

# COORPS™

Complete Omniversal Role-Playing System

## Intro to the .pdf edition

As the advantages and limitations of .pdf documents evolve, so does the "standard" BTRC document format. The lightly shaded header and footer bars are kinder to the wallets of those using ink-jet printers, and color text in black bars has been removed because a few people were experiencing printing problems.

As usual for BTRC hypertext documents, text in **red** is usually a hyperlink to someplace. Due to some printing problems, we've left out the blue destination links. Colored text boxes serve the same function as in the hardcopy version of CORPS, **green ⓘ boxes** for general info, **blue △ boxes** for alerts and **red ⓧ boxes** for things you just shouldn't be doing. Items in reversed text are just for visual contrast and have no special function other than a major subject heading. If you have problems with the reversed text, check to make sure your printer driver is set to raster mode.

## Printing this

This should print well on normal 8.5" x 11" paper, and on the European A4 size as well. For best color printing we suggest a resolution of 360dpi or better, and the use of diffusion dither rather than regular halftones. The color mix is designed to be either a pure CMYK color or a 50-50 mix of two of them. Red is 50% magenta and 50% yellow, for instance. On laser printers, a modern 600dpi printer should do an excellent job. If you can adjust the level of halftone screening, it should be at least 85 lines per inch. Laser printers of 300dpi resolution provide adequate output for all pages of this document.

## HYPertext 1.0



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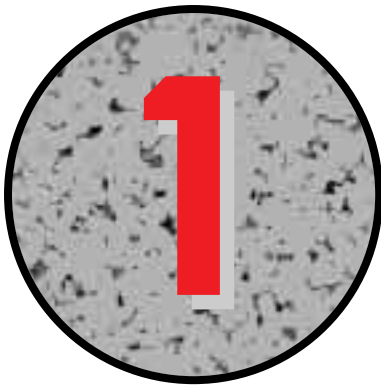
**CORPS** is supposed to be remarkably easy to use. Each major section has its own distinctive icon, and major subheadings are easy to spot.

**i** If you are just getting started in role-playing games, or with this game in particular, the sections of the contents with this label are the ones you should check out first.

If all else fails, use the table of contents and see the section that seems closest to what you are looking for.

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## INTRO- DUCTION

*"Part of being a game designer is the grim knowledge that at any moment you could be replaced by an infinite number of monkeys..."*

*Greg Porter*

### What is CORPS?

**CORPS** is a role-playing game, an exercise of the imagination and mind, where you take on the role of an adventurer in an exotic setting, slaying dragons, foiling villains, righting wrongs and occasionally saving the universe for fun and profit.

### The Rules

The rules of the game set the boundaries of this imaginary reality. They give the person running the game (the Game-master, or GM) a way to arbitrate sticky situations that in a movie would be handled by the script. In a role-playing game, there is no script, however. So, there are guidelines to cover these situations, like "how much can I lift?", "how skilled am I at my job?", or "just how much did that hurt, anyway?".

#### Information

Throughout the rules, you may see a number of symbols in the margins of the text. These are to help you with rule problems that may crop up, or answers to commonly asked questions. The first one is the information symbol, which explains a subject in a little more detail, or provides a quick synopsis of a longer rule topic.

#### Alert!

This is a notice. You may be referred to other related sections of the rules. There might also be a pitfall in the rules here, a paranormal power that can be exploited, or something that you really should remember about this section.

#### Don't do that!

This is a note that a particular rule or item *should not* be used in a particular manner.

There are other icons in the rules as well, designed to draw your eye to a particular topic faster than skimming the headings would.

### The Genre

Is the type of story your game will tell. These can be of any type, and genres you might consider these rules for could be:

<b>Espionage</b>	Characters are secret agents working for a shadowy government agency.
<b>High Fantasy</b>	Characters are adventurers in some past or future world of magic and swordsmanship.
<b>Post-ruin</b>	Characters are survivors in a world devastated by natural or artificial disasters.
<b>Superheroes</b>	Characters are superbeings fighting crime and injustice.
<b>Conspiracy</b>	Characters are ordinary people caught in a global web of intrigue.
<b>Time Travel</b>	Characters travel through different times and dimensions to survive, avoid pursuit, or correct injustice.
<b>Dark Nihilism</b>	Characters are survivors in a violent, decadent society where financial and social advancement is based on combat and guile.
<b>Exploration</b>	Characters are exploring a new frontier of some type.
<b>Space Opera</b>	Characters are citizens of a interstellar empire, with its attendant intrigue and other sentient races.

