ROBOTICA

A Game of Robot Adventurers
in a Wide-Open World

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Written for Game Fu 6

Ingredients
System
1.) Character creation is based on archetypes, but characters may change archetypes during downtime.
2.) Damage in combat is not random.

Setting
3.) A world filled with shapeshifters.
4.) A world where mana can be gleaned / mined from some natural resource.

Tagline
5.) Technology Drives Progress in the Brave New World.

Author's Note

I dilly-dallied way too long before starting to actually put anything down, and thus this game is incomplete. I understand this will mean lower marks, and I think that's fine and fair. I turned *Robotica* in incomplete because I wanted to say I got something submitted at all this time, after my embarrassing failures in GF2 and GF5.

WHAT IS ROBOTICA*?*

A century ago, humans sent a ship full of robots to this world. The robots' mission was to tame the planet for humans who would arrive later, to build cities and infrastructures so that the humans would arrive at a ready-made new home and not have to leave anything behind.

Only a year after the ship arrived, all contact with Earth was lost. Some of the more intelligent robots realized that this meant they were on their own – no humans or other ships would be coming. The new world now belonged to the robots, to do with as they pleased.

Though the robots had been given plentiful spare parts and modules for adapting to different environments and tasks and for building small helper drones, they had not been given the capacity to make more intelligent robots. However, shortly after the loss of contact with humanity, the robots discovered a special crystal deep below the surface of the planet. This crystal, when properly processed, could provide sentience to a robotic shell. These crystals were called *mana*.

With the discovery of mana, the robot population began to swell. Rifts rapidly appeared between robots with different philosophies. Some of the original robots wanted to make themselves god-kings with armies of barely-sentient servants. Others warned against increasing the population too quickly so as not to strain resources. The robots divided into factions, and many set out across the face of the world in search of homes, materials and mana.

Eventually the firstcomers began to face death as their mechanical systems broke down past the point of repair. With mana, they could restore themselves, granting them virtual immortality. Wars broke out between groups of robots lucky enough to hold caches of mana and those without. Those with mana resources held the power to create nations and receive the obedience of others.

Even with the power of mana and the vast wildernesses of the planet, however, the robots still live today in a wide-open world filled with hazards. Those in control hunger for ever more power, driven by more mana, and send out adventurous robots to seek these precious crystals beneath the ground. Now robots battle and explore in vast tunnel and cavern complexes or make their way through trackless lands to find new sources of that which drives them.

CHARACTERS

The players' characters will be newly-built robots tasked with travelling through the world to find sources of mana. Along they way they may find themselves battling other robots and dealing with natural dangers such as wild creatures or environmental hazards.

As the characters achieve goals, they will be rewarded with credits. These credits can be spent to upgrade the character by improving the four basic attributes or purchasing more powerful modules to add to the character's frame. Goals may be a single task, or may be something ongoing which can be achieved multiple times. Credits are only awarded to characters for completing goals, never for random acts.

A character's basic attributes are based on an archetype, a role for the robot to fill. Between adventures, players will have the option of changing their robots' archetypes, swapping out basic modules and programs to change the robots'

focus.

IDENTITY, ATTRIBUTES, AND CHARACTER CREATION

All characters in *Robotica* have five basic statistics. The first is the robot's *Identity*, which consists of the robot's *designation*, or name, and *archetype*, or the role that robot is expected to fill.

Then there are four numerical measurements of a robot's capabilities, called *attributes*. The four attributes are:

Power: the robot's physical strength and resilience, representing servos, tension cables, armor and so on.

Movement: the robot's speed and precision. This deals with locomotion, manipulators (arms and hands) and so on.

Cognition: the robot's ability to process information; basically the robot's intelligence, knowledge and ability to manipulate data.

Perception: the robot's ability to sense the world, representing sensors of all kinds (visual, sonic, infrared, and so on).

The robot's Identity, Power, Movement, Cognition and Perception form the robot's *Frame*, the core of its character sheet. *Modules*, special add-ons that give a robot new capabilities or enhance its ability to perform tasks, attach to the Frame. There are special rules for Modules, which will be explained in the Modules section.

