their duties, having been trained for a nuclear holocaust; this situation was well outside of their expectations. I suppose we, the scientists, have it the easiest. Although we worry about loved ones, there is so much new data to analyze on one of the best mainframes on the planet, it has kept us focused and optimistic by comparison.

January 10th 2130
Many here now openly speak of breaking out of our mountain prison. Although we have power for at least another fifty years, and with it the ability to pump water from the deep subterranean wells, our food supplies are getting critical. We have lost contact outside the mountain except for the ever vigilant satellites. Most of my staff has deserted making their way to the surface through one of the escape tunnels. There really was no point in stopping them, what were we supposed to do, shoot them. There are fifteen of us left out of a crew of over one hundred to man this, perhaps, last outpost of the United States. Maybe I will go with the others and take my chances before the food runs out and there is no choice. They tell me we have a well stocked armory and we should arm ourselves before we brave the surface. I must admit, I see the logic in such precautions, At least we won't need the radiation gear, least ways not in our immediate vicinity. I'm still not sure why it had to go nuclear, but at least it was limited; I don't know whether by choice or inability to launch but few detonations were detected, and none within a hundred miles, so they tell me.

Monday May 15th 2130
The last five of us are leaving the complex in about an hour. We have spent a week being trained by our Marine guard, and I feel fairly competent with the SAP-556 and my new friend the 45 PPD. We have decided to place the base in low power standby, destroy all the missile launch codes and rig one of the escape tunnel hatches so we can get back in if it comes to that...

Good luck and Godspeed to all of us.
Dr. S. Johnson

09:30 Monday May 15, 2130 Log ends...

Sample file

The Vortex

The Vortex, which lies in the Arizona desert near the ruins of the town once called Mesa, is the result of an early 22nd century experiment in trans-dimensional travel, gone horribly wrong. It is a widely held fact that the vortex, sometimes referred to as a gateway, is the source of all changes on earth over the last four hundred years. The phenomena is now a quarter mile across surrounded by a region of perpetual night stretching out across the Nevada desert; roughly circular with a radius of 25 miles, enveloping the entire area. Interestingly enough one can fly over the phenomenon at an altitude of just over a mile and remain outside the darkness and observe what remains of the great experiment. Of note, anyone that has ever landed at the site has never returned. However, if one travels within the zone below 1mi / 1.6km it is always night, and the phenomenon seems to have no ceiling allowing one to presumably fly to the perpetually full moon within the starless sky. There is no doubt among scientists that this is a gateway between the earth and any number of other places and possibly dimensions.



The swampy jungle that has sprung up in this zone of night is one of the most dangerous places on earth. It is filled with all manner of beast and sections of, for lack of a better term, reality instability, where things and creatures seem to wink in and out of existence with no apparent pattern or timing. The vortex zone is also the most avoided place on earth, at least by human kind. There have been few expeditions into the zone, and even fewer have returned. Those that have, tell of strange unworldly happenings and terrible beasts.

It has been postulated that the other end of the vortex is not anchored to a point in space-time and therefore manifests at random vacuuming up and depositing matter and energies on earth. A popular visual analogy is that of a many light years long vacuum cleaner with its trap anchored on earth; while the gigaparsec long hose is randomly whipping around the cosmos at superluminal speeds snatching up things and energies and depositing them on earth.

The magical community has other ideas and points out to the scientific community that it's not a one way phenomena as things get sucked off earth as well. Or more accurately, replaced by other things, which indicates a two way exchange. Additionally, they add, since no seemingly incompatible matter has been discovered and the planet hasn't been blown-up, it is likely that the manifestation isn't trans-dimensional, or at least not constantly so. They have been known to go on at length about maintenance of the cosmic balance and tit-for-tat exchange while citing astrological concepts that many in the scientific community still scoff at, even in this age of tangible magic.

The most authoritative work has been done by ISUM (Institute for the Scientific Understanding of Magic) which is a scholarly body of traditional science and sorcery, with a large techno-mage alumni that has published strong theories on everything from the Vortex to the origins of arcane species. ISUM tends to take a middle ground not fully committing to the single or multi-dimensional nature of the phenomenon, preferring to make observations based on what's coming through at any given time.

