

ETHERSCOPE

ETHERSPACE ADVENTURES
IN AN AGE OF INDUSTRY,
INTRIGUE, AND IMPERIALISM



A COMPLETE ROLE PLAYING GAME
Created by Nigel McClelland and Ben Redmond



ETHERSCOPE

CORE RULEBOOK

For our families and the memory of John Henry Greenwood, loving grandfather of Nigel McClelland, whose support and belief have made this book possible.

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CONTENTS

CORE RULEBOOK	1	Influences Detail	106	The Dying Saving Throw	171
CREDITS	1	SPECIAL TRAITS	108	Recovery	172
CONTENTS	2	CHAPTER III: EQUIPMENT	113	Ability Score Damage	172
INTRODUCTION	5	ENCUMBRANCE	113	ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDS	173
JACK	5	Carrying Capacity	113	Darkness and Light	173
THE YEAR IS 1984.	6	MOVEMENT AND OVERLAND TRAVEL	114	Heat and Cold	173
The Pan-European War	6	ACQUISITION	114	Catching on Fire	173
The New Reich	7	Wealth Bonus	115	Starvation and Thirst	173
Russia	7	Acquiring Goods and Services	115	Suffocation and Drowning	173
Britain	7	Increasing Wealth	116	Falling	174
The Pacific War	8	CONCEALED WEAPONS AND OBJECTS	116	Poison	174
The Etherscope	8	WEAPONS AND ARMOUR	117	Disease	175
America	9	Weapons	117	Energy Drain and Negative Levels	175
Ottoman Empire	11	Armour	128	Acid	175
The Great Metropolis	11	VEHICLES	129	Electricity	175
New Dangers	11	Powered Armour	132	VEHICLE MOVEMENT AND COMBAT	176
WELCOME	11	CYBERNAUGHTICS	133	Characters in Vehicles	176
What is Roleplaying?	12	Classifying Cybernaughtics	133	Scale	176
The World of Etherscope	12	Cybernaughtic Purchase Points	134	Vehicle Sizes	176
Playing the Game	13	Tolerance	135	Facing and Firing Arcs	176
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK	13	Minimum Constitution	135	Getting Started	176
System Basics	13	Cybernaughtic Apps	136	Initiative	176
INSPIRATION	14	Cybernaughtic Arm	136	Vehicle Speed	177
CHAPTER I: CHARACTERS	17	Cybernaughtic Eye	137	Moving	177
CHARACTER CREATION	17	Cybernaughtic Leg	138	Pilot Options	177
ABILITY SCORES	19	Dermal/Subdermal Plating	138	Collisions and Ramming	179
Ability Modifiers	19	Motor Neuron Accelerators	139	Losing Control	180
Using Ability Scores	19	Scope Jack	139	Hide and Seek	180
CHARACTER RACES	20	GENERAL EQUIPMENT	140	Fighting from Vehicles	180
Humans	20	Equipment Tables	140	Damaging Vehicles	181
Alpha Humans	20	LIFESTYLE	147	CHAPTER V: THE	
The Transgenic Strains	21	SERVICES	151	WORLD OF ETHERSCOPE	183
Fey	25	CHAPTER IV: COMBAT	153	GEOGRAPHY	183
SOCIAL TEMPLATES	26	COMBAT ROUND—THE BASICS	153	The Great Metropolis	183
Template Descriptions	27	Combat Statistics	153	The British Empire	184
BASIC CLASSES	30	INITIATIVE	155	North America	185
Overview	30	ACTIONS IN COMBAT	155	Europe and Western Asia	185
Broker	30	The Combat Round	155	The Pacific	186
Combatant	33	Action Types	156	South America	187
Enginaught	36	Attack Actions	156	Unexplored Regions	187
Pursuer	38	Move Actions	157	SOCIETY	187
Savant	41	Full-Round Actions	158	Espionage: The Great Game	187
Scoundrel	44	Miscellaneous Actions	159	The Eugenics League	188
CHAPTER II: TRAITS	49	Attacks of Opportunity	159	Religion	188
PERSONALITY TRAITS	49	MOVEMENT AND POSITION	160	The Northumbrian Republican Movement	189
Values	49	Tactical Movement	160	Counterculture	189
Allegiances	51	COMBAT MODIFIERS	160	Gamma Sewer Kingdoms	190
SAVING THROWS	51	Favourable and Unfavourable Conditions	160	Criminal Organisations	190
EXCELLENCE POINTS	52	COVER	161	Craftsman Guilds	190
SKILLS	52	CONCEALMENT	161	Occult Societies	190
Getting Skills	52	HELPLESS DEFENDERS	162	CHAPTER VI: THE SCOPE	193
Using Skills	53	SPECIAL INITIATIVE ACTIONS	162	SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	193
Skill Descriptions	56	Delay	162	A Brief History of Ether Science	193
FIGHTING TECHNIQUES	80	Ready	162	Technology	195
Combat Styles	81	SPECIAL ATTACKS	163	GEOGRAPHY OF THE SCOPE	198
OCCULT SKILLS	84	Aid Another	163	A Typical Scope City	198
Occult Science	84	Firearms	163	New London	199
Occult Powers	84	Grenades and Explosives	163	Centropolis	199
Occult Skill Descriptions	85	Attack an Object	164	Schopheim	199
Occult Lore Powers	85	Bull Rush	165	Haven	199
Psychic Powers	88	Overrun	166	The Pleasure Domes	199
Spirit Medium Powers	90	Trip	166	Other Cities	199
FEATS	92	Grapple	167	SCOPE RIDING	199
INFLUENCES	104	Bind	168	Scope Avatars	200
Gaining Influences	105	CHARACTER STATUS	169	Avatars and Equipment	201
Using Influences	105	Conditions	169	Movement in the Scope	202
		DEATH, DYING, AND HEALING	171	Remote Users	203
		Injury and Death	171	Entering the Scope	203
		Healing	171		

