

# THE MUTANT EPOCH™

TABLETOP ADVENTURE ROLEPLAYING GAME

Published by

Outland  
Arts

**COMING Early 2010**

## Downloadable PDF Preview

Spring 2009 edition

### Quick Overview of The Mutant Epoch RPG and Setting

The Mutant Epoch™ Adventure role playing game is a fast paced, well supported and easy to learn, post apocalyptic tabletop game. The RPG is about putting you in the game as someone you can't be in real life, forcing your in-game persona to survive in an age of rediscovery, high adventure, savage conflict and freakish mutants and machines. Characters work in small excavation teams to make forays into vast ruined cities, across junk strewn wastelands, and twisted forests and nightmarish swamps, only to cope in the newly emerging barter forts, villages and warlord ruled dominions of humanity. Villains, beasts, mecha forces, belligerent factions and environmental threats to the human communities keep the characters on their toes, forever challenged and involved in this adventure game.

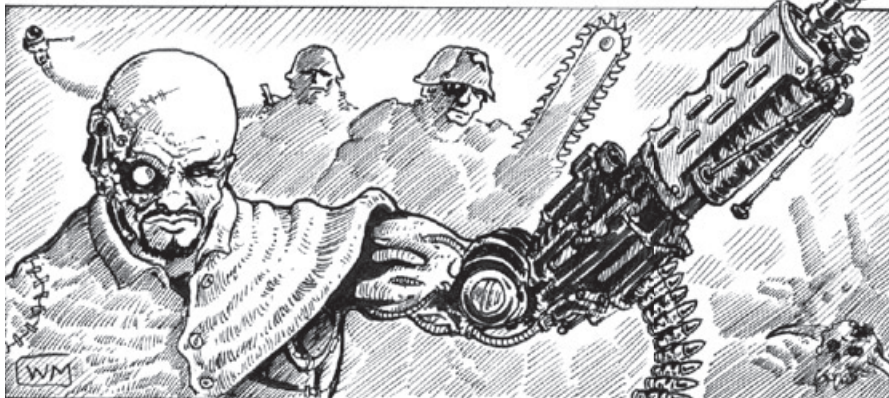
All you need is the Hub Rules book, some polyhedron dice, paper and pencils, some friends and your imagination.

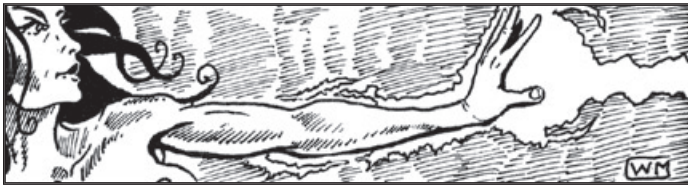
We have divided this game overview into the following sections:

- **The Mutant Epoch Setting**
- **Objective of Game Play**
- **Huh? Role Playing?**
- **Preview of Characters**
- **The Outland System Game Mechanic**

### Preview of The Mutant Epoch Setting

While a game master could take whatever sections of the TME rules and create his or her own setting, at any time in the future, The Mutant Epoch, as published, takes place in the mid 27<sup>th</sup> Century a couple hundred years after the collapse of the former civilizations. It is a new dark ages for humanity, where might is often right, where nature has become twisted by ancient human science and accelerated evolution, where people live in small, often remote communities, fearful of strangers and growing eccentric in their isolation. It is a time when only a few hard pressed townships have formed factions, often in response to some external threat, where communities have taken on a more or less feudal system, employing technology more reminiscent of medieval Europe, mixed with the highly prized relics left behind by the ancients. In places, digger towns have emerged on the edge of great ruined cities of the oldsters, where daily expeditions by excavators pierce the dangerous junk heaps in search of wondrous treasures, as well as answers as to how and why the civilization of the old ones ended.





Beyond the relative safety of the scattered towns, are the vast wilds and shallow seas, broad wastelands where ancient battles took place, impenetrable woodlands, stinking swamps, badlands and great dune wastes. All of these areas are littered with the remains of dead cities and installations. Rusted machines of war are often buried under meters of ash or compacted mud and rock, but at other times, protruding kilometers into the sky in vast urban ruinscapes. Everywhere, newly evolved plants and animals, which seem as hostile and merciless



as the landscape, wait to devour the unwary, the slow or the weak, even as emerging clans of fierce sub-humans and man-killing machines claim their own domains, and plot annihilation of the old kind, the humans, and their off-shoots.

