

TMCRPS

The Too Much
Coffee Role-Playing
System

[Clinton R. Nixon](#)

Introduction

I drank too much coffee last night.

I couldn't sleep, and needed something to do, and decided—I want a game system.

Since I wrote this, I've realized that it's merely a conglomeration of some other systems, and that makes me a total poser. Great.

Anyway, I wanted a system that was simple, free, and used d6's, which I can get at 7-11 if I need to (and pick up coffee).

Here it is.

I hope maybe this helps someone. Use it in whatever you feel like—I think it's pretty adaptable.

I'd really appreciate any changes or comments—I'm certain this could be improved.

Also, I really like Too Much Coffee Man by Shannon Wheeler. Read this comic – <http://www.tmcm.com>.

Heavily inspired by:

[FUDGE](#) by Steffan O'Sullivan;
[Unknown Armies](#) by Greg Stolze and John Tynes;
[Feng Shui](#) by Robin D. Laws (which I've not read, but a friend told me this was a virtual copy of, so... um, sorry);
[PERP](#) by Mike Mearls

All of these are excellent games—better than this by far and not nearly as insulting. Go play them—two of them are free, for Pete's sake.

Thanks to:

[Doc Fortune](#)
Everyone at ApartmentCon!
[The Gaming Outpost](#)
[Hephaestus' Forge](#)
Folgers
Bindu Vrishabhendra
[Napster](#)
That hot pink-haired girl that delivers Chinese food

Playtested by:

You

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I am your father.

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d00bie.

Character Creation

Number System

Everything in the TMCRPS is rated from -5 to $+5$. 0 is human average (or average for a typical character in whatever you're playing.)

Generally, every level is better than the next by a factor of 2. That is, a character with Woodcarving $+2$ is twice as good at woodcarving as a character with Woodcarving $+1$. Don't take this too literally, though—a character with a Sprinting of $+4$ cannot run twice as a character with a Sprinting of $+3$.

Statistics

Statistics are the raw potential of your character—what he is, and can be, good at. TMCRPS does not have a list of statistics. This is for three reasons:

1. To make it harder on you.
2. Because I'm lazy and lists of statistics are usually written by a jackass.
3. Because 0 is human average. That is—any statistic you do not specify on your character sheet is human average.

Joe has a Strength of $+2$, a Perception of $+1$, an Endurance of $+1$, and a Willpower of -3 written on his character sheet. He needs to dodge a car driving right at him. The GM decides this is some sort of Agility roll, but Joe doesn't have an Agility written down: his Agility is 0 .

It is up to the power level of your game how many free levels you give to statistics. In any case, players can adjust statistics by this method: *A bonus level in a statistic can be gained by losing two other statistic levels.* These lost levels do not have to be from the same statistic. Pete can lower Agility to -1 and Willpower to -1 to raise Wits to $+1$.

Statistics have another dark purpose: a skill cannot have a higher level than its related statistic $+ 1$.

Skills

Again, no skill lists. But, you wonder—how do I know what statistic is the relevant statistic for each skill?

If you can't figure this out, go play something else, or I'll pimp-slap you.

Skills are very relative to the genre. In the 1970's, a 0 in Computer Operation meant that you couldn't operate one—the average man had no idea how to. A -2 would be that you thought UNIVAC was a vacuum cleaner. In 2000, a 0 in Computer Operation means that you know what Windows looks like, can use a mouse and can probably painstakingly type a paper in a word processor.

It is once again up to the GM to decide how many free levels of skills to give to players. A strong determinant in this is how broad skills are in your game. Less levels should be given in a game with a "Weapons" skill and a "Thief Stuff" skill than in a game with a "Handguns," "Pick Lock," and "Read Over My Shoulder, Will You! Eat it, pig!" skill.

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Another important thing to consider is the skill's umbrella of knowledge. As a skill improves, the character will gain peripheral knowledge. For example, someone with the skill "Mechanic (Cars)" at +4 will know many things, including the companies that manufacture most car parts, what type of car is most reliable, and could even use this skill to work on something related, like a tank.

Lastly, each character should choose one skill he or she is known for, called **This is What I'm Known For** or TiWIKF. Put a star or something up beside this. This is usually what the character's best at, but doesn't have to be.

Example: Lumpy the Barbarian is well-known throughout the land for his bizarre flailing of his battle-axe. He doesn't hit so often, but he's so uncoordinated that his enemies often fall to the ground in laughter watching his spastic war-dance.

Nick "One-Eye" LaLone, Mafia kingpin, is well-rumored to have been shot over 20 times. The old bastard never dies, but he attracts bullets like a magnet—his chest's a mass of scars, according to those in the know. (Example of a piss-poor Dodge skill that's Nick's TiWIKF)

Gifts

Gifts are things that cannot be easily quantified. This is not the same as in many games where "Acute Hearing" would be a gift—in TMCRRPS, that's Hearing +1 or Perception +1 or something.

