Before The Crash

@Scruffwuffulous

February 11, 2026

Contents

1 Ideas Section (to be removed before any publishing) 3

2 Scratchpad 6

3 Section Example 7

4 A Grand Introduction 8
- 4.1 Welcome to Before The Crash! . . . 9
  - 4.1.1 What is Before the Crash? . . . 9
  - 4.1.2 What is an RPG? . . . 9
  - 4.1.3 What do you need to play? . . . 9
- 4.2 Before we begin . . . 10
  - 4.2.1 If you want to get playing ASAP . . . 10
  - 4.2.2 A note for potential GMs . . . 10
  - 4.2.3 How to use this book . . . 10

5 Characters and how to make them 11
- 5.1 What makes up a character? . . . 12
  - 5.1.1 Labels . . . 12
  - 5.1.2 The **F.I.R.S.T.** system . . . 13
  - 5.1.3 Relationships . . . 13
  - 5.1.4 Personal Items . . . 13
  - 5.1.5 Powers . . . 13
  - 5.1.6 Vices . . . 13
- 5.2 How to build your own character? . . . 14
  - 5.2.1 The standard method . . . 14
  - 5.2.2 Some example characters . . . 14
  - 5.2.3 Things you can tweak (and might want to) . . . 14
- 5.3 Non-Player Characters and the Supporting Cast . . . 15
  - 5.3.1 Supporting Characters . . . 15
  - 5.3.2 GMPCs & NPCs . . . 15

6 Overview of Mechanics 16

7 The World of the Crash 17

8 Advice for GMs 18

9 How to Plan a Session 19

10 How to Build a Campaign 20

11 What makes up a GMPC? 21

12 A treatise on Cyberpunk 22

1 Ideas Section (to be removed before any publishing)

What do we need to get across?

- Two important questions that the player and the characters should explore

  Who am I really / What am I and why?

  How do I fit into this society and world in which I find myself

- It needs to give the vibes of a cyberpunk setting in flavour as well

What do we want to use?

- Aim to use a hack of the Cortex Prime system

  because I love the central dice mechanics

  This requires a choice of the prime sets

- We want to create the vibes of a Vangelis score mixed with some high-octane punk rock

  Ideally we want to have a healthy balance of decent character moments amidst the fun of bashing those corpo bastards.

- We need to decide on the nature of the setting:

  Are there synths/replicants/whatever?

  Are there augs/mods/chrome?

  How much control over their life does the average person have?

  And who really holds that power?

Finally, how do we want to present this to players, GMs, and anyone else who happens across this document?

- Sections should start with an Intro

  First is probably an intro to RPGs (or at least my perspective on them)

  This should have a basic setting primer

  Then probably a quick example of the basics of the dice system

  To finish the Introduction, we should do an intro to the book and how to use it

- Now we need a section on characters and how to build them, just the basics and reference stuff

- Next should be a selection which contains **all** the details on how to resolve any rules disparity

- Now, the last things that a player needs to know before they tap out. i.e. a section on the given worldbuilding, and a note to say you may want to make your own...
- So begins the GM section (I need a funny thing for GM to stand for) To start we need to do a GM intro
- Then a quick breakdown on how to structure a session
- Now how to structure a campaign or any extended story
- A bit on how to generate GMPCs or NPCs whatever you want to call them
- A treatise on what Cyberpunk is to me, and what it can be to you (Wires and Chains...)
- Welcome the players back to end with an extended example of play, using the characters established earlier in the Characters chapter
- Then comes some kind of index, this is going to be fun...

When *ALL OF THIS* is done, we can consider fixing up a nicer visual style
Current choice of attributes and the like:
Prime Sets:

- Distinctions

  These are just 3 d8-rated descriptors of your character that come with a bonus SFX
- Roles

  These should be split into classes of roles, pick one from each, then one more.

  Needs more thought, split Detective, Corporate, etc.?
- Relationships

  Meant to incentivise players to create backstory elements on the fly

Non-Prime Sets: (these are all maybes)

- Affiliations

  These can just become assets
- Powers

  These can become assets and SFX
- Resources (rework like FATE)

  These can become assets

- Signature Assets (this is a definite)

  These should be essential to character creation

- Skills & Specialities

  I like specialities, but perhaps they can be worked into Roles? Skills, no

- Values

  Tempting, we shall see...

2 Scratchpad

OH MY GOD WHYYYYYY

Some notes I must transfer from paper, which all seem to be setting based?:

2.1 AI never succeeded :/ Besides: it's cheaper to rip the consciousness of debtors and old creatives...

2.2 Body modification has become cheap & stylish. Good body modification is just stylish...

2.3 Cyberspace is on its third great instance & is almost indistinguishable from a dark mirror of reality. Those who control it wield great powers

2.4 Everyone can interface with almost anything or anyone...

2.5 Who owns you?

Additionally (more mechanically focussed) I wrote:

- One of the Prime Sets is "Memories (of People?)"

