BLYSS

THE BIG GUNS

Introduction

Well, this is the first rules expansion for the BLYSS system, and as you are quite clearly aware by now, it's called "The Big Guns". Make no mistake, the document before you has very little to do with guns – it does however have a lot to do with firepower and flashy effects, for "Big Guns" refers to magickal powers, psionic effects, and fantastic technology.

Presented within is a simple system for creating powers and abilities, along with suggestions as to how to implement them in your game. BLYSS Big Guns is a perfect supplement for fantasy, sci-fi, and superheroic games.

Hopefully you'll find the Big Guns system useful either as a supplement or as an example for your own house rulings. If not, what the hey – it's free!

Best regards,

Contents

Glossary of Terms

Ability Points – The Points used to buy Big Guns. Bought in exchange for Character Points.

Big Gun – A powerful ability or effect, often a spell, power, or technological wonder.

Energy – The force behind technological powers.

Magickal School – A single division of the potentially limitless forces of Magick.

Mana – The driving force behind a magic user's powers.

Psionic Field – A single division of the potentially limitless forces that can be brought into being by the powers of the mind.

Psyche – The reserves of mental energy that power psionics.

Swag – A Big Gun built as an item rather than a power.

Techniques – A Big Gun accessible to all, powerful but potentially dangerous.

The Big Guns

Magick vs. Psionics vs. Technology
Broadly, there are three categories your character's Big Guns may fall under – Magick, most suitable for fantasy campaigns, Psionics, suitable for fantasy and science fiction, and Technology, suited mostly to science fiction but perhaps too to modern games. Examples of all three can be found in the superheroic genre.

Clearly, the nature of the game will play a large role in defining the nature of the character's powers, but it is up to you to describe the reality – what they are, where they are from, and why the character possesses them.

Big Guns can be bought as powers or as items (known as Swag).

Techniques
Other powers possible with the Big Guns system are abilities known as Techniques. Most often seen in fantasy and science fiction, Techniques represent the ability of any character, magickal, psionic, or not, to tap innate power to manifest an awesome power. Techniques require Ability Points to buy like any other Big Gun, but have no additional requirements. For details on how Techniques work in play, see "The High Price of Power".

Big Guns Requirements
Before taking any of the following guidelines as written, confer with your SM (or if you are the SM, take the time to consider them and if necessary make your own rulings).

In general, the character requires some statistical representation of their power before they can begin buying Big Guns. Suggested requirements are as follows:

Magick: The character requires a Trait for each Magick School or group of Schools they possess. Players should consider their concept carefully before buying Traits.

A Magick School is defined as a type of magic that can be separated from all other magic. For example: Fire; Water; Earth; Air; Force; Nature; Shields and Illusion, to name a few.

Magickal Skills are most appropriate for scholarly wizards, those that have learnt their magick through years of bookish study. A Skill encompasses only one Magick School, such as Fire.

Magickal Talents are appropriate for sourcerous characters, those who derive their magick from their own inner fires. A Talent can encompass a broader grouping of up to four Schools (they must all be connected justifiably to the SM's satisfaction) such as an Elemental Talent (Fire, Water, Earth, and Air).

Magickal Naturals are appropriate for characters to whom magick is as natural as breathing – as life itself (which could include deities, as an example). A Natural represents almost primal force, encompassing anything up to ten Schools (once again, they must all be connected justifiably to the SM's satisfaction).

Psionics: The character requires a Trait for each Psionic Field or group of Fields they possess. Unlike Magick, Psionics are impossible to learn from books, and practitioners tend to be more powerful, more dangerous, and ofttimes more unstable. Players should consider their concept carefully before buying Traits.

Psionic Fields are defined in the same way as Magick Schools – indeed, they're the same thing.

Psionic Talents are appropriate for most psions, representing the willpower and mental reserves necessary to successfully harness the powers of the mind. A Talentencompass a broad grouping of up to four Fields (they must all be connected justifiably to the SM's satisfaction) such as an Elemental Talent (Fire, Water, Earth, and Air).

Psionic Naturals are appropriate for characters to whom psionics is as natural as breathing – as life itself (a giant floating brain, perhaps?). A Natural represents almost primal force, encompassing anything up to ten Schools (once again, they must all be connected justifiably to the SM's satisfaction).

Technology: The character requires a Natural Trait to represent their reliance on technology (characters with technology-based powers are most likely robots or cyborgs). A particularly complex being might even require multiple Naturals to represent different systems working together as one.

Note that in all the above cases, the abilities are assumed to be a part of the character.These requirements are unnecessary if you're building your character Swag.

Ability Points
Big Guns are bought with Ability Points. Ability Points aren't the same as Character Points – in fact, you have to exchange Character Points for Ability Points at a rate of 1 CP for every 12 AP

You require AP even if you're building Swag – the CP exchanged are the item's effective value to the character. You have a powerful item but remember you'll be that much weaker if you ever lose it!