Sample file

Neo-Pangaea and its Population

By the 4th century AV only limited cartographic surveys of the super continent exist. Some of the more heavily populated human world is connected by well mapped solid roads, while the rest relies on trails blazed by explorers and traders. Throughout the wild lands one travels cross country or on trails left by nomadic lower arcane. The wars and geological upheaval of the first century A. V. culled global population and left vast expanses without human habitation. These are the wild lands, which cover the majority Neo-Pangaea. The areas that boarder the wild lands and the small towns, outposts, and lone trading stations dotted throughout constitute the frontier; beyond which neither human nor arcane are known to settle.

The *Pan Pacific Expanse* from the west coast to Dragon's Head ~14,000mi / 22,530 km. From Dragon's head across the E. Ocean and land to the west coast ~10,000mi / 16,093km. There are thousands of Islands throughout the Pan Pacific. The Arctic and Antarctic are both glacial. Names were assigned by human cartographers of limited cultural knowledge, those who live locally and the arcane likely have other names.



Sample file

Fall of Nations

World War III had descended upon the 22nd century as the world itself seemed to be coming apart. In the early decades of the Vortex, the effects on planetary geography were extreme as though time had accelerated for the planet but not those who dwelt upon it. Massive storms swept the globe while volcanism and tsunamis ravished coastlines as plate tectonics experienced unbelievable acceleration. As the planet became hostile so did the nations upon it, thus humanity began to war. At first humans fought humans, until they discovered the arcane; a new enemy to which they could assign blame for dwindling resources, planetary change, and the hostility of their fellow humans. As nations became isolated and overrun by geological upheaval, devastating attacks, and arcane encroachment, those that could went into hiding. The governments of the world dusted off their long abandon cold war shelters and Armageddon scenarios, leaving the masses of humanity to fend for themselves. This situation went on for decades until finally the industry of war could no longer supply its armies and the governments which had sent them to fight ceased to command. Whole armies found themselves in foreign lands with no way home, no new supply, and no higher command to turn to. They did the only thing they could, hold the ground they stood on and attempt to build a new life. Many such human places still exist across the world as little fiefdoms and micro nation-states. The nations of the wold never recovered leaving a hodgepodge of self governed micro nation-states, city-states, and townships acting independent of central authority.

Society in the 4th Century AV

Humans and Arcane

Those living in one of the few large walled high tech human city-states which either survived or rebuilt, post cataclysm, see themselves as superior. Their mostly human populations are often content to dismiss the outside world, those who wield magic, and the arcane as pagan bumpkins. These micro nation-states control and produce most of the high technology available in the wold today. Fortunately for the rest of us, they are just a greedy as anyone else and happily export their tech-toys, weapons, and p-cells as far as possible to anyone who can pay for them. It seems that even these walled bastions of modern humans need trade to survive, regardless of isolationist "humans first," attitudes. Large well armed trade caravans routinely depart these cities, laden with goods, destined for the remote corners of Neo-Pangaea.

There are many humans who have a kinder view of their arcane neighbors, mostly among those living away from technologically intact areas and closer to arcane settlements. Many believe this is where the distinction "Common arcane," evolved, as a way to refer to arcane who are familiar with human culture, sometimes living a hybrid lifestyle. In the 4th century most humans have adapted to the arcane, although it wasn't always so. It took a solid 100 years for humans to stop making war on them and accept that they now share this planet. While plenty of bigotry still exists within all races, there haven't been any major racial conflicts in recent centuries. Most people's energy is spent on survival and attempting to rebuild civilization. The arcane too, devote a good deal of effort to civilization building as they also suffered a sort of apocalypse; as their ancestors were swept from their homes across the galaxy, possibly further, and deposited on a strange planet in a state of severe upheaval. Evidence suggests that arcane species once called earth home, however, that was over a thousand years ago, a forgotten history. It is rational to believe that the arcane of the past and those of the present are not the same, nor even direct decedents of the former.

Over the last few centuries the path of human society and religion has diverged from that followed in previous centuries. Many feel this new world with new rules and new species give less credence to their ancestral traditions and cultural inhibitions; falling back to an imagined past where the fey were common place. While ancient cultural identities are still in play the nearer you get to the frontiers and where arcane and human populations are intermixed, many ideas once unthinkable in pre-vortex times are more readily tolerated if not embraced as normal. For instance, cross-spices coupling between arcane and human is no longer looked on as bestiality.