This is more along the lines of "Hearing Ultrasonic Waves." Still, this can be a skill if your GM wants to quantify it. Same with the traditional fantasy Infravision stuff. You could have an Infravision gift, where you can see heat the same as you can see normally in terms of range and whatnot. Or it could be a skill, where your ability in the skill determines how far you can see, and to what detail.

As like everything else, the number of these is up to the GM. You may not even have any in your game, or you may have really mundane (yet cool) ones like "Knows the King of Prussia."

Gifts are also useful as prerequisites in order to have something that average people don't have. For example, if you're playing a modern setting where a few people in the world have psionics, then "Psionic" would be a gift you might have to buy in order to use psionics. Note, in a case like this, your psionic skills are relative to other psionics, not normal humans (cause they ain't got none). You can do the same with magic or anything else. Such is the beauty of buying a gift.

Trading stuff

Note: If your GM doesn't allow this, don't do it. Or he might have something else. This is all pretty relative, remember.

During character generation, you can trade levels in one category to levels in another. Here's a quick breakdown.

1 Stat level = 3 Skill levels

1 Gift = 7 Skill levels

Trade as you like. This also allows a GM to say, "Ok, make 20-point characters," where points is a better term by far than Skill levels. You could spend 3 points to raise Twinkiness (the statistic) to +1, and 7 to buy Magic-Man (the gift) and have 10 points left to spend on skills.

Resolution

Resolution be easy.

Dice

You need two really common d6's to use TMCRPS. It's best if they're two different colors—if not, take a Magic Marker to one. Declare one a positive die, and one a negative. When you roll these, subtract the negative die from the positive die (or if you've already figured out that the negative die rolls negative numbers, add them—math is insane. You know what I mean. Get a frickin' result between -5 and 5.)

Unopposed actions

If you are trying to perform an action without someone else opposing you, the GM will set a difficulty:

-1	Really, really easy
0	Easy
1	Average
2	Kinda hard
3	Difficult
4	Ball-buster
5	Sorta kinda impossible except for assholes with too much time on their hands.

Don't be afraid to use 6 or something as well.

Roll the two d6's, and add the result to your appropriate skill or statistic. If you make the difficulty, then you did it. If you make the difficult by a long shot, then you did it well—maybe the GM will make the results spectacular somehow.

Opposed actions

The two people involved both roll the d6's and add the result to their appropriate score. The higher of the two wins.

The GM may assign a difficulty to opposed actions as well. Example:

Two characters are leaping to get a gun that's fallen to the floor. The GM sets a difficulty of 1, and the two guys leap for it. Ed Healy rolls a -2 and adds his Dexterity of +1 for a -1. Jared rolls a 1 and adds his Dexterity of -1 for a whopping 0. Both guys leap for the pistol, and Jared manages to edge out Ed, but he misses the gun as well as both men roll around and tussle.

Dublin

If a player rolls double 1's or 6's on any action, this is what happens:

- 1/-1 Something really bad happens.
- 6/-6 Something really good happens.

This does not denote success or failure. If a character with Drive +4 is speeding into an alley and rolls 1/-1, this doesn't mean he didn't make the turn. It just means the GM gets to think of something nasty.

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For the character's TiWIKF, the player gets to make up Nifties—results that occur whenever he rolls 2/-2, 3/-3, 4/-4, or 5/-5. These can be positive or negative, but have to be relevant, and cool.

Jon the Swashbuckler is known throughout the land for his skill with the rapier. Jon's player has made up this little chart:

2/-2 Jon manages to cut the buttons off an enemy's piece of clothing—the clothing falls to the ground.

3/-3 Jon does a cool little leap—he throws his rapier into the air, spinning and grabs it in midair as he comes down on the enemy. (Note: Jon's player still needs to make his to hit roll.)

4/-4 Jon brings his hand and the hilt around to his enemy's face, insulting him with the slap of a hand-guard.

5/-5 Jon pulls off a sweet spin that gives him the chance to drive back all around him—give him a to hit roll on anyone within 3 feet.

Players can change this list between any storyline. The nifties are, as always, subject to GM ruling.

Combat and Damage

Much like FUDGE, people are more than welcome to create their own combat system. This is a sample one I've included.

Initiative

Determine initiative with an Unopposed Roll for all combatants—roll and add Dexterity, Speed, or something applicable. Combatants go in this order. The GM has the option of requiring a new initiative roll each combat round, or just keeping the same initiative throughout the combat.