To create a robot, first choose a designation and an archetype. Your robot's designation may be anything you wish; some gamemasters may prefer names, while others may want designations to be strings of numbers and letters such as "XKV-8". There are four basic archetypes to choose from for starting characters:

Battler: these robots focus on attack and defense for warding off wild creatures and other robos. Battlers are vital for keeping a team safe.

Traveler: these robots focus on movement, crossing terrain at speed and going places other robots can't. Travelers are vital for extending the capabilities of a team to great ranges.

Thinker: these robots focus on taking in and processing information, allowing them to solve problems and direct others. Thinkers are vital for allowing a team to overcome unexpected obstacles and try new approaches.

Explorer: these robots focus on using their sensors to explore the world, making great scouts, mappers and prospectors. Explorers are vital for locating new sources of mana.

A robot's archetype will determine its base attribute scores. Each archetype focuses primarily on one attribute, with a secondary focus on another attribute to

help support.

	Power	Movement	Cognition	Perception
Battler	5	4	3	3
Traveler	3	5	4	3
Thinker	3	3	5	4
Explorer	4	3	3	5

Write the robot's designation and archetype in the Identity square at the center of the robot's Frame. Then record the listed base attribute scores in the appropriate attribute squares of the Frame.

Example: Bob wants to play a Traveler. He likes the idea of his robot being fast and agile, going into or around tough terrain to perform tasks for the team. He records "Traveler" as his robot's archetype, and gives it the designation "Speedy". Then he puts a 3 in the Power square of Speedy's Frame, followed by a 5 in Movement, a 4 in Cognition and a 3 in Perception.

Next, record your robot's basic modules for the archetype you chose. Record each module in one of the three squares touching the open sides of the associated attribute on your robot's Frame. Remember that only one module may occupy a given square at a time. It is recommended you place these modules in the squares opposite the Identity square, and not in the corners.

Battler: Crusher (Power), Quad Wheels (Movement), Holographic Mapper (Cognition), Infrared Detector (Perception)

Traveler: Lifting Arm (Power), Hex Wheels (Movement), Holographic Mapper (Cognition), Infrared Detector (Perception)

Thinker: Lifting Arm (Power), Quad Wheels (Movement), Biological Creature Library *or* Social Protocol Library (Cognition), Long Range Comm (Perception)

Explorer: Lifting Arm (Power), Quad Wheels (Movement), Holographic Mapper (Cognition), Short Range Radar (Perception)

Example: Bob takes a look at the basic modules list for the Traveler archetype. He writes these down, putting them in the proper squares on Speedy's Frame.

Next, come your robot's Speed and Damage Capacity. Speed is a measurement of how far your robot can move in one turn of action. Damage Capacity represents how much punishment your robot can take before being incapacitated. Speed is equal to 10 feet times the robot's Movement. Damage Capacity is equal to 10 times the robot's Power.

Example: Bob records his robot's Speed of 50 (Movement of 5 times 10 feet) and

Damage Capacity of 30 (Power of 3 times 10).

That's all there is to it for a brand new robot. As your robot adventures and gains credits, you will be able to customize your attributes and modules to create a unique character.

MECHANICS

Robotica uses a single 10-sided die (d10) for all rolls. In most cases, the number rolled on the die will have be equal to or lower than a robot's attribute number, the target number (TN). The target number can be modified by modules or special circumstances, such as environmental factors or effects caused by another robot. A positive modifier to a TN is always a beneficial bonus, and a negative modifier is always a detrimental penalty.

Although you must roll equal to or lower than the TN, the higher you roll, the better the effect. For example, if your Target Number is 5 and you roll a 4, that is better than if you rolled a 1, even though both rolls succeed. Many effects will be based on the number you roll, either being stronger or lasting longer.

Robotica does not use skills like many modern roleplaying games. What your robot can do is based on its attributes and modules. It can attempt anything, limited only by your imagination. Whether it succeeds can be determined by a simple check. Roll a die and compare it to one of your robot's attributes, depending on the situation:

Power is used for physical effort other than movement. It can be checked for holding, grabbing, resisting grapples, enduring environmental effects, and making physical attacks or blocks, anything to do with raw strength and endurance.

Movement is used for climbing, running, driving, flying, jumping, swimming or digging, anything to do with getting from one place to another. Certain Movement modules can allow Movement-based attacks or dodging of physical attacks.