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Life on the Road

It is believed that the planet hosts over a billion sentient life forms, however, only a fraction of those are human. The rest are mutants, arcane, and sub-species of both. Billions of animals, common and arcane, also inhabit the land and sea. As the world is a hodgepodge of micro nation-states and thousands of small fiefdoms, towns, and fortresses. There is no central authority and beyond eyesight is beyond control of most settled areas. This means that travel near the frontier, between settlements, and even within some cities is dangerous; often fraught with wondering beasts, strange phenomena, and roving gangs. The world by in large is a dangerous place, where the only help you're likely to receive is from yourself.

The Wild Lands

Even further from civilization are lands, which encompass vast areas of the planet, unclaimed by any they are lawless and danger filled. First century battlefields and heavy weapons strikes permeate these hazardous areas that are sometimes toxic or littered with active munitions and wrecked vehicles. The Wild Lands are where many of the larger ruins of humanities civilization lies and are prime locations for salvage, treasure hunting, and the discovery of arcane magical artifacts; as it is believed that *Reality Instability* *(See: Techno-Magic)* has deposited much over the centuries. Although dangerous and deserted, many excursions and safaris into these lands are mounted by human and arcane alike as both have a need to treasure hunt.

Economy

Black Market

Although the world is not technically in a state of war as it was immediately post vortex, constant skirmishes still arise between city-states, outlaw gangs, and the arcane. This climate of micro regional control and conflict is a perfect environment for the black market to thrive. With something being legal or at least unregulated in one region there will be high illegal demand for it in another. The competition for control and wealth is of course a driving factor in the competitive natures of the different territories that leads to constant fighting, border raiding, and general armed conflicts. One late 2nd century AV philosopher was quoted as saying, “Mankind has what he has always striven for, rule of the gun.”

Trade Caravan

Heavy armed and armored trading caravans have taken the place of pre-vortex distribution methods, bringing market day and as much technology and goods as they can carry to as far a corner of the world as they can reach. Trade caravans and waterborne merchants crisscross the super continent and world's waterways stopping at every population center they can safely approach. This is why you will often find some items of technology available even in apparently backwater towns. In the larger cities and industrial conglomerations there are full time shopping malls, as many goods are produced locally. The smaller towns, which comprise the bulk of the settled world, rely on the trade caravans, waterborne merchants, and salvage to keep their settlements alive.

Cash

The world has gone back to the gold as a standard by which all else is measured. While any and all metals, gemstones, exotic elements, and magic all have trade value; the only universal currency is copper, silver, gold, and platinum coins. Many city-states and micro nation-states make coin from these four metals. Coin size and weight seems to have reached a level of standardization, contrary to what one might think in a feudal world. It seems that the city-states and trading guilds may have played a hand in this as currency standardization has taken hold over the last 100 years. Over that time metallic coins have come to be known by slang shortenings of their human elemental names, such as silver coins which are called "sil or sils" and gold coins often called "go or gos"
GM: Standard currency keeps things simple. See: COMMERCE & MONEY

Sample file

Technology



Many who still live in intact technological centers of the world cannot remember what life was like before the advent of the Tritium ion power cell (P-Cell). Most technology, from radios to aircraft runs on ultra powerful and ultra long life tritium ion power packs or some form of larger portable nuclear battery. Of course since the vortex there are large areas of the human world that lack abundant access to technology. In these low-tech regions a resurgence of older forms of technology and combination technologies has taken place. The world for travelers of 4th century A. V. is a conglomeration of old, new, and magical technologies. Some regions of the world function very much as if there was no vortex, while others appear to be from another planet or time altogether. Human corporations seem to be one of the most tenacious life forms on the planet surviving in one form or another usually driven by human greed or its war machine. One would think, in a world this messed up no industry or civilization would survive, on the contrary they have. Working diligently from many of the technologically intact regions of the world they supply electronics, weapons, vehicles, medical technology, and still continue research.