Mana/Pysche/Energy
A character's powers are no good to them if they haven't the required force to drive them – for Magick, Mana, for Psionics, Psyche, and for Technology, Energy. Mana/Psyche/Energy can be bought at a rate of 1 for every 6 AP (or 2 for every 1 CP).

Aside 1-01: Superheroic Characters and Ability Points
First, a note: Super Powers don't HAVE to be Big Guns. For heroes like the Flash or Spiderman they can simply be highly advanced Attributes or Traits (refer to the Ability Levels variant in the BLYSS Core Rules). However, characters with powers similar to Raven, for example, will definitely require the Big Guns rules.

It is suggested that since superheroes are supposed to be much stronger than your average person, even a standard BLYSS character, that the SM increase the amount of CP available to the player when building their character. An additional 100-300 is not an unreasonable amount (but may not be enough depending on the power level you require).

For superheroes using the Big Guns rules this results in a much greater potential AP pool, and far flashier and more powerful (or more numerous) powers!

Building your Big Guns

Use the following tables and guidelines to create individual powers. There are no special rules for Swag with multiple powers – simply create each power seperately and note all of them down under the single Swag. Likewise, if you wish you can have multiple items of Swag each with a different power – it's the points that are important, not how you choose to divide the powers you build.

Table 1-01: Big Gun Trait Costs

Ability	Cost in AP (each rank)	Cost in AP (Cumulative)
Non-existant	0	0
Poor	4	4
Below average	4	8
Average	4	12
Above average	8	20
Good	12	32
Very good	16	49
Masterful	20	68
Incredible	24	92
Unparalleled	28	120
Out of this world	32	152

To buy just one rank or increase a rank by 1 step, use the "Cost in AP (each rank) column." To increase an Attribute from "Non-existant "Ability to any Ability, use the "Cost in AP (Cumulative)" column and pay the AP cost of the Ability you desire.

What follows are a list of Big Gun Traits – the definable characteristics that make up a Big Gun. Ability Points are spent in the same way Character Points would be on a standard Trait. See **Table 1-01: Big Gun Trait Costs**.

Effect

All Big Guns have an effect of some sort – that's pretty much the point! Thus most powers have the Trait known as "Effect", which at its most simple represents the chance of the power succeeding/the difficulty of resisting it (the rank equals a Die Pool as per the BLYSS Ability Scale).

The effect of a power is defined by the player and SM. Examples could include paralysis, confusion, and poison. The mechanics of these effects can usually be defined using other Big Gun Traits – for example, in the cases of the first two, the most important Trait is Duration. The most important Trait for poison on the other hand might be Damage (representing temporary experience deterioration of the target's Stamina Attribute).

If the Effect of the power is clearly intended for combat, uses the "Combat Powers" column when determining the Big Gun's Duration.

Damage

Often the effect of a Big Gun is damage-dealing. Damage dealt is established using **Table 1-01: Damage**.

The first five ranks of the Damage Trait coincides with an increase in the damage die. During the next five, fixed numbers are added instead. This alternates every five ranks (ie. 20 ranks would result in 2d12+24 damage).

Damage that is dealt each round of the power's duration rather than just once (as usual for an instantaneous power) costs the same as the rank 5 higher than itself. Ie. To do d4 damage over multiple rounds, you must spend as many AP as you normally would for 6 ranks in Damage.

Damage usually represents loss of Health, but this doesn't have to be the case. It could

Table 1-02: Big Gun Damage			
Ranks	Damage	Ranks	Damage
0	d0	6	d12+4
1	d4	7	d12+6
2	d6	8	d12+8
3	d8	9	d12+10
4	d10	10	d12+12
5	d12	*And repeat...*	

also represent mana/psyche/energy drain or even experience deterioration. SMs are encouraged to alter the AP cost in such special cases (probably less for the former example and more for the latter).

Additionally, "Damage" could in fact represent the ability to restore lost damage, such as a Healing Spell.

Purely damaging powers do not require an Effect Trait – their damage is usually assumed to be automatic. If the damage is challenged, they are treated as having an Effect rank 6.

Big Guns with the Damage Trait are always considered to be "Combat Powers" when determining the Big Gun's Duration.

Duration
For every rank set to a Big Gun's Duration Trait, the time it lasts progressively increases, as demonstrated by **Table 1-02**: Duration.

Table 1-03: Big Gun Duration		
Ranks	Combat Powers	Non-Combat Powers
0	Instantaneous Effect	Instantaneous Effect
1	1 round	75 seconds
2	2 rounds	2 minutes, 30 seconds
3	4 rounds	5 minutes
4	8 rounds	10 minutes
5	16 rounds	20 minutes
6	Etc.	40 minutes
7		1 hour, 20 minutes
8		2 hours, 40 minutes
9		5 hours, 20 minutes
10		Etc.