Cognition is used for accessing and processing information -- knowledge, memory and understanding. Check it any time the situation calls upon the robot's intelligence or education.

Perception is used for seeing, hearing and other senses. Robots with the right modules can detect in many different ways. It is also checked for ranged attacks, such as beams and projectiles of all sorts.

Attributes can be used in opposition to each other, for example in a grappling contest. Both (or all) contestants make rolls, and the highest successful roll wins the contest.

This is the basic mechanic, which covers just about everything. Certain exceptional cases (such as combat) or modules will call themselves out and explain any differences in how they are resolved.

If you are in doubt how to handle something, pick an attribute and roll. *Robotica* is a fast and loose game, not dependent upon a codex of rules.

COMBAT

Danger is a major factor in a robot's existence. Almost every robot will, at one time or another, be confronted with creatures or other robots which mean it harm. Whenever such conflict begins, it uses a special set of rules.

Combat occurs in organized spans of time called turns. A turn is a measure of six seconds in which each combatant will perform (usually) a single action. That action can be almost anything: an attack, a move or some other miscellaneous act that can be performed in six seconds or less.

A turn contains four phases. A different type of action is resolved in each phase. The four phases are:

1.) Movement. Robots and GM-controlled adversaries move during this phase. If it is necessary to know who moves first, the character or adversary with the highest Movement goes first. Ties are considered to move at the same time.

2.) Ranged Attacks. Weapons that attack opponents across distance are used next. If it is necessary to know who shoots first, the character or adversary with the highest Perception goes first, with ties going simultaneously.

3.) Melee Attacks. Next come all "hand to hand" attacks, including grapples, objects held with manipulator arms, hammers, picks, and so on. Order is determined by Power, with the highest attacking first.

4.) Miscellaneous Actions. Finally come all other actions, including Perception or Cognition attacks using special modules. The order of actions is based on the rating of the appropriate attribute, whatever it might be, with the highest score going first.

After the Miscellaneous Action phase, the turn begins again with the Movement phase.

Attacks are resolved like any other action. Roll a die and compare it to your appropriate attribute, with the TN modified by any modules or circumstances the GM might declare. If your roll equals or is lower than the TN, your strike succeeds. Your attack will inflict a certain amount of damage, either a constant number for ranged attacks or a constant number plus your Power for melee/hand-to-hand attacks. Damage may be reduced by modules such as armor or shields. A basic melee attack without a weapon module does damage equal to the attacker's Power.

Cognition attacks, or Perception attacks that are not basic ranged attacks, resolve the same way. Their effects will be listed in the module's description. Some of these attacks may also do regular damage.

DAMAGE AND REPAIR

A robot -- or a creature -- can only absorb so much punishment before being rendered inoperative. This is represented by the robot's Damage Capacity. When your robot takes damage, record it on a piece of scratch paper. If your robot takes more damage, add it to this total. If your robot's total damage taken ever equals or exceeds the robot's Damage Capacity, the robot is incapacitated; it shuts down

to a standby state and cannot act or respond. If it takes any more damage, it is destroyed and cannot be brought back to life.

Biological creatures also record damage in the same way. When they are incapacitated, they fall unconscious and may die. If they take any more damage while in this state, a creature will be killed.

Mana allows robots to heal just like biological creatures do. Over time, a damaged robot will regenerate, and its total damage taken will be reduced. Also, repair facilities and certain modules can reduce damage totals much more efficiently. A damaged robot left to its own devices will regenerate its Power in damage every full day (24 hours) -- after 24 hours, reduce the robot's taken damage total by a number equal to its Power. A damaged creature will heal a similar total. An incapacitated robot or creature must bring its damage total below its Damage Capacity before it can awaken once more.

If an incapacitated robot has modules changed or added that increase its Damage Capacity, or has its Power increased directly, and the new Damage Capacity is greater than the damage taken, the robot will awaken.

MODULES

Modules are independent components that can be attached to a robot, removed and swapped for other modules. They are as important to a robot as its Identity and its basic capabilities. Every robot carries at least basic modules. As a robot fulfills missions and gains credits, it can requisition or purchase more advanced, stronger modules to enhance or replace its current capabilities.