Cybernetics a brief overview

Many believe the development of cybernetic technology was originally spurred by the presence of the arcane. Most of the mutant and arcane species on earth are superior to normal human beings ether physically, perceptually, or both. This new discomfort among the human race at not being the top sentient race anymore helped to spur the rapid development of human cybernetics. Nowadays cybernetically enhanced humans are not uncommon. Any larger city will usually have at least one cyber-plasty clinic. Some of the larger trade caravans carry portable cyber-plasty clinics and have doctors on staff. They repair and augment any and all comers who can pay for it. Many modern cybernetic systems run off the energy already produced by the living body. Through a series of ingenious technological breakthroughs in micro fiber elasticity and micro voltage nano-motors true human powered cybernetics are a modern reality. There are of course many cyber systems that do require power sources, for these, variations on P-Cell technology seem to provide the answer.

Many professions from bounty to zombie hunters can gain an edge on their quarry through cybernetic enhancement. It was common practice in the first century AV to augment soldiers in hopes of competing with some of the newly discovered arcane; many of whom can see in the dark among other advantages. Any of the five senses can be augmented to extreme levels with little to no obvious outward change in appearance. Strength, stamina, and longevity can be greatly increased by the use of cybernetic muscle and organ replacement. About the only organ that can't be replaced is the brain, although it can be aided through the use of several implant technologies. These implants offer anything from thought directed micro computers to radio communication and protective devices to safeguard against psychic attacks. Full body replacement is possible, where the human brain is transplanted into a robotic body which can sustain life for hundred or more years.

Sample file

P-Cell Technology



The tritium ion power cell is a form of nuclear power generator developed in the late 21st century. The compact regenerative P-Cells have become the standard portable power pack for human tech. Even in remote areas, P-Cells are still somewhat common. The P-Cell is a power generator-storage combination system, using beta voltaic technology to absorb energy from decaying tritium to charge advanced batteries for later discharge. Tritium decays into helium-3 in approximately 12 years which is also the service life of the storage circuit . Another benefit of P-Cells having been around so long is that industry standardization has caught on, resulting in six common sizes. The tritium within a p-cell is pressurized tritiated water T_2O. The only hazard presented by a p-cell is forcibly breaching containment, as a vapor cloud erupts from the cell. This vapor cloud is an inhalation hazard for 1D4MR of level 5 radiation exposure to 1ft / 30cm radius per 100HD of p-cell capacity. See: Elemental Attacks, Harmful Radiation.

P-Cell Recharge Table

Size		Hours to recharge				Total power		Silver	Weight
		25%	50%	75%	100%				
Micro	Mic	1	2	3	4	0.4HD	400w	20	0
Mini	Min	1.5	2.5	3.5	4.5	20HD	20Kw	40	.25lb / .11kg
Short Pistol	SP	2	3	4	5	180HD	180Kw	360	1lb / .45kg
Long Pistol	LP	2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	240HD	240Kw	480	1.5lb / .68kg
Short Rifle	SR	3	4	5	6	450HD	450Kw	900	2lb / .9kg
Long Rifle	LR	4	5	6	7	600HD	600Kw	1,200	2.5lb / 1.1kg
P-cell outer casing is a 3HDC metallic impregnated, heat resistant, hermetically sealed polymer.									

Tech Availability in a Broken World

Newly manufactured goods are distributed via trade caravans and sea routes, as almost no freight moves by air and it all moves much slower and more sporadically than in pre-vortex times. One might wonder how the human world, reduced to only a handful of major high-tech population centers, manages even modest scale manufacturing; industrial grade 3D modeling is the answer. Developed late in the 21st century, these machines, resembling 3D printers the size of seagoing cargo containers, were re-engineered in the 1st century AV into a system of semi-portable modular automated manufacturing plants. Run on small nuclear power systems, these computer controlled machines receive raw materials in one end and produce components and complete systems out the other. The fully finished parts are manually assembled by a small semi-skilled workforce. These machines produce anything from P-cells and textiles to weapons and automobile assembly kits.

Due to the slow speed and high attrition rate of post-Vortex distribution, with the possible exception of P-Cells, one is likely to find that technology on the frontier or arcane areas is scarce and overpriced. On the frontier most available human tech is either used, a rare import, or refurbished salvage from the remains of waylaid travelers, abandon cities, and old battlefields. GMs may create unique items that are a mix and match of several items from APOCalypse 2500™ texts with lesser or different performance characteristics. This represents the reclaimed and improvised nature of technology in remote areas. Locally produced technology could be either very expensive or relatively cheap depending on its capabilities and scenario situations. It is likely that Techno-magic is more widely used in remote areas, especially among arcane and humans who may be living in a mixed population area.