TABLES

Upload Tabs	204
Upload Capsules	205

CHAPTER VII: THE ADVANCING CHARACTER EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT	207
Character-Level Dependent Benefits	207
Advancing a Level	207
Level Advancement	208
Multiclass Characters	209
ADVANCED CLASSES	210
Overview	210
Connector	211
Cybernaught	212
Explorer	213
Industrialist	214
Occult Investigator	215
Program Crafter	217
Scope Rider	219
Scope Warrior	220
Spy	221
Street Mercenary	222
Tab-Jammer	223
Thief	224

CHAPTER VIII: GAMESMASTERING ENCOUNTERS	227
Designing Encounters	227
Awarding Experience Points	230
CREATURES AND CHARACTERS	230
Major and Supporting Antagonists	230
Creating a Creature or Character	230
Creature Subtypes	233
Exceptional Characters	234
Ordinaries	234
Example Characters and Creatures	235
Animals	238
Ordinaries	241
Etherspace Creatures	244
RUNNING AN ETHERSCOPE GAME	250
Class and Values	250
Themes	251
BUILDING YOUR CAMPAIGN	252
Game Styles	252
METAPLOT	255

CHAPTER IX: ADVENTURES	257
INTRODUCTION	257
ANALOGUE	257
Part One: Sullivan Bennett	258
Part Two: Meanwhile, Back at the Lab	260
Dr. Bennett's Lab	262
Part Three: The Chase is On	266
The Duchy of Raymond Faulk	267
New London	271
Conclusion	275
COMPOUND 13	276
Part One: The Background	276
Part Two: Involving the Characters	276
Part Three: Getting Started	277
Part Four: Aerial Journey	277
Part Five: Overland Travel	278
Part Six: The Hill Village	279
Part Seven: Wild Dogs Attack	280
Part Eight: The Crash Site	281

CHARACTER SHEET	284
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APPENDIX ONE: LEGAL INFORMATION	286
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Table 1-1: Ability Score Costs	17
Table 1-2: Ability Score Modifiers	19
Table 1-3: Fey Scope Familiars	25
Table 1-4: Social Templates	27
Table 1-5: The Broker	31
Table 1-6: The Combatant	34
Table 1-7: The Enginaught	37
Table 1-8: The Pursuer	39
Table 1-9: The Savant	42
Table 1-10: The Scoundrel	45
Table 2-1: Excellence Points by Character Level	52
Table 2-2: Skill Points per Level	53
Table 2-3: Class and Cross-Class Skills	54
Table 2-6: Ability Check Examples	55
Table 2-4: Difficulty Class Examples	55
Table 2-5: Example Opposed Checks	55
Table 2-7: Balance Modifiers	56
Table 2-8: Bluff Circumstance Modifiers	57
Table 2-9: Climbing DCs	59
Table 2-10: Distraction DCs	59
Table 2-11: Creative Art Check Results	59
Table 2-12: Attitude Classes	60
Table 2-13: Diplomacy Results	60
Table 2-14: Bribery DCs	60
Table 2-15: Disguise Modifiers	60
Table 2-16: Disguise Familiarity Modifiers	60
Table 2-17: Engineer Repair Checks	61
Table 2-18: Open Lock DCs	61
Table 2-19: Engineer (chemical) — Acids and Bases	62
Table 2-20: Engineer (chemical) — Explosives	62
Table 2-21: Engineer (ethertech) — Example Device DCs	62
Table 2-22: Engineer (ethertech) — Disable Security DCs	62
Table 2-23: Engineer (mechanical) — Example Device DCs	63
Table 2-24: Engineer (pharmaceutical) — Medicinal Drugs	63
Table 2-25: Engineer (pharmaceutical) — Poisons	64
Table 2-26: Engineer (pharmaceutical) — Scope Tabs and Upload Tabs and Capsules	64
Table 2-27: Engineer (structural) — Example Build DCs	64
Table 2-28: Escape Artist DCs	65
Table 2-29: Create Forgery Check Modifiers	65
Table 2-30: Detect Forgery Check Modifiers	65
Table 2-31: Handle Animal Task DCs	66
Table 2-32: Hide Size Modifiers	67
Table 2-33: Hide Concealment Modifiers	67
Table 2-34: Investigate Clue Analysis Modifiers	67
Table 2-35: Long Jump DCs	68
Table 2-36: High Jump DCs	68
Table 2-37: High Jump Maximum Height	68
Table 2-38: Language Groups	70
Table 2-39: Listen DCs	70
Table 2-40: Listen Penalties	71
Table 2-41: Navigate DCs	72
Table 2-42: Performance Check Results	73
Table 2-43: Scope Resilience Alter Avatar DCs	75
Table 2-44: Remote Movement DCs	76
Table 2-45: Program Component Complexity Level	76
Table 2-46: Drone Statistics	77
Table 2-47: Scope Use Finding Documents DC	77
Table 2-48: Scope Security Level DCs	77
Table 2-49: Search DCs	78
Table 2-50: Typical Survival Checks	79
Table 2-51: Fencing Stance Feats	82
Table 2-52: Fencing Manoeuvres	82
Table 2-53: Met-Fu Stance Feats	82
Table 2-54: Met-Fu Manoeuvres	82
Table 2-55: Queensbury Boxing Stance Feats	83
Table 2-56: Queensbury Boxing Manoeuvres	83
Table 2-57: Scope-Fu Stance Feats	83
Table 2-58: Scope-Fu Manoeuvres	83
Table 2-59: Occult Skills by Class	86
Table 2-60: Healing Potion DCs	86
Table 2-61: Enchant Item DCs and Hit Point Loss	87
Table 2-62: Object Reading DCs	88
Table 2-63: Aura Sight Emotions	89
Table 2-64: Locate Possessions DCs	90
Table 2-65: Telepathic Projection DCs	90
Table 2-66: Future Prediction DCs	91
Table 2-67: Feats Summary	94-96
Table 2-68: Heroic Surge Uses Per Day	99
Table 2-69: Track DCs and Condition Modifiers	103
Table 2-70: Maximum Influence Ranks by Level	104
Table 2-71: Influence Points per Level	104
Table 2-72: Example Etiquette DCs	105
Table 2-73: Gather Information DCs	106
Table 2-74: Standing Check Results	106
Table 2-75: Listen Check DCs to Detect Invisible Creatures	110
Table 3-1: Carrying Capacity	113
Table 3-2: Speed Adjustments due to Encumbrance	113
Table 3-3: Hampered Movement	115
Table 3-4: Hourly and Daily Overland Movement	115
Table 3-5: Terrain and Overland Movement	115
Table 3-6: Requisition Modifiers	116
Table 3-7: Concealing Weapons and Objects	117

