Psionics – Emmet White

Sensitive

Machine Ghost

Range: Self; computer by touch.
Duration: Three minutes per level of experience.
I.S.P.: 12
Saving Throw: Not applicable.

The psychic goes into a trance as he focuses his concentration on entering a computer or most any type of artificial intelligence (not applicable to sentient, self-aware machines like Archie-3). This power is limited to the acquisition or reading of information only. The psychic cannot input, program, or delete data on the machine. He can also access information stored by most electronic means, including computer disks, video and audio disks, film or audio tape, and hard drives. Reading electronically encoded disks and tapes is similar to Object Read, except in this case, he hears and sees the data as if he were playing it on a computer or disk player, only he perceives the information 10 times faster. Thus, the character can read (never input) information from disks or broken computers without a physical "jack" connection or an actual display device, i.e. computer and monitor, CD player, etc.

As an actual Machine Ghost, the psychic mentally enters and travels the neural network of an active computer. He is actually inside the device. In many ways, this experience is similar to Astral Projection except the psychic is "projecting" into the machine rather than into the Astral Plane. It also has the same pitfalls as Astral Projection, as in the character enters a strange, very seemingly real world that he must learn to navigate. Like Astral Projection, the electronic world of computers takes on a virtual world landscape. This means in the computer virtual world, its programs, viruses and defense mechanisms will take on virtual manifestations that can interact, confront, impede, or attack the Machine Ghost.

A password or special access code may appear as a metal door or iron gate, or locked filing cabinet that needs to be (seemingly) broken open to gain access to what is held inside. The more difficult the code, the bigger, stronger and more difficult the door and lock(s). Data is likely to appear as books, paper files, diagrams, film, holograms, and other common means of communication and documentation. The more sophisticated defense measures are likely to appear as one or more guards who must be defeated before the information is accessible. They can appear as sorcerers, Coalition troops, known enemies or exotic aliens. Viruses and defenses designed to attack an intruder typically appear as demons or monsters.

Combat in the virtual world seems real and is conducted the same as it would happen in the real world. Combat and damage are measured by the character's perception of his real body armor, weapons and natural powers. When the psychic has lost more than 70% of his armor, or S.D.C./M.D.C., he will feel the urge to flee the virtual world. If he flees, a computer defender will not follow, however a virus will pursue and continue to fight. Although all such damage is only in the mind of the psychic (no physical damage occurs in the real world), if he dies in the virtual world, he can die in the real world as well! The shock to his psyche and body will momentarily stop his heart, and he slumps over dead! The character must roll to save vs coma and death. In this case, physical treatment is not necessary and the recovery process, if success-ful, takes less than a minute. The psychic must roll three times, and the best two out of three rolls determines life or death. Rolling between 01-75%, two out of three times, means the heart starts and the character is shaken but fine; feels woozy for 2D4 minutes (reduce Spd 25% and all combat bonuses by half). Failure to recover from the heart attack means immediate CPR medical treatment is required - Paramedic skill will suffice, provided any protective body armor can be removed so that treatment can be given; rescuers have 10 minutes. Roll to save vs coma and death again; must roll twice under 80% out of three rolls.

The downside in the usage of this power is the psychic loses all sense of time and reality outside the data he is accessing. This means he is oblivious to what is happening around him, and unless protected by a companion, is vulnerable to attack without any means of defense. Pain or being struck or shaken will alert the psychic to trouble, but he has the choice of breaking contact and responding, or ignoring it and continuing to retrieve data. Only Telepathy can reach the character while in this state (can't hear spoken words or sounds outside the computer), and is a means of two-way communication.

A character accessing a file on a disk can break contact at any time with a thought, although he will be disoriented for one melee round; reduce his number of attacks and combat bonuses by half. Breaking free of a computer virtual world is not so easy. Unfortunately, leaving the virtual world of a computer is fundamentally the same as the Astral Plane. The psychic can vaguely sense the way he came and must follow it hack to the virtual access point. To do so, the player must roll on the following table and must roll "definitely certain" to have his character successfully escape. The player must keep trying until he succeeds or time elapses. If the character cannot escape virtual space before the duration of this ability elapses, he is flung out with the same effect as "virtual death"; roll to save vs coma and death as described above.

Note: The psychic will instinctively know when he's down to the last three minutes of the duration and when trying to exit, can fly toward the way out (typically appears as a door or a dimensional Rift).

- 01%-30%: Hopelessly lost (roll again).
- 31%-45%: Uncertain (roll again).
- 46%-65%: Fairly certain on the right track (roll again).
- 66%-00%: Definitely certain! Whew! Made it back.

Mind Block

Range: Self.
Duration: 10 minutes per level of experience.
I.S.P.: 4 (per each duration period).

This is the ability to completely close or block oneself from all psychic/mental emanations. When intentionally closed to supernatural or psychic forces the character cannot sense anything, cannot use psychic abilities, nor be influenced by others. A Mind Block will prevent penetration of Telepathy, Empathy, Hypnotic Suggestion, Day Dream and Empathic Transmission. It can be an invaluable protective mask when dealing with malevolent psychic forces. Adds a bonus of +I to save vs all psychic and mental attacks. Note: Mind Block only blocks psionic attacks that affect the psychic's mind or emotional state (i.e. Telepathy, Empathy, Hypnotic Suggestion, etc.). It offers not protection from magic.

