POWERS

V0.1

Intro

Welcome to the first draft of the Powers rules!

Powers is intended as game that allows players to do anything or be anyone they want, buy building the descriptions of their abilities. It's designed mainly for playing comic style super heroes, but could really be used for any kind of setting you can imagine.

This is the game at an extremely early stage, and as such doesn't include everything I've done so far, let alone everything that will be in the finished game. What it does cover is the basics: how you make dice rolls, how characters are put together, and the most fundamental of the Components. This should be enough to give you a good idea of what the final thing will be like, as well as letting you start thinking about how the rules work, what you think might need changing, adding or removing.

There are a few things, even here, that are missing at the moment. The first and most obvious one is points cost. Eventually, every Component will have a points cost of some sort, and starting characters will have a starting number of points to spend. At the moment, nothing has points, as I still haven't worked out a good way of deciding how much everything should cost. I've got a couple of ideas, but this is definitely the area I want the most feedback on. How would you do it?

Other things that are missing/not complete here are some more examples, better layout/design, and greater detail in the explanations. Again, let me know where you get confused, or where things could do with more (or even less) explaining.

The final things that come to mind as not here (although it is referenced) are the Fail tables. I'm working on them, but they are far from finished, so I thought it better to leave them out until they are complete. Half a table would be just weird.

Other than what I've already mentioned, the questions I would like you to answer are:

1) Does it all make sense, or is it utter gobbledegook to you?
2) Are there contradictions in the rules so far that I haven't accounted for?
3) Is there something in the rules that you just don't like?
4) Is there anything that you think is awesome, and absolutely must not be changed?

Anything else that comes to mind will also be welcome. I've spent so long staring at this and thinking it through that I've completely lost perspective on it. Fresh brains are needed, and you lot are as close as I can get to that!

Hope you like it!

-Joose

Basic concepts

Powers

In most RPG systems, characters have attributes, skills, equipment, magical powers, henchmen and many other elements describing what makes the character who he or she is. In Powers, everything about the character is described with two things: Attributes and Powers.

Attributes are common to all characters, and describe general things like how intelligent they are, or how strong. Although these attributes can vary greatly from one character to another, every character has the same selection of 6 attributes.

Everything that a character can do that sets it apart from everyone else is a Power. Powers can be anything from having a gun or a Kevlar vest to being able to fly faster than a jet, shoot beams of energy from your eyes or control people with your mind. Does your character heal from wounds faster than a normal person? That's a Power. Are they able to hack computers? That's a Power. Do they ride a motorbike? Have wings? Metal skin? Speak to animals? Set themselves on fire? Resist radiation? Breathe underwater? All of these are Powers.

Components

All Powers are made from Components. These Components can be anything from the effective range of the power, to conditions that need to be met for the power to work, to the kind of damage the power does. Every Component has a cost; better Components cost more, and Components that make the Power worse can refund you points to spend elsewhere. Players can put together Powers either during character creation or through spending XP by purchasing Components and assigning them to a Power. Additionally, GM's might give players components or even entire powers, either as rewards or even as punishments!

Components describe the rules effects of the powers. It is up to the player to describe the "fluff" that the Components describe. Components can be combined in any way, unless specifically restricted by the Component description.

Power Ratings

Each power has a Power Rating, or PR. This is calculated by adding the cost of all components that have a positive cost. This Power Rating is used to determine what powers are allowed, and to determine the effects of Epic Fails.

Attributes

Each character has 6 attributes that everyone shares. These are:

-Strength: The characters physical power, ability to lift objects, etc.
-Resilience: The characters natural ability to resist physical affects like poison or fatigue
-Intelligence: The characters ability to solve problems, and overall brain power
-Willpower: The characters ability to resist mental affects and persuasion
-Agility: reflects the characters balance, dexterity and physical speed
-Health: How many points of damage the character can take before being Close to Death (CTD)

Dice Rolls

Dice rolls are made on d6. Stats/powers define the number of dice thrown, with 5 & 6 being a hit. Tests are either:

1) Opposed test: you roll, target rolls, most hits wins. If a number of hits is required to measure how successful the roll was, it is the net difference between you and the target. A net of 0 is a failure.
2) Unopposed: you roll, with either a target number of hits or a scale of success based on number of hits.

