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# APPENDIX: INVENTING

Superhero gadgetry has to come from somewhere and, generally speaking, it is not being mass produced. On the contrary, most of the amazing devices used by heroes and villains are one-of-a-kind or specialized items made by lone inventors.

If “necessity is the mother of invention,” then the demands of superheroics certainly qualify! Inventive heroes are frequently called upon to put their skills to work coming up with solutions to difficult problems. The *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Hero’s Handbook* details a system for in-game creation of these ingenious inventions and this **Appendix** expands upon it.

## THE INVENTOR ADVANTAGE

So far as the game rules are concerned, there’s invention and then there’s *invention*. “Inventing,” as its described and discussed here, is the ability to come up with devices—items producing various power effects—on relatively short notice. It is the province of the techie, gadgeteer, and kit-basher, and not the slow and steady process of advancing technology.

In order to use the inventing rules at all, a character must have the Inventor advantage (*Hero’s Handbook*, **Chapter 5**). The character will also benefit from a high Technology skill bonus, and may also have a high Intellect to go with it, although neither high Intellect nor formal training are necessary to be an Inventor. Like many M&M traits, the advantage makes no assumptions about how the character does it, just describing the capability.

In cases when the character’s inventiveness is truly a power or from some source other than the inventor’s own genius (the blessings of a god of technology, for example), then the Enhanced Advantage power is appropriate, allowing the character’s inventing ability to be affected like any other power.

Note that, since Inventor is a skill advantage, it is possible to spend a hero point for a Heroic Feat to acquire the advantage for one turn. Unfortunately, by default this isn’t enough time to actually do anything with it. Gamemasters wanting more opportunities for non-inventors to indulge in the bout of technical brilliance should feel free to modify this rule to be one *use* of the advantage, allowing a non-inventor to spend a hero point to come up with an invention, even though they normally lack the ability to do so. This option is particularly suitable for Silver Age style games, where it sometimes seems that *every* hero is an inventor!

## INVENTING SKILLS

Inventing requires Technology skill checks and, since the skill cannot be used untrained, inventors must be trained in Technology in order to make use of the Inventor advantage, although this training may come from innate talent or even Enhanced Skill rather than actual training or experience.

At the Gamemaster’s discretion, inventing may also require some secondary Expertise in a particular field related to the invention, in which case the inventor uses the lower of the two skill bonuses for the design phase of the invention (see the following): the character’s theoretical knowledge limits, and is limited by, practical engineering. Generally, this is not required, and inventors can design and invent whatever they want using only the Technology skill, but required Expertise may suit certain styles of games or settings where the GM wants to limit the Inventor advantage or require a degree of specialization.

## THE INVENTING PROCESS

**Chapter 7** of the *Hero’s Handbook* details the inventing process, using the following steps, expanded upon here:

### CONCEPT

The first step is for the player to come up with a concept for the invention, defining its effects in game terms and determining their overall cost in power points, using the guidelines from **Chapter 6** of the *Hero’s Handbook* (and supplementary material like this book and *Power Profiles*).

The GM reviews and approves of the concept for the invention and asks for modifications, if necessary. In particular, the Gamemaster may determine that certain effects or ranks of effect are unsuitable for the series.

Players of inventor characters may wish to keep notes on the concepts for various inventions for future reference, should the character decide to “re-activate” that invention or create something similar. This saves time during play and reduces the work the GM needs to do in reviewing and approving of the concept (since it was previously approved).

### INVENTING AND POWER LEVEL

By default, inventions are subject to the same power level limits as all other effects in the series. Gamemasters may wish to bend or waive this rule, depending on the circumstances or style of the series, but should keep in mind that allowing inventions to exceed power level limits makes them more difficult to create, given that the inventor’s skills are still limited; a PL6 inventor (limited to a +16 skill bonus at most) will have some difficulty with DC 30+ checks, for example, although they are not impossible. Allowing an invention to circumvent power level limits can be one way of allowing heroes to overcome otherwise near-impossible odds.

### INVENTING AND CHALLENGES

In some instances, the effect of an invention is to overcome a challenge, such as overriding the lock-out on an alien computer system, or taking control of a villain’s

# APPENDIX: RITUALS

The rituals rules given in **Chapter 7** of the *Hero's Handbook* are an extension of the Inventing rules (see **Appendix: Inventing**), just substituting different trappings for the process of creating something in a lab or workshop. Rituals can be extended to cover a wide range of “slow” powers that require time, preparation, skill, and effort, rather than the relatively effortless powers of most superheroes and villains.