Table 3-8: Ranged Weapons	119
Table 3-9: Ammunition	121
Table 3-10: Ammunition Weights	121
Table 3-11: Grenades and Explosives	122
Table 3-12: Splash Weapons	122
Table 3-13: Melee Weapons	124
Table 3-14: Armour	128
Table 3-15: Vehicle Statistics	130
Table 3-16: Powered Armour	132
Table 3-17: Attachment Size and Defence Bonuses	133
Table 3-18: Grades of Cybernaughtic App	134
Table 3-19: Cybernaughtic Apps	135
Table 3-20: General Equipment	139
Table 3-21: Skills and Professional Equipment	144
Table 3-22: Lifestyle Items	147
Table 3-23: Typical Long-Distance Travel Speeds	150
Table 3-24: Direct Travel Distances Between Major Cities	150
Table 3-25: Services	151
Table 4-1: Size Modifiers	153
Table 4-2: Actions in Combat	156
Table 4-3: Two-Weapon Fighting Penalties	158
Table 4-4: Defence Modifiers	159
Table 4-5: Attack Roll Modifiers	160
Table 4-6: Cover	161
Table 4-7: Concealment	161
Table 4-8: Scatter Direction — 1 Range Increment	164
Table 4-9: Scatter Direction — 2-4 Range Increments	164
Table 4-10: Scatter Direction — 5+ Range Increments	164
Table 4-11: Size and Defence of Objects	165
Table 4-12: Substance Hardness and Hit Points	165
Table 4-13: Object Hardness and Hit Points	166
Table 4-14: Light Sources	173
Table 4-15: Damage from Falling Objects	174
Table 4-16: Diseases	175
Table 4-17: Electricity Damage	175
Table 4-18: Vehicle Sizes	176
Table 4-19: Vehicle Speeds and Modifiers	177
Table 4-20: Hazards and Avoidance DCs	178
Table 4-21: Bootleg Turn DCs	178
Table 4-22: Vehicle Jump DCs	179
Table 4-23: Vehicle Speed Jump Modifiers	179
Table 4-24: Sideswipe DC Modifiers	179
Table 4-25: Collision Damage — Die Type	179
Table 4-26: Collision Damage — Number of Dice	179
Table 4-27: Collision Direction	179
Table 4-28: Damage to Vehicle Occupants	180
Table 4-29: Vehicle Crew Quality	181
Table 6-1: Avatar Ability Scores	200
Table 6-2: Avatar Base Traits	200
Table 6-3: Avatar Trait Values by Skill Ranks	201
Table 6-4: Avatar Skills	201
Table 7-1: Experience Level	207
Table 7-2: Character-Level Dependent Abilities	208
Table 7-3: Additional Attacks	210
Table 7-4: The Connector	212
Table 7-5: The Cybernaught	213
Table 7-6: Cybernaughtic Enhancement Engineer DCs	213
Table 7-7: The Explorer	214
Table 7-8: The Industrialist	215
Table 7-9: The Occult Investigator	216
Table 7-10: The Program Crafter	217
Table 7-11: Optimise Device Check DCs	218
Table 7-12: Gremlin Statistics	218
Table 7-13: The Scope Rider	219
Table 7-14: Ride the Currents Distances Between Scope Cities (in minutes)	220
Table 7-15: The Scope Warrior	221
Table 7-16: The Spy	222
Table 7-17: The Street Mercenary	223
Table 7-18: The Tab-jammer	224
Table 7-19: The Thief	225
Table 8-1: Hazard CRs	228
Table 8-2: CRs for Skill Checks	228
Table 8-3: Encounter Threat Levels and EL Adjustment	228
Table 8-4: Experience Point Awards	229
Table 8-5: Creature Saves and Base Attack Bonuses	231
Table 8-6: Animals	232
Table 8-7: Constructs	232
Table 8-8: Racial Subtypes	233
Table 8-9: Humanoids	233
Table 8-10: Outsiders	233
Table 9-1: Some Example Tropical Diseases	279