Sample file

Vehicles Availability

Unlike the pre-vortex automotive manufacturers, modern auto makers don't spend their time churning out the family sedan and luxury S.U.V. The world of the 4th century AV requires something more robust, hence the prevalence of personal armored vehicles. Except for some limited market among the larger city-states for mass transportation, almost all new vehicles are offshoots of military designs. Everything from hovercraft to tanks and giant walking machines are available directly from the manufacturers in the larger cities. However the majority of transportation is not mass produced but created regionally from the ruins of human's past civilization. It is far more common to run across improvised vehicles made from the scrap yards and battlefields of the world. These pieced-together machines run the gambit from primitive animal drawn carts to surprisingly sophisticated technological contrivances, and are sometimes entirely magic or techno-magically driven. **GM:** Use the various vehicles and drive systems in this and other game books to create improvised vehicles of types one might find available in outlying areas.

Weapons Availability

Governments, what few there still are, finally understand that a loosely regulated arms trade is much more effective than a prohibition; as legal trade reduces black market trade and home-manufacture; after all, people-eating beasts exist, everyone carries weapons, and they're not going to stop simply because some official says they can't. Due to the fact that the world was largely at peace in the last decades before the vortex, many nations had budget-cut their armies down to small defense forces. When cataclysm struck and world war followed they had to rearm in a hurry. With frantic purpose, most nations turned to modular automated industrial manufacturing tech to produce millions of modernized versions of last centuries tried and true small-arms; while simultaneously bringing formerly experimental energy weapons into small scale production. **GM:** Weapons available in large cities-states or from trade caravans are high quality used, new, or imported. In frontier areas weapons sellers have limited selection of 1st century AV surplus and larger selection of locally made or salvaged and refurbished weapons. Ammunition may be overpriced on the frontier due to limited or nonexistent production capability, leading to compatibility issues for projectile weapons. Regional variations exist, in as much as a locally made weapons from one region may not be compatible with ammo supplies in another. While self contained smart manufacturing machines exist for ammunition production, such technology and the raw materials are scarce on the frontier. See: Weapons, Ammunition Compatibility for details.

Mutant Humans

Mutants started appearing about fifteen years after the Vortex. At first it was small things, extra eyes, arms, and legs that were not deformities as much as they were advantages. It was like human evolution had gone into overdrive as if nature was attempting to adjust the human species to its new world. These mutants were at first shunned and even feared, but in the last couple hundred hears have become at least as widely accepted as arcane species. While most would calculate mutant populations in the hundreds of thousands, some mutants don't look like mutants, which causes others to put population figures closer to the millions. Mutants come in all sizes and shapes with a vast variation in ability and appearance. In all their forms, mutants are still sometimes the targets of distrust and bigotry especially in large city-states where normal looking humans make up a significant percentage of the population. These city-states often have a pre-vortex feel to them, where technology is abundant and magic comparatively scarce. No one talent or ability describes all mutants. The most common of the mutations has no obvious physical manifestations. These are the sorcerers and magicians. It seems this mutation is so common that literally any human has the potential to bring about supernatural manifestations. It is widely held that every single human borne since the opening of the vortex has been mutated to be sensitive to magical energies. While not all humans have a high Psychic Rating, everyone possesses some magical potential. In the last two hundred years there has not been a human tested that has not scored at least a 4 on the PR test.

Sample file

The Arcane

Excerpt from the paper titled "Arcane and the Vortex."

It is interesting that species of creatures should appear on earth that so closely resembles ancient mythology of human pre-industrial civilization. Most of the myths of such creatures are believed to come from a time before the medieval period of 800 AD. In fact common social beliefs of the medieval mind well after 800 AD showed that such fairy folk where believed to still inhabit many of the earth's more remote regions. I speak of course primarily of the dwarfs, elves, gnomes, and trolls of ancient western folklore. These four races of arcane are the most likely to interact with humans, without trying to eat them. However there are hundreds of subspecies of arcane or magical creatures on Earth today, such as the dragons, orcs, and goblins just to name a few.