The creatures found in the Hub Rules and the Mutant Bestiary One book, are basically of North American descent, when based on any present day animals at all. Furthermore, the

fiction and published regional settings take place in south western Untied States, with the Crossroads Region located directly over a portion of greater Los Angeles.

The name of the game being The Mutant Epoch implies much about the setting itself, being 'an age of the mutants.' While mutants certainly do play a huge role in the setting, a variety of other astounding beings and factors are also present, including synthetic humans, robots, cyborgs, digital beings, sub-humans, dimensional entities and portals, as well as plenty of unmutated peoples and species. In addition, there are pockets of the old culture still surviving, often in pure stock dominated fortresses or territories, including the numerous orbital colonies which survived the devastations and wars of old. These hold over complexes are often very advanced, and while their resources are few and their enemies many, they do manage to produce most of the synthetic humans and cyborgs found in the current age, as well as limited advanced weaponry and robotics. The mecha, or mechanicals, are another element which greatly affects the new reality, whose androids and robot armies, often serving a mother computer in a hive-like structure, continue their war of extermination against their former human masters.

To sum up, the world of The Mutant Epoch would hardly be recognizable to present day people. It is a unique era in human history, an era where pure stock humans no longer hold the reigns of power; for in this new world there are now more

mutant life forms than non-mutants. This is an age where new cultures rise upon the ruins of the old and hold out corporate strongholds struggle against mecha and mutant factions. It is also a time when unlikely heroes rise up and make a stand against the onslaught of barbarian marauders, blood thirsty beasts, humanoid raiders, the mecha hives and newly emerging, hostile powers. For many intelligent beings, especially mutant humans, it is the beginning of the greatest age in history, when the former dominance of the pure stocks has faded, and the opportunity to seize power and territory is within reach of the fit, the brave, and the adventurous. "No guts, no glory" shout the former slave races, as they make their forays into the ruins to claim their inheritance from careless, arrogant forefathers.

### Objective of Game Play

How does The Mutant Epoch differ from other RPGs as far as the objectives of play are concerned? If you are unfamiliar with role playing game in the first place, visit this page: [Huh? Role Playing?](#)



In The Mutant Epoch, the goals of play, beyond the obvious ones of having fun, cooperative storytelling, entertainment and camaraderie with fellow players, is for your character to survive. Often, the meaning of survival goes beyond just seeing your character make it through the session, but rather, that his or her faction, community, family, friends, and strain of humanity survive. From all sides, there are enemies which strive to see your kind wiped out and they would do so were it not for the brave few who stand in their way. Of course, characters may be perceived as mere excavators, little more than grave robbers, salvagers and looters of the ancient places. At low rank, this is often a true appraisal of an adventure team;

however, as the PCs grow in prowess, recover better gear, make alliances and secure strongholds, they will see their role shift. As mentioned above, they will see their objectives changing from personal survival to the survival of their community or faction, their role changing from selfish survivalist to heroic champion. The twisted





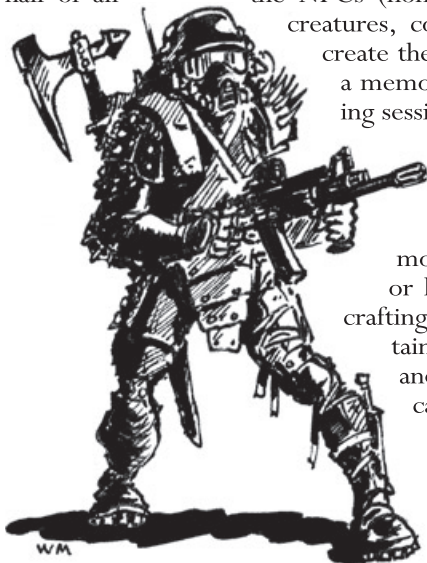
new era is exceedingly dangerous, and even the most independent, robust and well equipped digger or squad of excavators needs a place to retreat to, where they can heal up, buy food and water, trade their unwanted loot, gather regional news, enlist replacement adventurers, get assignments from patrons, and form mutually beneficial alliances. Without these communi-

ties, the characters would have little hope of survival, thus it is their main motivation, at higher rank, to protect and improve their home town, or even to establish their own fortified base camp and reclaim a few square kilometers of the lawless, wild lands which cover much of the world.