Often, these genres can be combined and mixed with little difficulty. For instance, characters could be spies in a low-tech fantasy world, combining espionage and fantasy, or superpowered mutants in a post-ruin world, combining these two genres.

### The Gamemaster

Is the one who runs the show. The GM provides the background setting (espionage, wizardry, space exploration, etc.), and provides the background personalities that the characters interact with (the street contact that you got a vital piece of information from, for instance). The GM also uses the rules to arbitrate actions between characters and these personalities, like using the levels of skill to determine who wins a fistfight. In movie terms, the GM provides the stage, plot and extras, while the characters are the stars.

### The Players

These are the "real people" playing the game. They don't dress up for the part, or wander around a stage. Rather, they take the verbal setting provided by the GM, and provide the dialogue and descriptions of what they do. Most of the action takes place in everyone's head, although there are times when a map of things is useful to see where people are and what they are up to.

## The Characters

These are the actors in the story, imaginary personalities that act and interact with each other and the other inhabitants of the game world. They may have abilities vastly different than the person playing them (the player), but they are still an aspect of the player's personality, since it is the player who controls their words and actions. A character is represented not only by these actions, but by a character sheet, a piece of paper that assigns numerical ratings to the character's abilities, like strength, agility, degree of skill and so on. This provides a permanent record of the character's abilities, and allows comparison of the character to other characters or inhabitants of the game world.

## Dice

Dice are what you use to determine the random and semi-random outcomes of events in the game world. For instance, the chance of a lottery ticket being a winner is random. However, the chance that you can hit a target with a gun is semi-random. That is, you have a certain level of expertise with firearms that influences your overall chance of success, but your chance of a *particular* shot going where you want requires a die roll, with higher skills having a better chance of success. Using dice to resolve situations will be more fully explained later.

## Plot

The plot is the second most important thing in the game. All good adventures or riveting stories have a good plot. If you look at your favorite movie or novel, you can probably write down the basic plot in a paragraph or so. The tricky part is turning this outline into an enjoyable adventure. The plot should not be confining. Players should not feel they are simply going through motions to reach a pre-determined outcome. The story written is a *joint* venture of the GM and players. The GM may have a story in mind, but characters will often surprise the GM, or go in directions totally unplanned for, and the GM needs to be flexible enough to take this possibility into account.

## Having fun

Is the *most* important thing in the game. You don't play a role-playing game to create a story, or expound on a theme. You play to have a good time, and the story and theme should follow naturally from that. The GM needs to create an interesting world that players *want* to have characters in, and players need to create characters that they will enjoy running into the wonders and challenges of this world. Everyone is supposed to have a good time, even if you get annoyed and frustrated on occasion.

## Designer's Notes

**CORPS** is (to me at least), a radical departure in RPG design and philosophy. While designing it in early 1990, the thought of creating a role-playing system without the "roll" was enough to make me totally abandon other projects until I had the bare bones of the system down on paper. **CORPS** makes it possible to phase out over 90% of the dice rolls you would have to make in a normal system, but yet retains a level of realism that is unmatched by any other game of equal ease of play. If you have to read a rule twice to understand it, we did something wrong. **CORPS** is a system where the same modifiers apply to *all* characters, and once you know a basic rule, expanding it to cover other situations should be easy and intuitive.

There are some who say that the story is everything, rules just get in the way, and that the system used is irrelevant...

The answer to that is that while you can pound nails with your forehead if you want to, a hammer is a much more effective tool for the job. Roleplaying is more than just a GM making up a story with occasional input from players to give the illusion of free will. It is the combination of plot, personalities, skills and sometimes blind chance that keeps everyone on their toes and coming back for more.

A role-playing game is a tool to help a group of people, the players and GM, tell a story. Game systems *do* matter. A good GM can make *any* game great, but it certainly does not hurt to have a good system to begin with.

That is what **CORPS** is supposed to be. A fast-moving, easy to learn system that provides enough realism and chance to make players think of the consequences of their actions. A system that is detailed, without being so mired in minutia that doing things becomes more an exercise in indexing than tactics. A system where characters have some certainty in their ability to get things done *without* dice rolls, and the uncertain chance of doing things in haste or beyond your normal skills.

Just remember that *everything* here is only a guideline. If you can think of a better way to do something, go with it.