Ironically 21st century paleoclimatology had actually spotted the historical moment of change. The time was referred to as the "Medieval Warm Period," a period of unusual regional global warming between 800 and 1300 AD. In the 21st century science was unable or perhaps unwilling to make the connection between earths historical weather glitches and the presence of astral energies. Since the Vortex the human scientific community has had to accept the existence of what is traditionally referred to as magic. It is now believed by most human scientists, the techno-magic, and natural magic communities that the period beginning around 800 AD is significant. It is believed that the medieval warm period was the first recorded instance of Earth "cycling out," of astral energy's influence.



800 AD has further significance as human history, about this time, records the mentioned climate change and a marked reduction of widespread mythical relevance. Shortly after this period in history we began to see myths, not of massive communities of fairy folk, but rather tales of individual magical characters such as the Merlin of King Authors court. The mythological records of this time also talk of the waning of large groups of fairy folk and often their retreat into distant mysterious lands. It is current belief among many that this medieval warming was a sign of the Earth passing out of one of the lines of magical energy radiating from the galactic center. It is assumed, because of the assumed properties of astral energies, that magic faded slowly from the Earth, taking several hundred years to disappear completely. This directly relates to the relatively slow decline in appearance of magical apportions in human mythology. Since the opening of the vortex the earth has undergone many dramatic changes. Not the least of which is the reappearance of large numbers of mythical creatures that nearly exactly match the descriptions in much of ancient human mythology. This of course has led many to believe that the ancient stories of supernatural creatures are based in factual and accurate historical accounts of the time the earth was last under the influence of astral energy.

In summation it seems the appearance or perhaps reappearance of arcane species on earth is a direct result of the emanations of astral energy from the vortex. As to the actual mechanisms that have placed so many arcane on earth, there is as of this writing no sound scientific explanation; although, there is some conjecture that they may have been made to manifest by the same energies that reshaped the earth's geography in the first decades following the vortex's formation.

Excerpt from the paper titled "Arcane and the Vortex."
By Professor of Astral Mechanics at ISUM
Dr. J Blackburn

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Magic an Overview



Humanity has always been fascinated with what it has called for millennia magic, sorcery, wizardry, witchcraft, etc. Humankind's names for the wielding of supernatural powers are many. In humanities distant past there have been countless legends of great sorcerers and magicians who could perform all manner of feat from healing the sick to calling down fire from the heavens. As civilization and technology grew the legends of great magic began to fade from its culture and art to be replaced with stories of the deeds of technology and innovation. There have always been those few in modern society that lay claim to some magic power, usually these persons where found among the neo-pagans of the 20th and early 21st centuries. However these modern-world practitioners of the mystical arts could not wield the great power of myth.

The vortex changed all that as everyday there were more and more humans being born with the ability to manifest all manner of seemingly supernatural ability. There are also many arcane species who can wield magical power and some that even seem to exist because of it. Human kind has, as with all things, taken wholeheartedly to this new aspect of AV life forming great guilds and societies for the study and mastery of magic. Over the last couple of centuries these great colleges of wizardry have gathered vast archives of arcane writings and developed a derivative human system for the teaching and practice of magic.

For an understanding of Magic and its use in game play see: Vocational Magic and Spells

Techno-Magic a History

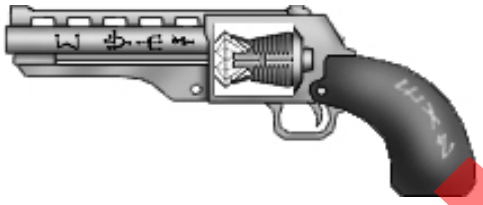
From among the hallowed institutions of scholarly wizards came an odd sort of fellow who is believed to have single-handedly brought magic to the common man. His real name is lost to antiquity, he is now simply known as Edger the Great. Edger up until late in life was a somewhat obscure physicist and amateur magician. He actually was an outstanding scientist by all accounts but only a mediocre wizard, a study he picked up late in life after a visit to a local carnival; whereby he met a seer who inspired him to ponder magic. Having been a lifelong devotee of the physical sciences and striving to understand the properties of nature's energy; Edger brought a unique perspective to the realm of the supernatural. Almost immediately upon joining the local guild of magic he began to try to understand not just how it worked but why. This was somewhat frowned upon by his early professors, as their credo had always been, "strive to know how it works but never ask why." This new and upstart approach to the subject relegated Edger to the lower levels of wizardry and made his name somewhat infamous as subject of jokes in the lecture halls and classrooms.