Psychometry (a.k.a. Object Read)

Range: Touch.
Duration: Varies; usually about 2D6 minutes.
I.S.P.: 6
Saving Throw: None.
Base Skill: *Impressions:* 56% +2% per level of experience. *Images:* 48% +2% per level. *Present:* 38% +2% per level of experience.

Also known as Psychometry, this uncanny ability enables the psychic sensitive to receive impressions and images from an object regarding its use, history and last owner. This is done by holding the object and concentrating on a specific line of thought or opening up to general impressions (the latter is always more vague and random). Just as a psychic must open himself to sense evil or magic, he must open himself to the object. If successful, he will receive impressions and/or images revealing bits of information.

Impressions include: General alignment of its last owner (good, selfish, evil), general emotional state of mind (angry, happy, sad, hate filled, confused, etc.), the object's general purpose (what it is used for), whether or not the last owner is living or dead, and whether the item has been used with/by magic or supernatural forces. Object Read will also conclusively indicate whether the item is currently enchanted or contains a supernatural force/entity (as well as its alignment and emotions). If the item is possessed, an Object Read makes the reader totally vulnerable to psychic attack (no bonuses to save).

Images: The psychic can also see images of isolated events which have happened in the past. This will provide brief snippets of images and events that will offer glances of the previous owner and others close to him. Traumatic and emotion filled events/images are the easiest to see. Impressions will accompany the images, adding to the story
as it unfolds. Information includes: approximate age, height, weight, build, race, sex, sometimes occupation, hair color and length; special facial or body features such as a scar or tattoo or beard (very often the exact facial features are out of focus, blurred or obscured); the object's use/purpose; and some special event, usually very traumatic, important or happy. Often the event image will be fragmented as if it was a piece of movie film edited by a crazy man. The event will always be one in which the object was involved in some way.

The success or failure of an Object Read: Roll percentile dice once for impressions and once for images. The roll must fall under the character's base skill ability to succeed. A roll higher than the base skill means a failure and the psychic feels and/or sees nothing. Impressions and images are two different things, so roll for each. The psychic may get no impressions, but see images or vice versa. The present cannot be seen unless the psychic was successful on at least one of the previous read impressions or images rolls. Once an object has been read it cannot be read again by the same psychic, even if he did not see or feel a thing. Of course, the psychic can attempt to Object Read other items, but each attempt will cost 6 I.S.P.

The Present: The present can also be glimpsed, but costs an additional 4 I.S.P., with no guarantee of success. Sometimes the psychic can focus in to see and feel the last owner as he or she is at that very moment. This will provide an idea of what is his current state of mind/emotion, appearance, dress, general location (that is to say, a bedroom, office, street, outdoors, etc.; no address or sense of close or far is provided), general features (shaved his beard, dyed hair, etc.) and so on. The psychic may be able to identify a place or person by feature if he has seen it before or runs into him in the near future.

Speed Reading

Range: Self.
Duration: 3 minutes per level of experience.
I.S.P.: 2

This is the ability to read and comprehend the written word extremely quickly. Speed of reading is 30 pages per minute (4 melee rounds). The psychic will retain the information as he would normally. Highly technical texts will reduce the speed reading by half (15 pages per minute) and may require two readings to remember in detail.

Total Recall

Range: Self.
Duration: Permanent.
I.S.P.: 2

The character remembers every word he reads. Specific blocks of written and visual information can be recalled in perfect detail at will. Each block of information costs 3 I.S.P. to recall in absolute detail. If all I.S.P. have been expended the memory is a little fuzzy, so that exact quotes and details may be impossible to recall. Roll percentile to see how much is retained:

- 01%-50%: Remembered in full detail, word for word.
- 51%-80%: Details are forgotten, but the full essence of the ideas are clear.
- 81%-00%: Can only recall the most basic concepts; no details nor strong comprehension.

Note: Does apply to the spoken word, although psychics with this ability usually have very good memories. Also not that only materials read or studied while Total Recall was *activated* can be recalled in exact detail later, word for word, line for line without mistake.

Super

Telemechanics
Range: By touch or up to 5 feet (1.5 m) away.
Duration: 10 minutes plus 2 minutes per level of psionic.
I.S.P.: 10
Saving Throw: None.
   This ability allows the psychic to mentally communicate and under-stand machines. This psi-power is a bizarre combination of Object Read and Telepathy, except that it applies to mechanical devices only.
   By touching any non-artificially intelligent machine, whether it be a bicycle, gun, car or airplane, the psionic will instantly have a complete (although temporary) knowledge of exactly how the machine operates. I must stress that the psychic knows everything about the machine; the complete schematic diagram and operation knowledge are clearly seen in his mind's eye. The level of skill expertise is equal to 80%.
   When touching an artificially intelligent machine, i.e., computers, the psionic not only understands everything about its operation, repair, access codes, etc., but can actually communicate with it telepathically. This means he can tap into a computer's memory bank without using a terminal because the information would be sent directly into the psychic's mind. Remember, the telepathic link and memory are temporary abilities (although a Total Recall would be able to call up small bits of info). The psychic's skill knowledge is equal to an 88% skill proficiency and applies to all aspects of the machine, its operation, repair, special codes, programming, etc.