The objective of playing the Mutant Epoch will of course differ from person to person, and also between players and the game master. Each person sitting at the table will have different goals depending on their own life experiences, exposure to popular books, films, computer games, other RPGs and what they want to get out of the campaign. Some players are more interested in combat action, others prefer exploration and uncovering ancient sites, while others are into interaction with fellow player characters or GM controlled non-player characters.



The game master, or GM, will have the most challenging and rewarding role in the game, as he or she must be the 'window to the world' for the players, speak and act on behalf of all the NPCs (non-player characters) and creatures, control the weather and create the necessary elements for a memorable and exciting gaming session. Given the duties the GM must perform, he or she will obviously have a separate set of game objectives, paramount of these is to see his or her efforts at adventure crafting well rewarded, entertaining for all, fun to host and open enough to inspire calls for further sessions.



## Huh? Role Playing?

In short, role playing games (RPGs) are just as the name implies; players take on roles in a game. Frankly, in this authors opinion, and depending on your group's style of play, an RPG can be more like a novel or a movie than a game, and be akin to cooperative storytelling with random, unknown 'scenes' and outcomes occurring which make it very immersive. There is also no guarantee that the heroes will succeed at their mission or even survive the adventure, which makes for some very gritty, compelling and occasionally nerve wracking sessions.

Another aspect of most role-playing games is the fact that instead of competing with the other players sitting around the table, you are normally on the same side and working together to accomplish some sort of quest, with the game master (GM) or referee usually serving as the primary narrator and creator of the setting, events, beings, and circumstances outside of each player's characters (PCs) control. In The Mutant Epoch, which leans more towards being a traditional RPG, the players are encouraged to share the narrative on a limited scale, such as controlling specific NPCs on behalf of the GM, especially if their own character is not in the current scene where play is currently taking place.

For the most part, a tabletop RPG involves a group of players sitting around a table, with between 2 and 4 players and one game master. However one GM and one player is common, while true solo play gaming is also more wide spread than most gamers admit to. Many gamers are busy with work and family, or they are separated from their regular gaming group and still like to tabletop RPG. The Multi-path adventures published by Outland Arts, such as Blood Road or Nuke Tower to name only two, are designed for both group play or solo play as there are many options and possible outcomes while playing these adventures.

There are many sorts of RPGs from the old school traditional to the 'hippy' story games style. Traditional games tend to grant all event, setting and non-player character control solely to the game master, and can lead to a hack and slash style play where players tend to avoid character to character or character to non-player character dialogue. Traditional games can lead to something called 'railroading,' whereby the GM has





be enjoyable and a good way to release steam; however, a first person shooter computer game can handle this just as well.

Story games, at the opposite end, tend to be focused more on interaction with NPCs and fellow player characters, instead of outright killing them; plus, in many of these games the players either share some degree of story narrative with the game master, or there is no GM at all. For many new gamers, the idea of having to dive into a theatrical role is intimidating at first and they might find it easier to roll-play at first instead of role-play. If a group of players are experienced gamers, or actors, they can easily tackle a story game, or even turn an old school game into a story game without even tweaking the rules. For beginning players, however, the concepts of cooperative play, understanding the game setting, rules and lingo, and differentiating the various polyhedron dice is usually enough for the first couple of sessions and so allowing the players to test drive their characters in the game world and rules mechanics should suffice.

In *The Mutant Epoch* RPG, it is up to the GM and players how much narrative control, NPC assignment, and interaction with NPCs to employ. A person new to RPGs might be wholly freaked out and never show up at another session after previously sitting at a table where the huge career gamer with a goatee is fully immersed in his role as a petite, elf princess and speaking in a shrill voice whenever uttering the PCs flowery dialogue. In short, there is a dial setting to each game and each gamer, a dial which can be adjusted to accommodate the players and game master to regulate how much character dialogue and play acting is appropriate. Often times somebody playing with those he or she has gamed with for many sessions will relax and get into character more readily, and allow a campaign to switch over to something resembling a novel



instead of a mere dice game. It is just something that takes time, allowing the new gamer to feel comfortable at his or her own pace and get over one's innate, culturally imposed sense of feeling silly at playing make belief, let alone talking as his or her character in the 27<sup>th</sup> century as a cyborg, mutant or synthetic human.