Edgar, undaunted by the scorn of his fellows, began to experiment outside normal wizardly circles putting magic under the scrutinizing eye of modern science. This scientific study and analysis of magic from the point of view of a physicist went on for several years. During this time Edgar came forth with some minor theories of the what, how, and why of magic's function. The publication of which got him kicked out of the magicians' guild and banned from its sanctioned practice. However by now he was driven and a simple "black-balling," was not going to deter his scientific quest for understanding.

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The breakthrough came quite unexpectedly, as Edger new like all wizards that certain minerals and crystalline structures are better than others at focusing magical energies. In fact since the vortex many new elements have appeared on earth, and of those many are crystalline in nature. One day Edger received a package which contained a sample of a common magical element known to occur near regions of *Reality Instability.* The sample, labeled as "Magite," was something all first year magic students recognized as and element used in magical components. The sample sat around Edger's lab for weeks waiting his attention as he obsessively continued his experiments to determine magic's "wavelength." Edger believed that all energies in the universe could be measured and quantified. During one experiment, which had failed to produce results on previous occasions, the small sample of crystalline Magite began to glow with a faint pulsating light. Edgar turning his attention away from his experiment marveled at the change in the material and also noticed that the glow brightened when he moved it closer to his running experiment. Using less than scientific caution he replaced the P-Cell power pack with the Magite. The resulting explosion blew out the back door to the lab and set off the fire alarm, evacuating the building.

It had worked, the experiment to create a magical apparition worked, Edgar had created humanities first magical manifestation with the aid of technology. The key was the Magite, one of many crystals used for centuries by sorcerers in the construction of magical components also seemed to be able collect, store, and transmit magical energy. Wondering if his newfound techno-sorcery would work for the magically challenged he brought in several students from the local technical collage to test his theory. Putting each subject through the adept tests to first insure that none had any latent magical ability he had each in turn try to operate his techno-magical device.



Every student who tried could operate the device and produce the magical affect. However, when the Magite was removed the device failed to function in all cases. The key had been found, a way to bring the power of magic to the unskilled masses through the use of technology. So was born the science of what is today called by its varying practitioners Techno-magic, often Techno-sorcery and sometimes by a resentful natural magical community,"pseudo-magic." As word of Edgar's discovery spread throughout human civilization many lesser mages and the non-magical alike were drawn to Magite based technologies. Over the last two centuries many Human made Magite based technologies have been invented and with them have arisen many guilds and societies. The largest to have grown from Edgar's work is The Institute for the Scientific Understanding of Magic or ISUM.

As a side note, arcane scholars often scoff at Edger's fame. Stating ironically, that arcane use of Magite dates back millennia and its properties were well known to the elf of Edgar's time, had anyone bothered to ask.

** Reality instability as defined by ISUM, is a phenomenon where in the physical laws of the universe and even time itself seems to behave erratically often contrary to modern scientific understanding. The affected area is sometimes regional, sometimes local, sometimes long duration and sometimes of very brief duration. It can manifest as a storm where it resembles a tornado in its movement and duration. The phenomenon is most probably connected to the vortex in some as yet undiscovered manner, perhaps as a type of tidal surge without detectable connection. This is most probably the mechanism that deposited arcane and other items around the planet at the beginning of the first century AV; and may be continuing to do so in a much less energetic manner. Note, the area around the vortex is the single largest and persistent known reality instability zone on earth. Both elf and dwarf maintain Magite mines near its fluctuating boarder.*

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Theory of Astral Energy Flow

By Dr. J Blackburn
Institute for the Scientific Understanding of Magic

Preface:

"The magic and mystery of the past has come once more to the future," as noted by a first century AV philosopher. It was put forth by the 3rd conference of the Institute for Scientific Understanding of Magic, that: The presence of the vortex on earth has somehow connected the earth in a persistent fashion to the lines or waves of magical energy that emanate from galactic center. Prior to the vortex's manifestation the earth, being nearer the edge of the galaxy, only periodically encountered this magical energy in the form of long tendril like waves that emanate far out into intergalactic space. This occasional coincidence with astral energies most likely fueled the stories about, if not the real manifestation, of the many human legends of magical people and creatures. The conference went on at length to postulate that magic is at its strongest near the galactic center. They also contended that a coincidence with a wave of magical energy several billion years ago probably started life on earth. There are many in the scientific and religious communities that disagree on the whole genesis of life issue. Suffice it to say there is magic like that of ancient legend as a very real force on the Post-vortex earth.