CHAPTER VI: THE SCOPE

This chapter provides you with a broad overview of the Etherscope itself, providing details on the geography of Etherspace, the scientific and technological implications, and all the game rules to allow your characters to explore the Scope.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The following section considers the core theories behind the Science of the Etherscope world. It reveals what makes Scope riding, zepcars, and cybernaughtics a reality.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ETHER SCIENCE

Around the mid-nineteenth century, three key theories existed that all played a role in the formation of ether science. The first of these theories was the laws of thermodynamics, in particular the second law, also known as the entropy law. These theories were first developed by Carnot early in the century, and completed by Thompson and Clausius in the 1840s. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, were Michael Faraday's 1845 theories on electromagnetism. Finally, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859. However, it was Herbert Spencer's work that led to the important theories and discoveries of ether science. Spencer's *A System of Synthetic Philosophy* integrated ideas from all three earlier theories, along with some concepts from other contemporary science and philosophy. He drew upon three key concepts, described below.

Entropy Law

There are two laws of thermodynamics. The first states that energy is never used up, merely changed from one form to another, one of the ideas used by Spencer in his *Synthetic Philosophy*. The second law states that the amount of energy available for use in a given system has a tendency to decline. This is entropy, the desire for everything in nature to return to a uniform, decayed state.

The Ether

The word "Ether" was used by Faraday, but was in actuality a classical reference to the ideas of Plato. Plato, an ancient Greek figure, theorised that the five "true" (now known as Platonic) shapes were those of Fire, Earth, Air and Water, of which the Greeks believed all matter was comprised. Plato therefore needed a fifth element, which he did not fully understand, but which he called "Ether," the stuff of the cosmos.

Electromagnetism

Faraday could show that electromagnetic force was a wave, and as such there must be a medium through which it travels, such as how sound waves travel through the air and cannot pass through a vacuum. Faraday did not know the nature of this medium, but he named it "Ether" after Plato's concept of a cosmic element as he knew that, whatever this substance was, it must be present in the vacuum of outer space.

Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy

Herbert Spencer was a philosopher and writer of great influence on the Victorian world. Before publishing his *A System of Synthetic Philosophy*, he had written on a wide variety of topics, such as sociology, psychology, and biology. He was deeply affected by Darwin's work and even coined the term "Survival of the Fittest." Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*, historically only published for private subscribers, brought together his own ideas of sociology, psychology, and natural philosophy in a great work published in nine volumes over thirty-one years. Whilst it may be impossible to paraphrase such a work in one or two sentences, the basic premise is that all of nature, whether it be energy, species of life, human societies, or individuals, has a tendency to evolve from the general to the specific. Simple examples can be readily seen in each of these areas: Human civilisations evolve from small communities where everyone shares in all tasks, to towns with specialist farmers, blacksmiths, merchants and the like. In biology, we can see how an embryo seems to evolve from a tadpole-like creature into a somewhat reptilian and finally a recognisable human form. In thermodynamics, we can see how the processes of interaction transform energy. However, this theory falters when faced with the Entropy Law, which states a desire for all nature to return to a largely disorganised state.

The Etheric State

Spencer developed a theory in his early volumes that his peers felt was so groundbreaking they urged him to publish his work for the whole scientific community to debate. Spencer took his same line of thinking on a general evolutionary theory and added Entropy into his concepts. He started from Plato's original shapes and, in combination with Faraday's ideas, speculated that the shapes did not represent the four elements as observed by the Greek philosophers, but instead referred to the different states of matter and energy. He claimed that ideas about Air relate to a gaseous state, Water a liquid state and Earth a solid. Energy was the equivalent of Plato's Fire element, whilst Ether was Entropy. He theorised that, as energy is interchangeable with entropy and the three

ETHERSCOPE TERMS

Domain: An area of Etherspace that has been sectioned off from wild Etherspace and made suitable for human immersion, often holding cities for Scope users to explore or the processing systems of industry and the military.

Ether: The substance of entropy, which can react in a number of different volatile ways when it comes into contact with *Prime Reality*.

Ethertech: Technology whose operation involves a connection to Etherspace.

Ether Balloon: An ether bubble created by a special type of portal, used in place of the gas balloons of zeppelins.

Ether Flue: A series of portals through Etherspace that are used to purify coal gas.

Ether Veil: A thin layer of ether that covers all matter and energy in the universe. The human brain causes ripples in this veil, creating the source of thought.

Ether Guns: Long-range cannons with *ethertech* guidance systems.

Etheric State: A theoretical understanding of entropy as a state of the universe. It is one of the fundamental states defined by Herbert Spencer: Solid, Liquid, Gas, and Energy, the etheric state.

Etherium: An iron-cobalt alloy forged in Etherspace. It is exceptionally light and strong.

Ether Jet: A propulsion system developed from *vent portals* used most often in aircraft.

Etherscope: The areas of Etherspace that have been modified by human technologies, created from a collection of domains and *Scope*

cities.

Etherspace: A parallel universe made up of ether.

Immersed Scope Use: To transfer one's consciousness into Etherspace, thus experiencing the Etherscope as a new universe.

Personal Domain: A small domain usually the size of a desk or small office for use by an individual private owner.

Pleasure Domain: A domain that has been created for *Scope users'* leisure activities.

Prime Reality: The "real world" of matter and energy.

Program Crafter: A Scope user who specialises in creating materials from Etherspace.