Range
For every rank set to a Big Gun's Range Trait, the maximum distance a target can be from the user progressively increases, as demonstrated by **Table 1-03: Range**.

Area
For every rank set to a Big Gun's Area Trait, the size of the area affected

Table 1-04: Big Gun Range	
Ranks	Range
0	Caster must touch target
1	2.5 metres
2	5 metres
3	10 metres
4	20 metres
5	40 metres
6	80 metres
7	160 metres
8	320 metres
9	Etc.

Table 1-05: Big Gun Area	
Ranks	Area
0	1 target/self
1	2 metres
2	4 metres
3	8 metres
4	16 metres
5	32 metres
6	64 metres
7	128 metres
8	356 metres
9	Etc.

increases, as demonstrated by **Table 1-04: Area**.

Miss Chance (Accuracy)
Miss Chance is a Negative Trait. Powers built using the Big Guns system are assumed to hit on target wherever the character aims them 100% of the time (whether they have any effect or not is another matter, see Effect). However, the Miss Chance Negative Trait is often a good way to regain some AP from the spell.

If a Big Gun has a single rank or more in this Trait, it has what is known as an Accuracy Die Pool, which is equal to rank 10 (d12 + d12) – the Big Gun's ranks in Miss Chance +1.

Note that the +1 rank means a rank 1 in Miss Chance effectively results in an Accuracy Die Pool of d12 + d12 (very hard to miss indeed, but remember this is opposed to never missing) while a rank 10 can never mean the power has no chance of hitting (though if they hit with a d4 the character will be supremely lucky).

Table 1-06: Big Gun Miss Chance

Ranks	Accuracy Rank	Accuracy Die Pool
-0	N/A	Always Hits
-1	10	d12 + d12
-2	9	d12 + d10
-3	8	d12 + d8
-4	7	d12 + d6
-5	6	d12 + d4
-6	.5	d12
-7	4	d10
-8	3	d8
-9	2	d6
-10	1	d4

Table 1-07: Big Gun Charge Time

Ranks	Combat Powers	Non-Combat Powers
-0	Instantaneous Effect	Instantaneous Effect
-1	1 round	1 minute
-2	2 rounds	2 minutes
-3	4 rounds	4 minutes
-4	6 rounds	8 minutes
-5	9 rounds	16 minutes
-6	12 rounds	32 minutes
-7	16 rounds	1 hour, 4 minutes
-8	20 rounds	2 hours, 8 minutes
-9	25 rounds	4 hours, 16 minutes
-10	Etc.	Etc.

See **Table 1-05: Miss Chance** for Accuracy at each negative rank.

Charge Time
Akin to Miss Chance, Charge Time is a Negative Trait. Powers are usually assumed to be used instantaneously after the character activates them. A power with this Trait takes some time to warm up. Like Duration, this differs depending on whether the power is a "Combat Power" or "Non-Combat Power". See Table **1-06: Charge Time**.

Swag Only Big Gun Traits
The following two Traits are usually only applicable for items of Swag. Both of these Traits are factored into the AP cost of the item but not the cost of the power/s!

Charges
Obviously an item can't draw from the character's energy reserves, so you hadn't bought them any Mana/psyche/Energy. But without it how will you use the powers? Charges are internal reserves of of power fuel possessed by your item of Swag. They are half as cheap again as are reserves for your character (1 Charge for every 3 AP, or 4 Charges for every 1 CP).

There is a reason for this cheapness – once gone, Charges don't return, as does the power store of a character. They can however be replenished by a character who possesses the same type of power as the item needs at a cost of 1 Charge for every 2 points spent. An exhaustive process to be sure, and one not to be undertaken lightly.

The amount of Charges you buy now sets the maximum capacity of the Swag, and it can never be charged over this amount henceforth.

Uses Per Day

Most items are theoretically useable an unlimited amount of times, but this Negative Trait restricts the item to a certain amount. One rank sets a cap at 10 uses per day, and each rank up to ten reduces this cap by 1 use, as seen in **Table 107: Item Uses Per Day**.

This Negative Trait doesn't follow the usual Character Point/Ability Point progression: Each rank is only worth 4 AP.

Table 1-08: Item Uses Per Day	
Ranks	Uses Per Day
-0	Unlimited
-1	10
-2	9
-3	8
-4	7
-5	6
-6	5
-7	4
-8	3
-9	2
-10	1

Additionally, since the Uses Per Day of any item si determined by its Charges, and it could easily have less uses than 10, if this is the case the player should skip down several ranks until they reach the one below their item's amount of uses. Ie. If it could be used 9 times, their first reduction would be to 8.