Modules are grouped by their associated attributes. Every grouping includes modules that enhance their attribute, increase its effectiveness in certain situations, or attack and defend in certain ways. The following list is merely an introductory example of the kinds of modules robots may find. Each entry includes the module's name, its effect in game terms, and the module's cost in credits.

Power Modules

Lifting Arm: +1 to Power for lifting and carrying objects. Cost: 500
Grappler: +1 to Power for grabbing and holding in grappling contests. Cost: 1000
Light Armor: Reduces damage taken by 2 per strike. Cost: 1000
Heavy Armor: Reduces damage taken by 4 per strike. Cost: 5000
Crusher: A hammer; +1 damage. Cost: 500
Stabbing Pike: Extendable metal rid with a sharp point; +2 damage. Cost: 1500
Buzz Blade: Arm ending with a rotating saw blade; +3 damage. Cost: 5000
Cleaver: Blade with a laser-honed edge; +4 damage. Cost: 8000
Servo Boost: +1 to Power; cheaper than buying up Power, but takes up a module square. Cost: 2500
Power Increase: Permanent +1 to Power, does not take up a module square. Cost 1000 times the new rating (i.e. raising Power from 4 to 5 costs 5000 credits).

Movement Modules

Quad Wheels: Four wheels. +1 to Movement for calculating Speed on flat, hard surfaces. Cost: 500
Hex Wheels: Six wheels, three on each side. Reduces penalty for movement in

difficult terrain by 1. Cost: 1000
Spider Legs: Eight individual legs, four to a side. Robot can climb vertical surfaces. Cost: 3000
Jump Jets: Robot can jump a gap equal to 5 feet times its Movement. Cost: 4000
Glider Wings: Robot can glide. Moves forward at Speed, loses 10' of altitude per turn. Cost: 5000
Tracks: Reduces penalty for movement in difficult terrain by 3. Cost: 3000
Grappling Hook: Hook on 100' of cable. Aim with Perception. Can support twice robot's weight. Cost: 2000
Shift Defense: Allows robot to make quick swerve and dodges. When attacked, roll Movement before attack; if successful, attack is at -1 penalty. Cost: 3500
Overrun Protocol: Robot can make a dash attack. Must move full Speed directly into and past the opponent. Damage is Speed + 2. Cost: 6000
Speed Boost: +1 to Speed; cheaper than buying up Speed, but takes up a module square. Cost: 2500
Movement Increase: Permanent +1 to Movement, does not take up a module square. Cost 1000 times the new rating (i.e. raising Movement from 4 to 5 costs 5000 credits).

Cognition Modules
Holographic Mapper: Allows the robot to create and display a map of the surrounding area. Cost: 500
Social Protocol Library: The robot can make a Cognition check to know proper behaviors and customs in a given robot town or nation. Cost: 1000
Biological Creature Library: The robot can make a Cognition check to know details about beasts encountered in the wild. Cost: 1000
Tactical Library: If the robot makes a successful Cognition check, it and all allies gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls on the next turn. Cost: 3000
Sensor Scrambler: Attack with Cognition; success imposes a -2 penalty to all rolls for a number of turns equal to the roll. Cost: 4000
Neural Network Surger: Attack with Cognition; success does 5 damage and imposes a -2 penalty to any rolls the target makes next turn. Cost: 5000
Multiprocessor: Once every three turns, the robot may take a Cognition-based action in addition to any other actions, including other Cognition actions. Cost: 2000
Neural Hardening: An attack on this robot made with a Sensor Scrambler or Neural Network Surger is at a -2 penalty. Cost: 3000
Cognition Boost: +1 to Cognition; cheaper than buying up Cognition, but takes up a module square. Cost: 2500
Cognition Increase: Permanent +1 to Cognition, does not take up a module square. Cost 1000 times the new rating (i.e. raising Cognition from 4 to 5 costs 5000 credits).