Melee Combat

Melee combat is determined by an Opposed action of weapon skills between the attacker and the defender. If the attacker succeeds, he gets to add the relative degree by which he succeeds to the damage done by his weapon. Weapons are very genre-specific, but here's a few examples:

Fists – 0; Dagger – 1; Club – 1; Mace – 2; Short sword – 2; Broad sword – 3

A good rule of thumb is 0 for small, 1 for medium-sized and 2 for large weapons, with a +1 if it's sharp.

Dodging

While characters can only attack once per round, they are allowed to dodge as often as they are attacked. Dodging is automatic, and is the reason for the Opposed action. If, for some reason, you choose not to dodge or cannot, the difficulty of hitting you is effectively –1.

Each time you dodge, you have –1 to your weapon skill cumulatively that round. This hinders you from dodging 5 people attacking. This is the importance of initiative—if you've already been attacked by two people in a round before you get to attack, you'll have a –2 modifier.

Missile Combat

Missile combat is an Unopposed Roll. The difficulty is determined like so:

Range -1 Point Blank 1 Short range for weapon 2 Medium range 3 Long Range 4 You can still see the guy. 5 Hmm... why don't I go home and make dinner while you take potshots at some guy you're never going to hit anyway? Jackass.	Movement 0 Still +1 Walking +2 Running +3 Moving faster than running +4 Moving faster than a car +5 Jet Plane	Cover 0 No cover +1 Little bit of cover +2 About half covered +3 Head and shoulders poking out +4 Really covered +5 You see, I'm going to shoot through this little slit over there in their bunker and shoot him in the face.
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If you succeed, add your relative degree to damage. Guns do a lot of damage. Here's a brief list:

Thrown rock – 0; Bow – 1; Crossbow or .22 pistol – 2; Small caliber gun – 3; Bigger gun – 4; Shotgun – 5; Really big gun - 6

Damage

You need some kind of Damage Capacity statistic. This stat is rated from –5 to +5, like everything else.

If your damage capacity is –5 to +1, subtract the damage taken from your Damage Capacity. When you go below –5, pass out.

Lugzan has a –1 Meat statistic. He gets shot with a .22—3 points of damage: his Meat is now –4. Die, Lugzan, die!

If your damage capacity is +2 or higher, things are only a little more complex. Each level of damage capacity can take its value in damage. If it takes less than its value, lose one level of Damage Capacity. If it takes more, bleed over into the next level. This is better explained by beating up an example.

Pete (Meat +4) is fighting this street thug. The thug punches him for 1 point of damage—Pete's Meat is now +3. (Dude, I just said 'Pete's Meat.') Next round, the thug pulls a switchblade and cuts Pete for 3 points of damage. Since Pete's Meat is +3, he only loses one level. His Meat is now +2. Next round, he gets cut again, but for 4 points of damage—that's 2 points for +2, then 1 point for +1 and another for 0. His Meat is now –1.

This is really deadly. One or two bullets are going to put anyone on the ground, and 3 or 4 punches'll do the same. For a more fantastic game, divide damage by 2 or something.

Death

You have two options here:

The Good Option

Characters pass out when they are under –5 Meat. Characters only die when there is a good reason for them to do so—that is, it makes good story sense. This does not mean you can't abuse them—break some bones. It's much more fun to watch them suffer than kill them.

Kill The Bastards

They die at –10. No questions asked.

Supernatural Powers

I really can't even begin to tell you what to do here. Like FUDGE, you need to make something up. The supernatural is very genre specific.

But, here's some points to remember:

1. TMCRRPS is based on relative degrees. If normal people can't cast fireballs in your world, then the character needs to buy a gift to do so.
2. Spell lists! Everyone loves big, long, thick, hard spell lists!
3. Really, I can't think of anything else. Have fun.

Advancement

Each session, each player should get at least one Coffee Bean. They should get additional Coffee Beans for:

- ?? Good roleplaying
- ?? Putting self in extreme personal risk (without spending Beans)
- ?? Meeting personal goal
- ?? Meeting group goal (maybe 2 or 3 Beans)

No more than 5 Beans should be given out in a session, with the usual being 2 or 3. 5 is kind of extreme.

Coffee Beans can be spent in the following ways:

Spend a Coffee Bean to increase a roll by +1. This can be done cumulatively.

Spend a Coffee Bean to reduce an NPC's roll by -1.

Spend Beans to increase stuff.

Statistics 5 x new level of Statistic (if negative or 0, count as 1)

Skills 3 x new level of Skill (if negative or 0, count as 1)

Gifts I just wrote this screwy system last night. What the hell do you want from me? I have no clue. It depends on the game, the GM and how powerful the Gift is. Jerkoff.