In closing, role-playing games are among the most creative, immersive, socially beneficial, imaginative, and affordable entertainment mediums ever devised. All you really need is a rules game book, some paper, polyhedron dice (or a digital dice roller on a laptop), pencils, a couple of friends or family members and your imagination to set out on a most remarkable adventure.



## Preview of Characters

### Character Generation and Type

Generating characters is accomplished through a series of 16 steps, some random, some by the players choice, a few steps quite involved and requiring several rolls and a bit of explanation while others are very easy, such as when players pick a name and gender for their new character. Most steps require little more than a single roll on a table to determine dominant hand, swimming ability and whatnot. Establishing a character's type is handled by a random roll from a selection appropriate to the gamer's own RPG experience, or, the Game Master can assign a type or even allow players to pick a character type once they become familiar with the game and setting.

A character type can almost be viewed as a person's race; however, in truth, all organic characters contained in the **The Mutant Epoch Hub Rules** core book stem from human ancestry, either by breeding or DNA sampling. The available types contained in the Hub Rules are:

**Pure Stock Humans:** unmutated humans

**Clones:** copies of specific humans, born either in machines as adults or surrogate mothers

**Trans-humans:** humans enhanced at pre-birth and selectively bred

**Bioreplicas:** custom, bio-engineered beings, using human-themed DNA and grown instead of born, emerging as adults

**Cyborgs:** humans with nervous system augmentation and assorted implants

**Ghost Mutants:** aberrant humans with no visible mutations

**Mutants:** from the mildly deviated to freakish horror mutants

Many other character types will be offered in Outland Arts' The Mutant Epoch dedicated electronic magazine titled Excavator Monthly, as well as the upcoming Expansion Rules book, which will add androids, parasites, abominations, grafters, the rebuilt, mutant animals and digital beings as new character types.

The actual generation techniques used for character creation vary depending on the type of character being made. Pure stocks, synthetic humans (clones, trans-humans and bio-replicas) are quick to generate while cyborgs and extensively mutated individuals take longer to roll up due to the vast assortment of mutations and implants available through random determination. Regardless of the character type (including creatures, robotics and many plants), the same eight traits are almost always used for The Mutant Epoch.

### **The 8 Basic Traits Are:**

**Endurance**

**Strength**

**Agility**

**Accuracy**

**Intelligence**

**Willpower**

**Perception**

**Appearance**



These traits are most often determined by a d100 roll on a table, which uses a synthetic bell curve to usually get traits in the average range for an adult human, yet, allowing for the occasional inferior trait, or, the remarkable and exceptionally high values from time to time. Traits improve slightly during rank gain, but can also be permanently decreased through accidents, illness, combat or other hazards.



### **Rank Gain**

People change, especially when pressed to their limits, exposed to new experiences, immersed in battle, and forced to use all their skills, strengths, wits and guile in a daily struggle to survive. Many traditional role playing games, including the Outland System have some sort of leveling mechanism. In The Mutant Epoch RPG, going up in rank is helpful, but the alterations to the character are more subtle than other RPGs. For example, when going up in rank, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>, one's character doesn't suddenly double his or her endurance, even though that PC's endurance trait does automatically increase per rank due to the fact that the surviving individual becomes tougher. Other traits and skills can improve through random results on a bonus table, with each character type rolling with different odds of gaining benefits.

Gaining ranks is of course beneficial and desired, but the rules encourage a more realistic, life-like feel than other RPGs. For example, being of 7<sup>th</sup> rank doesn't make the character practically invincible, and a well placed bullet or sword blow could still kill a character, especially if a critical strike is rolled.

In short, we wanted to avoid the 'sword and sorcery' super hero style of gaming which afflicts so many RPGs.

## **Explanation of Outland System Game Mechanic**

The outland system is unique in its rules, tables, charts, and list usage: however, it is a traditional RPG system in that it employs many of the expected, successful and necessary elements to make for satisfying, fast paced adventure action, while still playable with as much character to character interaction and story narrative as desired.

The rules are in depth enough to satisfy the experienced gamer, but not needlessly complicated or wordy that it would confuse or turn off a new player. We've taken the same stance that works so well for well crafted fiction; when one





reads a book, the writer and writing should not be the focus, but rather the story and characters involved. In developing the Outland System, a primary goal was to keep the focus on the role-playing instead of the rules. While a game master should be familiar with the game mechanics, or at least know where to look for a specific rule, even first time players should be able to get into a session without having to do much, if any, reading beforehand or complex math during play or character generation.