In the case of Swag that have multiple powers, a separate Trait can be taken separately for each.

Example Big Guns

Following are three example Big Guns created using these rules. "Power Cost" is the cost in points of the power to use, which is equal to the AP Cost divided by 2.

Spell: Magick Missile

	Rank	Details	AP
Effect	0	NA	0
Damage	1	d4 damage	4
Duration	0	Instantaneous	0
Range	5	40 metres	32
Area	0	1 target	0
Miss Chance	-0	Never misses	0
Charge Time	-0	Instantaneous casting	0
		AP/Power Cost:	36/18

Power: Confusion

	Rank	Details	AP
Effect (Confusion)	5	Good (d12) chance of confusion	32

Damage	0	NA	0
Duration	3	4 rounds	12
Range	4	20 metres	20
Area	0	1 target	0
Miss Chance	-4	Masterful Accuracy (d12 + d6)	-20
Charge Time	-0	Instantaneous casting	0
		AP/Power Cost:	44/22

Swag: Amulet of Fireballs

	Rank	Details	AP
Effect	0	NA	0
Damage	5	d12 damage	32
Duration	0	Instantaneous	0
Range	5	40 metres	32
Area	0	1 target	0
Miss Chance	-4	Masterful Accuracy (d12 + d6)	-20
Charge Time	-0	Instantaneous casting	0
Uses Per Day*	-0		0
Charges*	240		80
		AP Cost:	124
		Power Cost:	22

*Factored into the AP cost but NOT the Power Cost.

Using your Big Guns
The following section explains how the Big Guns you've created are used within the context of the game.

The High Price of Power
Using a Big Gun costs mana/psyche/energy points equal to the the Big Gun's AP Cost divided by two (always round up), which is known as the Spell/Power Cost. A character suffers no adverse effects due to the expenditure of these points, though when they run out they cannot use their powers again until they've had a full night's rest (or possibly more if they're heavily fatigued).

Health Drain
It *is* possible to continue using powers once your character's energy has run out, but if you do so the Power Cost is taken from the character's Health! For example, if Randolph the mage has only 20 Mana left and needs 22 to cast a Fireball, his player can opt to substitute 2 Health for the needed Mana.

Techniques
A powerful yet not always reliable addition to any character's arsenal, a Technique is a special attack or maneuvere. They are built using the Big Guns rules, but require no special Traits, and no access to a pool of energy points.

Big Gun users can use Mana/Psyche/Energy to power Techniques as if they were powers of their School/Field if they wish, or they can use Techniques as any other person can.

For those without Mana (or those with it who have spent it all), to successfully use a technique the player must roll a Stamina check with a TD that is equal to the technique's cost, divided by two and rounded up. If they fail, they may no longer attempt to use a technique for the duration of the session. A screw-up results in fatigue. A critical screw-up causes the character to fall unconscious.

If, during the same combat as using one technique, a character uses a technique (either the same one or a different one) again, the TD to use this technique is 1 higher than it would normally be. This is cumulative.

If the TD should in this way rise above what the character can achieve, barring a Golden Roll, and they roll anything but that Golden Roll (which must, in this case, be rolled on the largest die in the Dice Pool), they fall unconscious. Even if they succeed they are considered fatigued if they weren't already, and are treated as if they had failed with regards to using further techniques (ie. They can't.)

After using 3 or more techniques, the character is automatically considered fatigued.

By using their mana/psyche/energy, Big Gun users can automatically succeed and avoid these pitfalls.

Just as with Spells, a character who has run out of Mana can supplement their Health Points to power Techniques if they so wish.

Even characters with no magical ability can do this, and they can attempt Techniques in this manner even when they otherwise couldn't due to a failed test, provided that they are not fatigued or unconscious as a result of that failure. Burning Health to power a Technique can be an effective final attack.

Concentration
Generally, a character needs to maintain concentration throughout the duration of the activation of their power or it fails. If for whatever reason a character might be distracted, they need to succeed at a Mental Fortitude Test in order not to botch the attempt. In a combat situation it is especialyl hard to concentrate on a power when you're more concerned with keeping yourself alive.

Recharging Swag
To recharge an item, a character must expend twice as many mana/psyche/energy as they intend to give to the item. It is a wasteful and exhaustive procedure – wasteful for that one day, that is, which compares favourably to the long-term nature of the item's power coupled to renewed powers the next day.

Naturally, a character with one type of power cannot recharge Swag that is fuelled by another type. A magic user attempting to recharge a psychic item

would fail, for example. SMs may wish to have the character expend points on the wasted effort if they attempt it.

The Big Guns presents a system for the creation and application of magickal, psionic, and technological effects in your game – an ideal supplement for fantasy, sci-fi, and superheroic settings.

A copy of the BLYSS Basic Rules or the BLYSS Core Rules is required.