All situational modifiers (cover, etc) alter the number of hits, not the number of dice rolled.

Fail, and Epic Fail

If a character rolls a 1 with more than half of their dice pool, it is a Fail. If they have rolled sufficient hits to pass the test, the result is calculated as normal. Then a roll is made on the Fail table to determine the outcome of the Fail. It is up to the GM exactly how this occurs within the context of the story.

EXAMPLE: Bob uses his Blammo Cannon power in an attack, and more than half of his dice for the Attack roll come up 1. The rest of the attack is calculated normally, and when he rolls on the Fail table, he gets the "Power Down!" result, meaning that he cannot use his Blammo Cannon power next turn. The GM decides that it has overheated, and needs to cool down before it can be reused.

If a roll is made where more than half of the dice come up 1, *and* no hits are scored, then an Epic Fail has occurred! Add the PR of all powers affecting the roll (including opponents powers in an opposed roll) and roll on the appropriate Epic Fail table for this PR total.

EXAMPLE: Dave returns fire on Bob, using his Super-Slap power. When resisting damage using his Mind Shield power, Bob rolls and Epic Fail! The PR of Super-Slap and Mind Shield are added, and Bob rolls on the Epic Fail table for that total. He rolls Dimension Shift! The GM explains that the force of the Super-Slap hitting the Mind Shield was so great, that it opened a rift in the space time continuum, pulling the party though to a mirror universe of their own! Oh no!

NOTE: The Epic Fail rule, whilst potentially a great source of comedy and drama, can hugely derail a groups story. Because of this, Epic Fail is an optional rule. Whether you decide to use it or not, make sure everyone in the group knows!

Contradicting Rules

There will be occasions where one rule contradicts another rule. In most situations, which rule should be applied is decided in one of two ways:

Specific beats General: If a specific rule (for example one stated in a component description) contradicts the usual rule for that situation, then the specific rule is correct.

EXAMPLE: Normally, Resilience is used to resist damage. The Psychic option states that damage from this source is resisted with Willpower. In this situation, the rules for the Psychic option are used, rather than the general rule, and Willpower is rolled.

Cant beats Can: If two powers interact, and one allows something to happen, but the other stops that thing from happening, then that thing cannot happen. Note that this only applies to rules that are absolute.

Combat

Basics

When the characters get into a fight, or at any time that the GM decides that things have become time critical, the players enter Combat. Combat is split into turns, each lasting approximately 10-15 seconds. Each Combat Turn goes in the following order:

1) Initiative is rolled to determine the order people may go in.
2) The character with the highest initiative goes first
3) Each character may declare a move and/or activate a single power.
4) Any rolls resulting from the movement or activation of a power are made, and the results calculated.
5) The character with the next highest initiative goes next, in the same way
6) When all characters have gone, another initiative roll is made.

Initiative is determined by adding Agility and Intelligence, and adding any modifiers from relevant powers. The number of hits scored is the characters initiative. When there are ties, the character with the highest number of initiative dice rolled goes first.

Example: Bob has initiative 20, and scores 5 hits, Dave has initiative 15, and scores 3 hits, and Nigel has initiative 17, and scores 3 hits. Therefore Bob goes first, then Nigel, then Dave.

Some Powers will allow characters to use more than one power in a combat turn, or go more than once in a combat turn. For details of how this works, refer to the relevant component descriptions.

Hitting a Target (the Attack Roll)

In order to hit a target with a power, the character must make an opposed agility test against the target. Note that the power being used may have modifiers that increase or decrease the number of dice rolled, and the target may have active powers that increase or decrease their roll. The attacker must score more hits than the target to hit. Situational modifiers (fog, cover, moving target etc) alter the result of the roll, not the number of dice rolled.

EXAMPLE:

Bob uses his ranged attack power to try and hit Dave. Bobs agility is 10, and his power has Accurate (5), so he is rolling 15 dice. Daves agility is only 7, and he has no powers to help him. Bob rolls 6 hits, and Dave only rolls 3. This gives Bob a net score of 3, so he hits! If Dave had been in good cover, he could have had a +3 to his roll, giving him a total of 6, meaning Bob would have missed. Better take cover next time Dave!