**Dice Usage**

Gamers love their dice, end of story. We also love dice, so over the years, we've made sure that every one of the polyhedron dice are called for. For the most part, however, where other games focus on the six or twenty sided dice, the Outland System mainly uses the ten sided or percentile (d100) dice for much of its combat resolution, character generation, task resolution and assorted tables. Of course, different mutations, weapon damages, encounter tables, outfitting tables and countless other charts, tables and matrixes require the use of the full dice set, so bring them all. It is recommended each player have his or her own set of polyhedron dice.



**Combat**

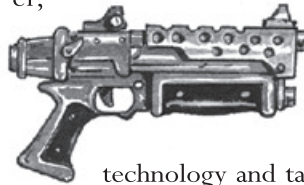
The rules for combat can be simple or complex, depending on the attack mode and any potential strike roll modifiers are applicable. Assorted factors, such as if a target is using cover, moving, in a crowd, or unaware of an impending attack. Likewise, an attacker's odds of successfully striking an opponent could be affected by firing while running, spending an extra turn to take careful aim, using a scope or bipod, as well as declaring a 'called shot', such as "my character tries to shoot the gun from the raider's hand."

The actual method of inflicting harm on an opponent is a two step process, familiar to many who have played other RPGs. In the Outland System, one uses his or her Strike Value (SV), minus the target's Defense Value (DV) to get a resulting target number or stroke range. Roll the target numbers or less on a d100 roll to strike

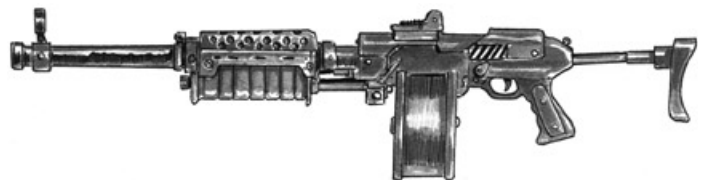


the target. Damage is inflicted on the victim and deducted from its endurance (END) value. When a being reaches zero endurance, it is incapacitated, but depending on its overall size (starting endurance) it may only be unconscious, slowly dying or outright dead.

A defender's agility trait value modifier, armor, using cover, zig-zagging, or using the dodge skill



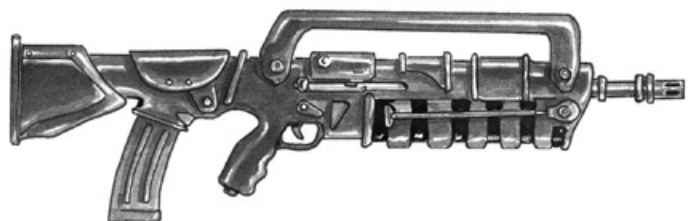
if acquired by the character, will make a person harder to strike, while the attacker's skill, rank, accuracy trait value modifier, weapon modifiers and additional technology and tactics will all improve the attacker's chance to strike the defender. For the average human, a single sword thrust or gun shot or two will dispatch the subject, or at least put him or her out of the fight and in need of first aid. In addition, the presence of submachine guns, chain guns, pulse rifles and multi-projectile mutations, which can unleash more than one attack per round, make combat a lethal undertaking. Without decent armor, quick thinking, use of cover or other tactics, character death is to be expected. The Mutant Epoch is a somewhat dark, survival focused setting, where combat is brutal, bloody and swift, but uses clear, logical rules that even a new player can grasp within his or her first engagement.



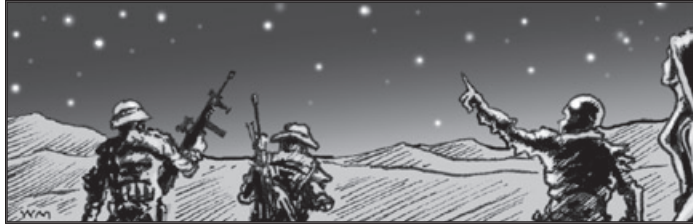
**Join The Mailing List**

If you would like to be informed of when The Mutant Epoch is going to be released, send us an email at [info@outlandarts.com](mailto:info@outlandarts.com) with something like 'TME inform' or 'TME release notification' etc. and we'll send you an email as soon as we have a firm date, along with a link to our full site and various options for possible purchase.