Remote Scope Use: To use the Scope from a *Scope Point*, thus viewing the Etherscope through a portal.

Scope City: A large domain within the Etherscope developed to appear like a city in Prime Reality. It is often found at the centre of a cluster of domains belonging to an individual nation. Scope cities are usually surrounded by a *Wall* of personal Scope domains.

Scope Jack: A cybernaughtic attachment that allows the user to connect directly to a Scope point, allowing him to immerse himself into the Scope.

Scope Point: An Etherspace portal protected by a glass window that allows the user to manipulate Etherspace either via a pair of remote hands or through "jacking in" if he has a Scope jack. Scope points always open to a set location in Etherspace, usually a personal domain within the

Wall of a Scope City, but the user can move away from that point once inside.

Scope Processor: Processing systems held within the Etherscope allow for high levels of miniaturisation. Such processors take up no space in Prime Reality other than the portal used to display the results.

Scope Rider: A user of the Scope who has become involved with hacking activities, usually associated with a countercultural movement.

Scope Tab: A drug taken in tablet form which transfers the taker's consciousness into Etherspace at a specific location, often a pleasure domain within the Etherscope.

Scope User: One who enters the Scope. Such a user is either immersed or remote.

The Wall: An area surrounding a Scope city that holds all of the personal domains for that city.

Upload Capsule: A drug similar to a Scope tab that provides very specific knowledge, such as the layout of a building.

Upload Tab: A drug similar to a Scope tab that provides general knowledge and skill bonuses, such as Scope-fu training.

Vent Portal: A portal to Etherspace that leaks volatile ether into Prime Reality. As the ether leaks out, it converts matter to energy, providing an efficient source of energy.

Zeppcar: A personal zeppelin about the size of a typical street car. They have a special *ethertech* control system that lets the user "drive" in vertical lanes in areas of the city with special control pylons.

states of matter are interchangeable, that energy and matter must be interchangeable, also. Entropy thus became known as "the etheric state," a fifth state alongside solid, liquid, gas, and energy. This led to a rush of "believers" trying to provide evidence that matter could be made interchangeable with energy.

The Discovery of Etherspace

Many scientists were fascinated by Spencer's theories and a race began to extract or identify the etheric state. However, the discovery of Etherspace came as a shock to everyone, including the man who discovered it.

Harold Wallace was a poor and struggling professional scientist, making a living from teaching and using his earnings to submit papers to the Royal Society, many of which were rejected. Wallace was not even trying to discover ether when

his experiment first opened a gateway to Etherspace. Like many great discoveries of Science, the uncovering of Etherspace was purely accidental. Wallace was experimenting with magnetic fields and using powerful electromagnets. He discovered that at certain specific frequencies, a ring of electromagnets positioned in accurately measured positions opened a portal into a mysterious, other realm. This was Etherspace, a strange parallel dimension, different in many ways from our normal understanding of the laws of physics. After a century of research into the etheric state, scientists discovered that, as Faraday theorised, ether is prevalent throughout the universe: a small veil of entropic substance encapsulates all. Etherspace, however, is a universe made entirely of ether, and there is a constant of ebb and flow of material passing back and forth between the two universes. It has also been discovered that ether is the medium through which thought waves ripple. Scientists and

philosophers had long argued over the possibility of a materialist understanding of thought, with many arguing that the simple electrobiology of the brain could not possibly hold all the answers to the human soul. It appears that the human brain has a less discernable quality, as it generates waves in the ether veil, and these waves have been proven to be the source of thought and consciousness. This discovery has provided a number of interesting technological applications, such as Scope jacks and tabs, which allow the transference of human consciousness into Etherspace, but as yet little is properly understood about the nature of thought and its implications on technologies and their use.

The Impact of Ether Science

Spencer's work had an impact throughout all aspects of society. Most notable was the effect on philosophy and politics.

There was an almost-instantaneous Plato fad amongst the thinking classes. Plato's Republic became the talk of the educated classes, and many became proponents of an intellectual elite ruling their countries. This made a crucial difference in the political arena, where the Second Reform Bill of 1867 was crucially altered — instead of securing voting rights for working class men, it provided for weighted voting power for those who had "proved themselves successful." This was supposed to apply to successful industrialists and engineers, but a financial prerequisite led to an increase in power for the landed aristocracy as well as the bourgeoisie.

Cultural Impact of the Scope

The Etherscope itself, understandably, has also had a massive cultural impact. There are those within the guilds who are concerned about its effect on the lives of working folk, worried that it means less skilled jobs and more potential for exploitation. Whilst the guilds are not the political force for organised labour that the unions were, there are some members who are more proactive, seeking to destroy what they can within the Scope. These people learn the skills of the Scope user to fight the perceived threat to their livelihoods.

Perhaps those with the biggest interest in the Scope are the Scope riders and tab-jammers. These counter-culturalists have made the Scope their homes. They are revolutionaries, rebels, and free thinkers, seeking to break the power of the ruling classes through the knowledge that can be obtained through the Scope. Whilst the Scope provides them with a great resource and an ability to strike successfully against their masters, the drug culture associated with the movement leads to addiction and other social problems. The young idle rich have found that the Scope allows them a great new way to explore their desires and throw wild parties — it has become the primary means of hedonism in the modern world. Finally, there are Scope temperance movements, largely stemming from the establishment churches. The Anglican Church in Britain is particularly opposed to the widening use of the Scope, especially the drug culture of the tab-jam-

mers. Vicars and ministers demonise the use of Scope tabs from the pulpits most Sundays.