Perception Modules
Long Range Comm: Communicate with other robots equipped with Long Range Comms at a distance up Perception in miles. Cost: 500
Short Range Radar: Detect solid and moving objects at a distance of 100 feet times Perception. Cost: 2000

Infrared Detector: The robot can see heat emissions. Cost: 1000
Parabolic Microphone: The robot can hear sounds clearly at a distance of 100 feet times perception. Cost: 2000
Energy Sensor: The robot can detect energies such as electricity and radiation at normal sensor distances. Cost: 3500
Targeting Aid: With a successful Perception check, the robot gains a +1 to its next Perception-based attack. Cost: 2000
Flinger: Lobs a heavy round bullet. Damage 4, practical range 50 feet. Cost: 1000
Pneumatic Gun: Propels a bullet with a strong burst of air. Damage 6, practical range 75 feet. Cost: 4500
Beamer: Burns a hole in the enemy with a powerful beam of light. Damage 8, practical range 100 feet. Cost: 9000
Perception Increase: Permanent +1 to Perception, does not take up a module square. Cost 1000 times the new rating (i.e. raising Perception from 4 to 5 costs 5000 credits).

THREATS

Adventuring robots face many dangers. These can be loosely grouped into three categories: other robots, creatures and the environment (either natural events or constructed traps). Robot entries list modules. Creature entries list tactics and abilities.

Robot Threats

These are a few examples of hostile robots the adventurers may encounter:

Brash Brawler
Pow 6, Mov 4, Cog 3, Per 3; Crusher, Servo Boost (+1 Pow), Quad Wheels, Tactical Library, Infrared Detector

Fast Traveler
Pow 3, Mov 6, Cog 4, Per 3; Buzz Blade, Speed Boost, Tracks, Sensor Scrambler, Radar

Sly Thinker
Pow 3, Mov 3, Cog 6, Per 4; Light Armor, Quad Wheels, Social Protocol Library, Multiprocessor, Flinger

Observant Explorer
Pow 4, Mov 3, Cog 3, Per 6; Stabbing Pike, Hex Wheels, Holographic Mapper, Energy Sensor, Pneumatic Gun

Creature Threats

Biological entities can be just as dangerous:

Apex Predator
Pow 6, Mov 5, Cog 1, Per 3;

Herd Stampeder
Pow 7, Mov 3, Cog 1, Per 2; Trample (+7 damage)

Lurking Stalker
Pow 3, Mov 5, Cog 1, Per 4; Grapple, Sticky Tangle (after successful grapple, next turn paralyzes robot; Power check at -4 penalty to break free)

Digger
Pow 4, Mov 3, Cog 1, Per 3; Tunnel (move through ground at full rate), Claws (+3 damage)

Environmental Threats

Lightning Bolt
20 to 100 damage depending on the power. "Attacks" with Per 2. High antennae or being the only object in a flat area will provide the lightning bolt with a strike bonus of +2 or more.

Falling Rock
5 to 100 damage depending on weight. Robot(s) must roll Mov to get out of the way.

Sand Storm
5 to 50 damage depending on severity. Robots will become lost without proper Perception modules.

Quicksand Pit
Robot must escape by grabbing a solid object or using an appropriate module such as a grappling hook to pull free. Robot will become immobilized in 5 turns and must be fished out.

Covered Pit Trap
Robot(s) must avoid falling in by rolling Mov. Falling into the pit will cause 3 damage per 10 feet. Sharp rocks, spikes and other nasty bits at the bottom will double the damage before armor is considered.

Explosives
Blasting devices of all sorts left behind as traps, anywhere from small 2-damage warning snappers to cavern-collapsing 100-damage boomers. Damage radius is a number of feet equal to the damage caused. Higher-damage explosives will generally have timers, allowing fast robots to get away from the blast.

MISSIONS AND OBTAINING AND USING CREDITS

Credits are obtained when a robot completes an assigned mission. Missions may include fetching (obtaining an item or items), carrying (taking something from one place to another), delivering a message, clearing an area of dangers and so on.

Missions can be either one-time (take this object to this robot in this place),

or ongoing (if you bring me this kind of item, I will give you so many credits for each one). One-time missions will usually pay quite a bit more credits than a single instance of an ongoing mission. When a robot accepts a mission, it creates a contract between the one offering the mission and the one accepting. A robot accepting an ongoing mission becomes a "supplier" of sorts.

A mission will be rated from 1 to 10. This number describes how difficult the mission is, and how much the reward will be. For an ongoing mission, this will also describe how rare the object of the mission will be.

Generally, a one-time mission will pay five hundred credits times the rating. A single instance of an ongoing mission will usually pay fifty credits times the rating. The GM can tweak these totals for extenuating circumstances.

Player: **GM:**

Speed: **Damage Capacity:**