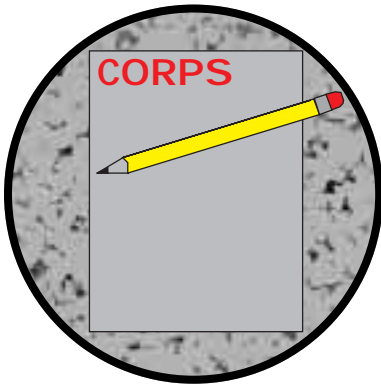
Last, thanks to those who made the 1st edition a success, and to all who read this, I hope you like it as well.

Good gaming,



Greg Porter





## CHARACTER GENERATION

### Basics

**CORPS** is the **Complete Omniversal Role-Playing System**, a simple game system that lets you create characters for play in any genre.

### What is a character?

A character is one of the inhabitants of the fictional world created by the GM. Like characters in a book or film, they have their own history and motivations, friends and enemies, and most importantly, a *reason* for doing things more exciting and dangerous than the average person. Your character is represented most of all by *you*, the player. It is *your* attitudes and motivations that make the character work. To assist this, your character will have certain skills and attributes that serve as a relative comparison between the character and those individuals or adventure situations that are encountered.

**Example** - You, as a person, are taking a walk, and a dog comes up and growls at you. You unconsciously make a threat comparison of your skill with the end of your foot and the dog's skill with its teeth. If the comparison is vastly in your favor, you stand your ground. If odds are against you, you run. If they are about even, you have to decide.

Likewise, if your *character* is confronted with the situation, you have a numerical rating that represents how well you kick, and how much damage you do, and the dog has a rating for its attack and damage. You as a *player* compare these numbers, decide what the likely outcomes are, and then have your *character* perform the appropriate action.

Your character will be built off a total of points, which are applied towards your skills and abilities. The better the ability, the more points it costs. So, all characters are more or less equal. Your character can get more points by taking on certain limitations that can influence the way they act in a certain situation, or how the other people in the campaign treat them. These are sort of a "reward" for placing a hurdle in your character's path that they must overcome.

**Example** - A player wants their character to be chivalrous to a fault. This can get them in trouble in a number of situations, so they get some extra points to compensate for it.

### Character Points

Your **CORPS** character will be bought from two sets of points, *Attribute Points* and *Skill Points* (AP and SP). Characters have a default starting age of 16 years old, and get a number of AP and SP based on the campaign type, which usually falls into one of the four categories below. Note that AP and SP are *not* interchangeable.

"Real-world" campaigns	100AP	50SP
Cinematic adventure	150AP	100SP
High fantasy	200AP	150SP
Superheroic adventure	200AP	200SP

These points can be altered by taking ads or disads (p.16), through the purchase of special abilities (p.95), or invested in non-stat parts of character design.

⚠ The thing to do *right now* is get an idea of what your character is supposed to be like, get a rough idea of the cost in AP and SP, and see if you've gone totally overboard.

### Attributes

Your **CORPS** character will have 6 attributes, each of which will serve usually several functions. The character's score in each attribute is marked down on the character sheet in the appropriate spot, along with the cost in AP.

<b>STR</b>	<b>Strength</b> - physical strength
<b>AGL</b>	<b>Agility</b> - dexterity, coordination
<b>AWR</b>	<b>Awareness</b> - IQ, perception
<b>WIL</b>	<b>Will</b> - toughness, personality, looks
<b>HLT</b>	<b>Health</b> - constitution, recovery, stamina
<b>POW</b>	<b>Power</b> - psychic potential

People will usually range from 1-10 in each of these attributes, and the cost of a given Attribute level is the level times itself, so a level of 1 would cost 1AP, a level of 3 would cost 9AP, a level of 5 would cost 25AP, and so on.

Level	Cost	Average man*	Average woman*
1	1	STR 5	STR 4
2	4	AGL 4	AGL 5
3	9	AWR 4	AWR 4
4	16	WIL 4	WIL 4
5	25	HLT 5	HLT 5
6	36	POW 1	POW 1
7	49		
8	64	*Based on 99AP	
9	81		
10	100		

**Example** - A player wishes their character to have an above average STR attribute, and buys a level of 6. This costs 36 of their AP, points which are now used up and no longer available to put towards other attributes or character advantages. You would place a "6" in the box for STR, and 36 in the box for the cost in AP.