TECHNOLOGY

This section considers the different technological applications of ether science. It is this technological application of the science that makes **Etherscope**.

Applications of Ether Science

Etherspace is different in many ways from the previous understanding of space. In the early days of Etherspace research, people rushed to experiment with portals and to discover new ways in which they could manipulate and control this resource. It was quickly discovered that most material is degraded or destroyed upon entering Etherspace; only magnetically active materials seem to have the ability to survive. It is also difficult to take ether from Etherspace, as matter has a tendency to degrade when brought into contact with pure ether. Pure ether is an unstable substance with a range of properties depending upon the type of portal that is opened. Ether often reacts with both matter and energy when it leaks from Etherspace and can convert energy and matter from one form to another, or even between types of the same form. The exact properties of ether as it comes into contact with Prime Reality appear to be based on the location within Etherspace the portal opens upon. Turbulent regions of Etherspace tend to consume matter, turning much of it into raw energy, whilst tranquil regions absorb all energy, causing an instant freeze effect.

Vent portals were perhaps the first technological application of Etherspace, providing a powerful and readily controllable source of energy. Vent portals open onto a turbulent region of Etherspace. As ether leaks from the portal and touches the air and other matter, it converts them into pure energy. This was quickly developed as a heat source for furnaces and steam engines, providing a more efficient source of energy. However, gas remained the primary source of domestic heating and lighting as the flow of vent portal

energy is to intense for such purposes and the process for controlling it precisely too expensive for any but the elite of society. Later, people discovered how to forge etherium, an iron-cobalt alloy, within Etherspace, as well as the means to move this substance through an open vent portal. Etherium is much stronger and lighter than any other material, and has allowed many technological breakthroughs.

Not only is it possible to pass magnetic materials into the ether, but research has shown that they can also be used to control the substance of Etherspace itself. This has enabled the forging materials and objects of pure ether. Whilst these objects cannot be removed from Etherspace, their applications within are unlimited. It is through such manipulation of Etherspace that the Etherscope has been created. Domains have been isolated from the ebb and flow of Etherspace. These are the building blocks of the Etherscope, holding whole cities and vast processing systems.

One final important development is Damian Knighton's ether flue. Knighton created a tunnel of portals within Etherspace that had an entry and an exit. Etherspace destroys complex molecular structures, hence removing impurities from simple gases and liquids passed through the flue. This allowed for an ultra-pure coal gas to be filtered through Etherspace, thus enabling gas lighting systems to become a much more viable technology. With heavy investment from British and Reich governments, the ether flue resurrected the coal mining industry. Coal had been replaced as a fuel source following the development of vent portals, but purified coal gas provided economic stability for the two superpowers' coal-based economies through the mass marketing of gas to the lower rungs of society.

Steam-Tech Vehicles and Engines

Steam-powered vehicles and motors have become the mainstay of the world. Etherium boilers and vent portal furnaces have allowed engineers to greatly increase the reliability and power of steam engines, thus preventing the rise of oil-based fuels and the internal combustion engine. The essential technology of an engine remains the same: Pistons work

in alternation to turn a crankshaft, and a gearing system converts this force into revolutions of the drive wheels at varying torques. Thus all ships, cars, and flying machines are powered by steam engines. This prevalence makes the atmosphere and smell of the cities unique. There is a distinct odour to a steam engine — a mixture of steam, oil, and smoke. It is perhaps a stronger and dirtier smell than the exhaust fumes of a gasoline engine, but it does not have the same damaging effect on the environment. Indeed, it provides the busiest cities with a rush-hour sauna-like effect as the atmosphere becomes dank with steam.

Zeppelin-Tech and Zepcars

Powered flight has also taken a unique direction, thanks to a number of factors.

Militarily, there is little need for air power. The massive power of ether guns has increased the tactical range of battle-ship weaponry to hundreds of miles. With the advanced targeting systems allowed by Etherscope technologies, ether guns have grown to become the most devastating and cost-effective way to wage war.

Dieter Keinann developed ether jet engine technology in 1897. With this breakthrough came quick and manoeuvrable zeppelins that can carry vast amounts of armour and heavy weapons. The New Reich's air dreadnoughts of the Pan-European War were the result — flying fortresses capable of waging war in any terrain. Even these behemoths, however, cannot match the armour and weapons mountable on naval superdreadnoughts of the British Empire. The Empire guards its superdreadnought military advantage with ruthless determination, even though no other nation has the wealth and political will needed to create these ships. The power of the Reich's air dreadnoughts and the devastation they caused during the Pan-European War has led to the German word zeppelin replacing "airship" or "dirigible" in common usage. Now people across the world refer to any dirigible as a zeppelin.

Early experimentations with using vent portals for direct propulsion proved problematic. As vent portals convert matter into energy, there was an unfortunate ten-

dency for such portals attached to vehicles to suck in the vehicle's workings structure. The principle of an ether jet is to feed the vent portal with air rather than parts of the vehicle it is designed to propel. As such, a turbine blows onto a ring-shaped vent. This air is then converted into energy to provide thrust. The main reason for the development of lighter-than-air aircraft, however, has been the application of ultrathin etherium to increase the toughness and reduce the weight of gondolas, and, perhaps more importantly, the invention of ether balloons.

A special portal has been developed which can create a bubble of Etherspace with energetic lift properties within Prime Reality — an invulnerable and controllable balloon for all aircraft. The ether balloon itself is completely invulnerable. If a bullet, or indeed any other material, hits the bubble, the object immediately vaporises. In the aftermath of a battle, it is not an uncommon sight to see the burnt-out shells of destroyed zeppelins still floating immobile above the battlefield.