Contemporary understanding:

The current theory of astral energy flow according to the 4th conference is as follows: "Before the vortex the planet earth being farther from galactic center and moving at 135mi / 217km per second, is only occasionally in the path of particular galactic lines of force. These lines of force, unlike the wave front of normal energy, emanate from the galactic center and spread far apart out at galactic edge. The formation of the vortex has somehow connected the earth to this phenomenon, resulting in the persistent presence of magical energies. These energies that are as yet to be accurately measured or quantified are the source of all magical ability on earth.



It is further theorized that magical energy is a force related to dark matter and (or) dark energy and is in a coherent state, displaying properties of both matter and energy, in stark contradiction to traditional scientific understanding. This gives it a fluid like property and an intangible viscosity and mass that causes astral energy to clump and flow in a tendril like manner rather than a broad wave front from its source. This property of viscosity causes astral energies to cling to objects rather than to be absorbed by, reflect off, or penetrate them. These factors cause astral energy to behave like a sticky liquid and a focused radiated energy stream simultaneously. This scientifically nontraditional behavior renders traditional methods of scientific measurement and quantification ineffective. It has been further theorized by some that on its "own plane," or in its own dimension astral energy is actually in a liquid state. Most in purely scientific circles reject the notion that astral energy could somehow exist in multiple dimensions as an interconnected phenomenon. What is certain is that no one has been able to come up with a definitive way to measure magical energy. Several ways do however exist to detect its presence and relative force. Of course it goes without saying that the magical communities of the world have proven that it can be manipulated. The undeniably obvious control that many on earth exert on astral energy makes its existence an undeniable reality.

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GAME SYSTEM

Terminology

Abbreviation	Description	
	Dice	
Number D Number	Number of dice + Type of dice	1D6 One Dice 6 Sided
To Roll	A "To roll," as in "to do" is a dice roll made against a percentage chance of successfully initiating an action. To succeeded you must roll your character's maximum percentage or less . See: Character creation step 5	
+ and - To Percentile Dice Rolls	+ is a bonus - is a penalty	Example +10% To hit: A 10% higher roll is still a success. - 10% To Hit: A 10% lower roll is required for success.
	Time	
MR Melee round	A Melee Round is a turn during which a character can do something. One (1) melee round is one (1) minute of game time. 60MR = 1 Hour or 1HR	
MA Melee action	A Melee Action is most often a factor in combat and is a variable fraction of a Melee Round. See: Combat, Actions Per Melee Round.	
PMR / PMA	Per Melee Round	Per Melee Action
MSF	A character's Maximum Speed Factor refers to a characters speed of movement during a given time interval. See: Character Creation Step 6, Physical Stats	
	Damage / Durability	
HD / SD HDC / SDC	1 point of HD - Hard Damage = 10 points of SD - Soft Damage HDC is Hard Damage Capacity and SDC is Soft Damage Capacity The reason for the division between the two is to reduce the numbers of dice needed for powerful weapons and spells. Example: 1D6HD = 10D6SD See: Mortality and Soft Damage Capacity; see also, Combat.	

World Time Line

Based on Gregorian calendar

Year AD or CE	2000	2100	9 / 12 / 2115	9 / 13 / 2115
Century	21st	22nd	22nd last day	1st AV, Day 1
After Vortex AV Before vortex BV	9/13/2015 100 BV	Apocalypse Day: 9/13/2115 Day one AV calendar		Game century: 4th Century AV Sep. 13 / 2415 to Sep. 12 / 2515
9/13/2115 - 9/12/2215 1 to 100 1st century AV	9/13/2215-9/12/2315 101 to 200 2nd century AV	9/13/2315-9/12/2415 201 to 300 3rd century AV	9/13/2415-9/12/2515 301 to 400 4th century AV	
The After Vortex calendar is the universal human calendar, adopted some time in the first century after the apocalypse. Common arcane use the AV calendar, recognizing the shared timeline. However, each arcane race also has its own much older calendar.				

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