Damaging a Target

Powers that have the Damage component can cause damage to the target on a successful hit. To determine the damage caused an opposed test is rolled. The attacker rolls the damage rating of the power plus any modifiers stated in the power, the target rolls Resilience plus any modifiers from damage resistance powers. Net hits from the attack roll can be either added or subtracted from the attackers total hits, after both attacker and target have made their rolls. Any net hits scored by the attacker are done as points of damage to the target, and should be recorded against their hit points.

Close to Death (CTD)

When a character runs out of hit points, they are "close to death". When this happens, and on every combat turn after, the player must make a Resilience roll to stay alive. The target number of this roll is the amount below 0 the characters hit points have gone.

Component Listing

Move

By default, characters can move at Normal speed along the ground. All speeds can increased up to double their normal by sprinting (reducing by up to half the number of turns it takes to get to their destination), but the character must make a Resilience test against the number of turns reduced by sprinting, and takes one point of Stun Damage for every hit under that target. This Stun damage is applied as one point per turn.

EXAMPLE: Bob wants to make a move that would normally take him 10 turns. He wants to sprint, but not flat out, so it will only take him 6 turns. He only rolls 3 hits on his Resistance test, so takes a point of Stun damage. If he had sprinted flat out, he would have taken only 5 turns, but would have received two points of Stun.

Movement can be interrupted by a number of things, including terrain or certain powers. By default, characters attempting to stop another character must be in Melee range, make a touch attack (as a normal attack, but without damage), and then succeed in a Strength opposed roll.

Speeds are listed in how long it takes to get to a certain range in turns. As ranges cover large ranges of distance, the listed number of turns should be taken as the maximum number of turns it would take to reach the far edge of that range. For example, if a character would normally take 16 turns to get to Long range, but the GM decides that its actually somewhere in the middle of Long range, then it may only take 10 turns to get there. This decision is up to the GM, but the turns should only ever be reduced from the listed amounts, not increased.

The highest range listed is the furthest a character at this speed can get during combat. Ranges further than this would take too many turns to get to for it to be practical. Ranges below the lowest listed can all be reached within one turn.

Move options are:

Very Slow (approx. 3mph): Short range in 2 turns, Medium in 24 turns.
Slow (approx. 7mph): Medium in 10 turns.
Normal Human (approx. 15mph): Medium in 4 turns, Long in 29.
Fast (approx. 27mph): Medium in 2 turns, Long in 16.
Extra-Fast (approx. 50mph): Long in 8 turns.
Super-Fast (approx. 100mph): Long in 4 turns.
Sonic (approx. 760mph): Extreme in 15 turns.
Super-Sonic (approx. 1500mph): Extreme in 7 turns.
Hyper-Sonic (approx. 4000mph): Extreme in 2 turns.
Super-Speed (approx. 20000mph): Super in 18 turns.
Ultra-Speed (approx. 1000000mph): Planetary in 14 turns.
Light-Speed (approx. 670000000mph): System in 10 turns.
FTL (approx. 2 light years per hour): System in 4 turns.

Stellar (approx. 100 light years per hour): Stellar in 1 turn.
Galactic (approx. 100000 light years per hour): Galactic in 1 turn.

Move Modifiers are:

Fly: The character can fly. Ground based obstacles can be ignored, but the character gets no cover bonuses from ground based cover.
Jump (range): Like fly, but the character must return to ground between jumps, as determined by Jumps range.
Wheeled: Character can only move using a power with Wheeled at normal speed over smooth terrain. At the GM's discretion, rough terrain either halves speed, or is impassable for Wheeled powers.
Burrow (rating): The character can use this ability to tunnel through solid objects. If the object being burrowed through has a toughness rating, use the Burrow rating to roll against it.
Tunnel (rating): As above, but leaves a tunnel behind that other characters can use.
Swing (range): Like Jump, but requires an object that can be used to latch on to
Aquatic: Using this power in/under water ignores terrain speed modifiers.
Momentum: Once a character has declared a move, he can't stop himself until he reaches his destination. Other things can still interrupt movement normally.
Controlled Momentum (rating): The character can stop themselves as normal, but can add Controlled Momentums rating to the Strength test if something attempts to stop them.
Absolute Momentum: The character cannot be stopped by any means until they reach their destination.