If you want more information, why not check out our blog at [www.themutantepoch.blogspot.com](http://www.themutantepoch.blogspot.com) and subscribe to the feed. All news about the game will be released on our blog from now on, and after the Hub Rules launch, the blog will focus on showcasing new art, upcoming products, new releases and commentary from our team of creators.



A newsletter is also in the works for once the game is released and will be delivered via email as a PDF on a monthly basis, containing much of what is on the blog but in a more in-depth and printer friendly format.



## Tell a Friend

Do you know somebody who might be interested in The Mutant Epoch, post apocalyptic fiction or gaming? Why not send him the URL to this site or this TME preview PDF so he or she can check it out for themselves?

You can also download a desktop wallpaper or web banner to help build buzz for The Mutant Epoch leading up to the release date. Let us know if you've posted the banners so we can have a look, too, and thanks for checking out the Mutant Epoch RPG.

## Media Kit

Do you run a blog, podcast, forum, chat room, eZine or other publication? Are you a reviewer or news source for gamers or those interested in science fiction, fantasy, or post apocalyptic fiction and art? If so, we've put together a media kit on our web site where you can download or copy and paste files for inclusion in your production or news source. For the purposes of review, publicity, and news, text may be quoted from this preview website and the Preview PDF without prior permission. Likewise, images included on the page are open for use by legitimate publications and websites so long as the images are used as part of a write up on The Mutant Epoch with either the web site address or a link given to [www.mutantepoch.com](http://www.mutantepoch.com).

## Society of Excavators?

### What's that?

The Society of Excavators or SOE is an online club of purchasers of The Mutant Epoch Hub Rules. Every copy of the Hub Rules book, either

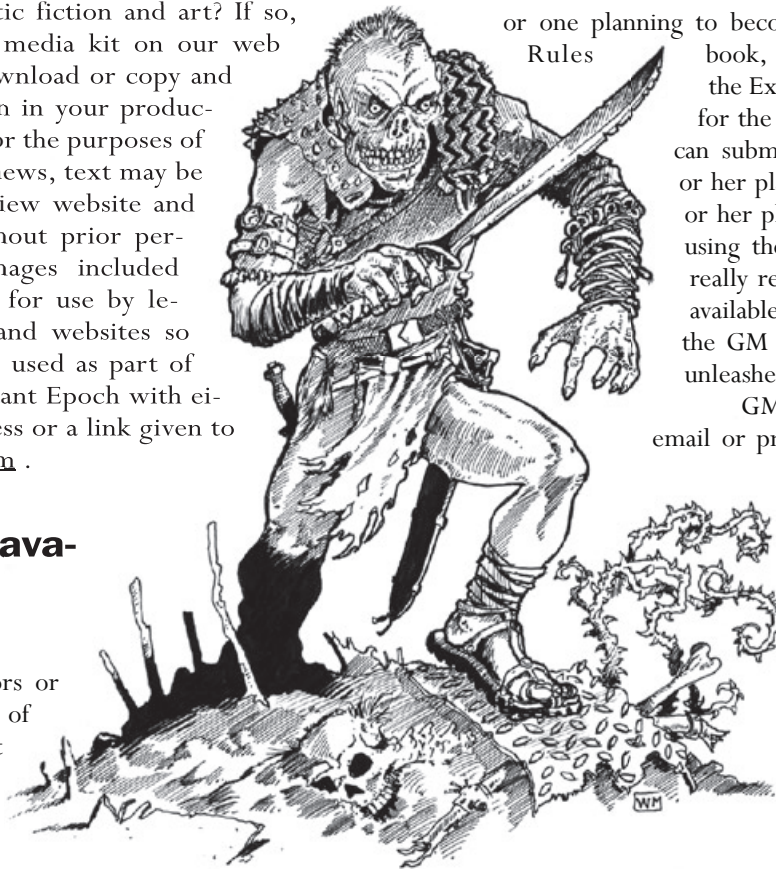
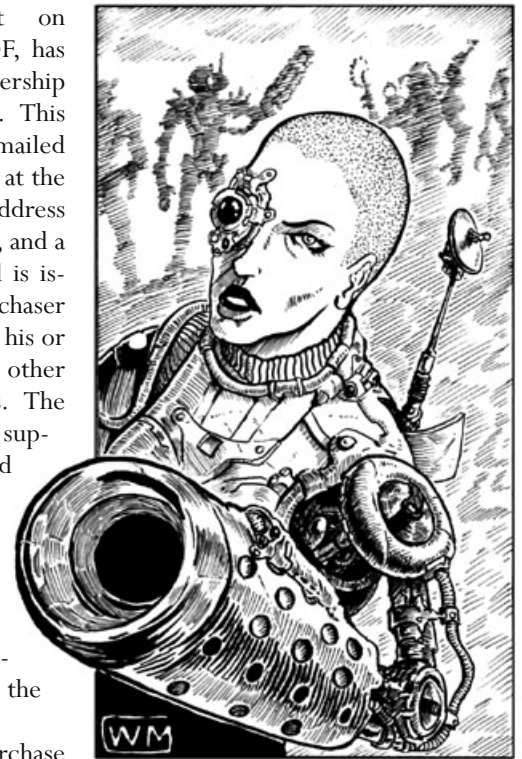
physical, print on demand, or PDF, has a SOE membership password in it. This password is emailed to Outland Arts at the specified email address within the book, and a digital password is issued to the purchaser after registering his or her name and other optional details. The Outland Arts supplied password is used by the SOE member to access the enormous and growing resource collection within the member's area.