Civilian applications widely use zeppelin technologies. With the massive growth of city populations, and requirements for longer-distance travel, the **Etherscope** world's cities have become massively congested. That private transportation remains a privilege of the upper and middle classes makes this advance in transportation technology even more remarkable. However, a new social class of skilled workers has evolved: the enginaughts. These pilots of commerce and public transportation vehicles have flooded the city streets.

Another application of zeppelin technologies, the zepcar, provided a temporary solution to congestion problems. These vehicles are small zeppelins, of a similar size to an ordinary town car. Within areas of heavy congestion, pylons run alongside the road, allowing transmission of traffic flow data for vertical lanes. Thus the zepcars "drive" at a given altitude, dictated by the pylons. If the pilot wants to move up or down a lane, an on-board Scope processor determines when there is a safe opening and shuffles the zepcar up or down a lane. As a result, driving a zepcar remains a largely two-dimensional experience in terms of manual piloting operations. The introduction of the zepcar had a massive immediate impact on

congestion. However, in the fifteen years since, traffic levels have increased further and now even the zepcar lanes are clogged with traffic. Some more aggressive drivers have developed ways to fool the lane processors and effectively fly their zepcar freely. This is illegal everywhere, and many crashes have resulted from the use of such devices, although it can certainly cut down the time you spend in traffic.

Scope Microtechnologies

The use of "ethertech" has enabled miniaturisation on a grand scale. By manipulation of magnetic frequencies within Etherspace itself, ether can be moulded into a number of pseudo-forms. This sequencing of magnetic frequencies to create forms is called program crafting. Although these forms do not survive outside Etherspace, program crafters can build a wide variety of structures within its confines. These creations can be programmed to respond to specific circumstances. Thus the program crafters have been able to create processing systems to solve a variety of information problems. This has enabled the creation of a number of technologies: small processing systems to handle all domestic and commercial appliances, large data processors of industry, targeting systems for ether guns, and communication devices allowing transmission broadcasts of audio and visual imagery through Etherspace — radio waves are literally transmitted through the ether almost instantaneously.

Scope Points

Scope points are access and control systems for the Etherscope. Each is a portal which connects to a specified processor stored somewhere in Etherspace. Typical user interfaces are handled by generating an Etherscope environment that can be interacted with. Most commonly a desk analogy is used. When the user's Scope point is activated, the portal opens onto the image of a desk, visually representing their various different applications and data files as objects on the desk. These objects act not only as the processing system of the Scope point, but also as storage: An individual document contains all the rules that dictate its behaviour and interaction with the rest of the Ether-

scope, as well as the data stored within its contents. Ether processors involve interactions between programmed ether objects. Data is stored by creating new objects, and systems involve the objects effectively "talking" to each other. For example, a search program will "talk" to each data file program it encounters as its object form moves through the area of its search and encounters the object forms of data files.

It is important, however, to point out that the portal opens a three-dimensional domain within Etherspace, and as such, interfacing with that domain is more complicated than simpler two-dimensional output devices. The most common way of interacting with your Scope environment is through a pair of Scope gloves that transmit your movements into a similar pair of hands within your Scope environment, thus allowing you to readily manipulate your objects. Older, simpler interfaces included a mechanical arm, whose movements were mirrored in the Scope alongside a keyboard for text input. Scope point processors use magnetic switches within Etherspace to allow you to interpret, input, control output, and store and process data.

The Etherscope

As Etherspace is one large continuum; All "computers" are effectively "online." All the data and processing technology is held within Etherspace. As such, tight security walls and systems must be built up to protect systems from invasion by hackers, known as Scope riders. A Scope user can choose to access the Etherscope remotely or immersed. Remote access is described above, typically involving the use of Scope gloves. The user can travel the Scope, viewing the different domains and systems she visits on the other side of the glass of her Scope point. Interestingly, Etherspace appears to be able to be manipulated to a small degree by thought. This has led to the development of technologies that allow people to transfer their consciousness into the Scope.

Immersed Scope use, as this method is called, requires either Scope tabs or a Scope jack to transfer the user's consciousness. A Scope jack is a cybernaughtic attachment that can plug the user's brain directly into a Scope point. As such, it transfers the user's

consciousness to the same domain that the Scope point is plugged into. Scope tabs transfer the consciousness to a specific place, usually a recreational domain in the Scope. The type of tab you buy will take you on a specific trip. When immersed, you take on an avatar, a Scope persona. This stems from your subconscious or psyche, and will invariably look like you, although the avatar is often a stylised or idealised form. Avatars can interact with the domains of the Etherscope as if they were Prime Reality. However, some have found ways to bend the physical laws of these domains, being able to move vast distances with a single thought and act much quicker than the domain would normally allow.

Tabs can also provide the Scope rider with a short-term boost to skills or knowledge. These "uploads" can allow you to access Scope programs that boost your avatar's abilities and draw from data banks within the Scope. These tabs provide boosts to skills, but only last for a short time. The information conveyed can only occupy short-term memory. The implications of technology that would manipulate the long-term memory and the ethical use of such technologies are under debate.

Drones and Gremlins

Amongst the most frequently encountered Scope programs are drones. These small animated programs perform specific tasks. They are often shaped like a creature or some bizarre automaton, but some of the best look just like men or women. Drones are, though, nothing more complicated than a Scope program and only able to act in specified situations according to specific rules of operation. They are quite limited and so are often only used to help bolster security (acting in response to a hacker) or to perform simple filing-type tasks.