Range
The default range is Personal. This means that the power can only target the character using the power.

Other range options are:

Melee: Target must be immediately next to the character. Note that this does not mean the character must touch the target, unless the Touch modifier is included.
Close: Target must be within a few feet of the character
Short: Target must be within a few dozen feet of the character. For example, in the same large room, or same side of a stadium. Average range for a normal human to throw a ball.
Medium: Target must be within a few hundred feet of the character. For example, the range of an average assault rifle.
Long: Target must be within a couple thousand feet of the character. For example, the range of a sniper rifle.
Extreme: Target must be within a few miles of the character
Super: Target must be within a few hundred miles of the character
Planetary: Target must be on the same planet as the character
System: Target must be in the same solar system as the character
Galactic: Target must be in the same galaxy as the character
Unlimited: Target can be any distance from the character

Range Modifiers:

Touch: Character must make a melee hit on the target to use the power (note: can be taken for any range)
No LoS: Does not require line of sight to the target.

Duration

Instant: this is the default duration for any power. This means that the power activates in the same turn it is decided on, and all effects are calculated in that same turn.

Always On: The power is on constantly, and cannot be deactivated.

Toggled: Like Always On, but the character can deactivate/reactivate at will.

Delayed (turns): As with instant, but will be calculated a number of turns after the character activates it.

Build Up (turns): As with Delayed, but the character is considered actively using the power for the duration of these turns. Doing other tasks will require a concentration roll.

Build Down (turns): Like build up, but the character is considered actively using the power for a number of turns after the power has activated.

Time (turns): As with Toggled, but lasts for a certain number of turns.

Damage

Damage is costed per point of damage done. Damage cannot be negative, anything that reduces damage by more than its total reduces it to zero instead. Damage must have at least one type, selected from the list below. This is purely to determine resistances. The default attribute used to resist damage is Resilience.

Bashing (club, fist, other blunt object, large projectiles like rocks from a slingshot)

Piercing (sharp objects like the point of a sword, or projectiles that penetrate like bullets or arrows)

Slashing (things that cut, like the edge of a sword, claws, a thin force field)

Fire (anything that uses high heat, including fire itself, microwaves, etc.)

Electrical (lightening, Taser)

Cold (arctic winds, snow, liquid nitrogen)

Sound (loud noises, music, etc. Note that a shockwave would also be Bashing)

Biological (disease, poisons)

Damage Modifiers:

DoT (turns): The damage is done every turn for the duration specified

DoT Fading: As above, but each turn does half the damage of the previous turn, rounded down.

DoT Increase (turns): As above, but doubles each turn for the duration stated.

Psychic: A psychic attack is replaces the default resistance with Willpower

Stun: Stun damage should be tracked separately to normal damage. If the total stun damage and normal damage takes the character to zero health, the character falls unconscious. See "near death" for description.

Phantom (rating): Phantom damage should be tracked separately to non-phantom damage. If phantom damage takes the character to zero health, they are "near death" as normal. However, each combat turn the character may make a Willpower test against the rating. If they are successful, all Phantom damage is removed.

Attribute Linked: The damage can be linked to an attribute, rather than have its own damage rating.

Resistance

Resistance is costed per point of damage resisted. Resistance can be negative (resulting in a weakness to damage), and will cost a negative amount as a result. Resistance either has one type (selected from the damage type table), or is a general resistance for a much greater cost (but less than buying all damage types at the same level). A Resistance can only be used to counter powers with a matching damage type.

Resistance Modifiers:

RoT Fading: For each turn after the power is triggered, its effective rating is halved, rounding down. For powers with a timer, or toggled powers, this effect starts when the power would normally finish.

RoT Increase: As above, but the effective rating doubles each turn for the duration stated.

Mind over Matter: replaces the default resistance with Willpower

Stun: Can only be used to resist stun damage.

Healing

Healing is costed per point of healing done. Healing cannot be negative; it can only be reduced to zero, as with Damage.

Healing modifiers:

HoT (turns): as with damage

HoT fading: as damage

HoT increase: as damage

Stun: can only be used to heal stun damage

Example Powers