Only the purchase of the Hub Rules book grants SOE membership, and membership remains in effect for as long as the person owns their copy of the Hub Rules.

The reason for this is that normally, only the game master or one planning to become a GM, would have the Hub Rules

book, and many of the goodies within the Excavators Society members area are for the game master's eyes only. The GM can submit the deceased characters of his or her players to the Dead Pile, or give his or her players access to the members area using the GM's password, but this is not really recommended as there are a ton of available downloads in this section, which the GM should keep secret until they are unleashed in a game session.

GMs can download sections to either email or print and show players outside the member's area. Also, if a player is keen to get access to the member's area, he or she is likely a fan of the Mutant Epoch milieu and for about the cost of a movie ticket, can buy and download the game and then register him or herself separately from the GM.





## Preview of SOE Membership

What is contained within The Mutant Epoch Hub Rules is everything you need to start running a TME campaign; however, it is also only the tip of an iceberg as far as available materials go. Three other sources of material are available to a purchaser of the TME Hub Rules, with forthcoming source books, supplements and adventures, including the Excavator Monthly magazine and more importantly, the GM and player designed creations. The third resource is online within the member's area of the Mutant Epoch website. By buying a copy of the TME Hub Rules, you are automatically eligible to join the Society of Excavators and receive free access to the vast storehouse of gaming goodness contained behind the password protected area of our site.

Here is just some of what you'll have access to as a member:

- **NPCs** (Non-Player characters) for general use in any GM created region or adventure, as well as those associated with other assorted TME products, such as regional settings, adventures, and fiction.
- **Mutant bestiary area**
- **GM's screen** 8 x11" sheet set
- **Fiction**
- **Kids area**
- **Common vehicles**
- **Greeting cards**
- **Mature content** 18+/ politically incorrect area
- **Free adventures**
- **Miscellaneous maps**
- **Character sheet variants**
- **Names for males and females**
- **Pitford town setting** free 'lite' version
- **Dead pile**
- **Tutorials**
- **TME glossary**
- **Player's Primer**
- **GM's Primer**
- **GM house rules**

- **Fan fiction and art**
  - **Contests**
  - **Player finder**
  - **Player submitted downloads**
  - **Slang & Cuss word**
  - **Suggestion box**
  - **Game ready PCs**
- ...and tons more!

## Books In Production

- **The Mutant Epoch RPG Hub Rules\***
- **Excavator Monthly Magazine issues 1-6\***
- **The Crossroads Region\***
- **Pitford: Gateway to the Ruins\***
- **The Village of Walsave: adventure TME-1**
- **Blood Road: adventure TME-2\***
- **The Flesh Weavers: adventure TME 3**
- **Mutant Bestiary One**
- **Nuke Tower: adventure TME-5**
- **Player's Primer**
- **GM's Primer**

\* Set for release in late 2009 or early 2010

Summary

**The Mutant Epoch is about humankind's attempt to reclaim some semblance of civilization, calling upon its best and boldest to uncover the lost knowledge and power of the old ones**