Gremlins, on the other hand, are brilliantly sophisticated programs, able to think for themselves, and possess personalities of their own. Scope hackers originally created the gremlins, designing them to cause havoc within a system. More recently, any program crafter with enough ability has made use of gremlins. Seeding a drone with a part of the program crafter's personality creates gremlins. Whilst this

does weaken the program crafter in the Scope, it seems not to affect their ability to function outside of the Scope. However, gremlins are rare, as only the greatest program crafters are able to create them.

Military Technology Applications

The military uses technology on many different levels. There are the massive land and air dreadnaughts of the New Reich — huge mobile bases the size of small towns. Bigger still are the superdreadnaughts of the sea that afford military dominance to the British Empire. Powerful cannons on these battleships, which patrol all the seas of the world, are used to assert British control of the oceans and ports. Infantry in steam-powered heavy armour fight most land combat. Handguns, rifles, and autoguns are common, but powered armour allows for much heavier weaponry to be carried by the infantry. Zeppelins are used for reconnaissance flights, but the big accurate guns of the battleships and dreadnaughts are used for tactical bombings and other more traditional aircraft duties. Small, one-man steam-powered tanks thunder across the battlefields in lightning shock attacks, and small-scale air dreadnaughts fill out similar roles in supporting infantry offensives. Many soldiers are enhanced with cybernaughtic attachments, including weapon systems, targeting devices, and built-in armour, creating "perfect" soldiers. The deltas are also widely used by the military forces of the world. Their keen sense of smell and dogged nature makes them the ultimate soldier and scout.

Cybernaughtics

Combining the technologies of eugenics and ether science has allowed the integration of machinery into the human body. Industry and the military have leapt upon this process in their never-ending quest to create the ultimate worker or soldier. From cybernaughtic limbs that dramatically increase strength, to internal processors that enhance neural responses, cybernaughtics have found many applications in the Etherscope world. As with the Etherscope, access to these technologies is

carefully controlled, becoming as much an indication of status and class as anything else. Systems range from clunking heavy collections of pistons and gears given to labourers as new limbs, to sleek servo-gearled chrome constructs sported by the elite. A lack of safety regulations in many factories has led to a high level of industrial accidents, impacting efficiency. For the unscrupulous industrialist, the cheap industry-level cybernaughtic attachments have become a way to ensure the assembly lines continue to run. Like most technologies in the **Etherscope** world, it has found its way to criminals and adventurers alike. A thriving black market exists, with a good number of chop-shops hiding in the shadows of all the great industrial cities. Such locations are discrete, as discovery can lead to a jail sentence. Cybernaughtics are a popular fad amongst the upper classes, where fashion designers have manoeuvred into the world of cybernaughtics and provide sophisticated and artistic attachments that become the talk of society.

Stephenson-Brunell Spires

Two key figures of Victorian engineering have led to the greatest engineering achievement of the modern age. Lawrence Isambard Stephenson-Brunell is the inheritor of the engineering greatness of his great-great-grandfathers, George Stephenson and Isambard Kingdom Brunell. Stephenson-Brunell, following in their footsteps, developed a new form of engineering, completely altering the face of the planet as a result. Ironically, Britain has not been the greatest beneficiary of his work. His greatest achievement, if not the greatest engineering feat of the century, is the spire complex — an entire city encapsulated within a single structure. The spire is a mighty structure of glass and etherium, built to contain its populace within a smog-free environment, where every amenity is close at hand. The first spire city, Bristol, was built to help purify the air of industrial pollutants, and maintain a higher level of cleanliness, reducing the spread of disease. After forty years, Bristol has outgrown its two-million-plus population and is in a poor state of repair due to the lack of investment by the British government. However, in America the newer, modular dome-and-spires structure allows

cities to grow. Stephenson-Brunell is the most noteworthy defector in the modern age, leaving Britain for America, where his spires are commissioned in every city and which has become rich on the fruits of his genius. Spire cities are found throughout the United States; the five boroughs of New York each have their own impressive dome-and-spire structure, whilst Chicago remains the tallest and largest single structure in the world, encasing hundreds of square miles under a single roof.

GEOGRAPHY OF THE SCOPE

Etherspace is an infinite swirling sea of etheric current. The Etherscope has been crafted out of this sea, creating domains that appear as encapsulated bubbles within the ocean of Etherspace. The creators of these domains can set the rules by which people's Scope avatars can move and interact. They can craft physical structures, from great skyscrapers to tunnel complexes. There are a number of domains created within Etherspace that now make up the Scope. Each nation has its own main domain — a Scope city in which people can meet, host conferences, socialise, or conduct research. Each city

is isolated from the others, as the imperialistic times mean that the nations guard their national security fervently and do not want information to pass to other nations through the domains. However, some Scope riders and spies have learnt to jump the rails and break out of these domains and travel to the cities of other nations. The Scope riders even have their own city domain: Haven.



A TYPICAL SCOPE CITY

Each Scope city is built around a similar set of principles. The city itself contains many structures, each designed for multiple purposes. There are libraries and museums, recreational centres, debating halls, and conference centres. See the illustration for the layout of a typical Scope city.

The Central Administration Tower

Each city is characterised by a Central Administration Tower, through which the civil servants of the nation can watch and govern the city domain. This is usually represented as a tall skyscraper that touches the roof of the domain. Inside the tower is a closed domain in its own