This **Appendix** presents optional expanded rules for rituals and their related game traits for **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS**.

## RITUAL POWER SOURCES

The standard **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS** rules assume rituals are magical in nature, drawing upon mystical forces (it even says so in the name of the rule: “Magical Rituals”). However, the mechanics of the ritual system do not inherently require magic, and could also be used with different practices and power sources, such as:

- **Chi:** Rituals based in yoga, martial arts, meditation, and other disciplines serve to cultivate and harness the user's chi or life force to create remarkable effects. The design and construction of the rituals involve research, deep meditative, introspection, and practice, while the performance of the ritual involves a complex series of movements and meditative postures.
- **Divine:** These rituals call upon the intervention of a divine power (a god or gods) on behalf of the ritualist. The design and construction phases are preparatory rituals of sacrifice and purification, along with divination and augury to determine the most auspicious elements, times, and other components of the ritual itself. Because of the shifting cycles of the world and the shifting whims of the gods, these rituals need additional preparation each time they are used, going through at least the construction, if not design, phase again. Rituals calling upon an evil deity are often referred to as “infernal” instead of divine.
- **Mathemagical:** Although these rituals may *seem* magical, they are actually “sufficiently advanced technology” employing esoteric mathematics to manipulate the building blocks of the cosmos in order to create certain outcomes. The process involves a great deal of calculation of the known variables and then the process of “solving” the necessary equations in order to bring about the desired effect.
- **Preternatural:** Some rituals, and powers, are Things Man Was Not Meant to Know, preternatural forces from outside the known universe, able to bend and twist our physical laws (and minds) in shocking ways. Preternatural rituals, and the occult knowledge to create and perform them, is nearly always the province of strange, forbidden cults, like the Brotherhood

of the Yellow Sign from *Freedom City* or the Eightfold Web from *Threat Report*.

- **Psychic:** Similar to both chi and magical powers, psychic rituals tap into the latent powers of the mind and spirit and typically involve meditation and other practices intended to focus and open the mind to those potentials. Psychic rituals may require trappings like crystals or other “vibrational” tools to attune a space or user to psychic energies. See the **Psychic** section of this book and the **Mental Powers** section of *Power Profiles* for additional ideas.
- **Spiritual:** Related to divine powers, spiritual rituals call upon the abilities of other beings—incorporeal spirits—to create their effects. These spirits might be those of the ancestors or more recent dead, shamanic spirit allies and totems, races of spirit beings like the faerie or djinn, or orders of lesser divine beings, from choirs of angels to the demonic legions of Hell itself.

## RITUALIST ADVANTAGE

The ability to perform rituals is an advantage called **Ritualist** (*Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 5**). Note that, since **Ritualist** is a skill advantage, it is possible to spend a hero point for a Heroic Feat to acquire the advantage for one turn. Unfortunately, by default this isn't enough time to do anything with it. Gamemasters wanting more opportunities for non-ritualists to indulge in the occasional ritual should feel free to modify this rule to be one *use* of the advantage, allowing a non-ritualist to spend a hero point to create or perform a ritual, even though they normally lack the ability to do so.

The default form of the **Ritualist** advantage given in the *Hero's Handbook* assumes the use of the Expertise: Magic skill and magical forces but, as **Ritual Power Sources** describes, that does not have to be the case, and there may be multiple forms of the **Ritualist** advantage in the setting drawing upon different power sources.

## RITUAL SKILLS

The **Ritualist** advantage provides the potential to create and perform rituals. Certain ritual skills offer the practical knowledge and ability to do so. Usually, this is a particular Expertise skill, such as Expertise: Magic in the default ritual system. A character could likewise have Expertise: Meditation, Expertise: Religion, or Expertise: Occult, to name a few potential ritual skills.

Generally, other existing skills from **M&M** are unsuitable as ritual skills, although the GM can make exceptions, if desired. Given the physical performance aspects of some rituals, a case can be made for Acrobatics or Athletics as a ritual skill (although more likely Expertise in Dance, Katas, Yoga, or some similar form of performance). Technology