Other additional stuff:

- No hack skill, no persuade skill
- GM tip: You should never have to roll to find clues, only information
- In my experience, a mystery plot is best planned by coming up with the antagonist's full plan and running that at the same time as the investigation. The bad guys should be moving actively while the PCs are investigating them.

Reworking the roles to be more basic, then allowing the player to add their own descriptor speciality afterwards. OR you get to pick standard array for your roles and then can add specialities to them to step up the relevant die (Will require standard array to be balanced low)

We call the following the or **F.I.R.S.T** system:

- Fighter (Grappler/Scrapper/Sniper)
- Investigator (Detective/Journalist/Sheriff)
- Rebel (Artist/Criminal/Firebrand)
- Street Punk (Corpo Trash/Gang Member/Grew Up Here)
- Technomancer (Board Masher/Chrome Freak/Net Runner)

Introduce dice properly in Introduction chapter as well as plot points

3 Section Example

4 A Grand Introduction

4.1 Welcome to Before the Crash!

4.1.1 What is Before the Crash?

4.1.2 What is an RPG?

4.1.3 What do you need to play?

4.2 Before we begin

4.2.1 If you want to get playing ASAP

4.2.2 A note for potential GMs

4.2.3 How to use this book

4.1 Welcome to Before The Crash!

Thank you for opening this tome and gazing at our great work! What is contained in this text is a beautiful mess of random ideas that have been developed by those infected with a desire for a specific RPG that until now did not exist...

4.1.1 What is Before the Crash?

4.1.2 What is an RPG?

4.1.3 What do you need to play?

4.2 Before we begin

4.2.1 If you want to get playing ASAP

4.2.2 A note for potential GMs

4.2.3 How to use this book

5 Characters and how to make them

5.1 What makes up a character?

5.1.1 Labels

5.1.2 The F.I.R.S.T. system

5.1.3 Relationships

5.1.4 Personal Items

5.1.5 Powers

5.1.6 Vices

5.2 How to build your own character?

5.2.1 The standard method

5.2.2 Some example characters

5.2.3 Things you can tweak (and might want to)

5.3 Non-Player Characters and the Supporting Cast

5.3.1 Supporting Characters

5.3.2 GMPCs & NPCs

5.1 What makes up a character?

In this chapter, we shall go over the character **stats** and what they represent, both in terms of a character's physical and mental attributes, and their personality, traits, and other characteristics. If you have played a TTRPG before, like **Dungeons & Dragons**, some of these will be somewhat familiar to you. Others take more inspiration from less crunchy games, especially those that are **Powered by the Apocalypse**. If this seems like nonsense to you, don't Worry! Hopefully all will be explained in this chapter...

To start we are going to go through the various **Attributes** that your character will have in their categories. These serve two functions: to represent how proficient, skilled, or otherwise capable a character is in a given area, and to tell you how many and what kind of **DICE** to roll when the GM asks you to. This second function will be discussed later in the chapter on mechanics, but we will give a brief overview in each subsection as to when you may be required to roll with a given attribute.

If you are used to RPGs, you may be accustomed to modifiers and arbitrary values associated with proficiency or lack thereof. Here, we only deal in that greatest of objects: **DICE**! Attributes (as well as some other things we shall see in the next chapter) are each rated with dice, with the lowest a and the highest a In most cases, a represents below average skill or capability, and represents extreme or otherwise incredible capability. Logically, you may have guessed that sits around average, and if your GM is being kind, it should.

5.1.1 Labels

The first, and most important attribute we will learn about, is a character's **Labels**. Each character has 3 Labels. Each of these is simply a sentence or phrase that describes an aspect of your character. These are tricky to describe, so we shall start with some examples:

Recall everyone's favourite Grey Wizard, Gandalf. He may have some Labels like:

- Wielder of the flame of Anor
- Maiar Wizard of the Istari Order

But these only seem to reflect the fact that he has great magical power. Note that the first one emphasises that he "wields" the flame, as opposed to "conquering" or "fumbling". In the second the fact that he is a member of the order tells us that he may have some sway with people who respect that order. Be careful with Labels, as words have power here.

A few more for Gandalf:

- Quick to anger, quicker to laugh
- Wise sage guide of the fellowship
- Ancient friend to elves, men, and dwarves alike

Ask yourself how much we can learn about Gandalf from these phrases, and whether you agree that this is accurate to how you see his character. If you want more practice try taking your favourite characters and try to boil them down to a few sentences. Once you can get three, you are ready.

When assigning dice values to Labels, you will always give them a . This may seem odd: "How can I be average at being me?" is a perfectly reasonable question to ask in this instance. In practice this reflects that whenever your character is acting in line with who they basically are, they should bring some of their core competencies into action. Again, more on when dice matter in the next chapter...

5.1.2 The F.I.R.S.T. system

The **F.I.R.S.T.** system is the next set of character attributes worth covering

Roles describe how well your character fits into a certain role; how well they act at wearing the particular hats that are involved in their day-to-day.

Roles are split into different **Role Classes**. These are as follows:

- Fighter
- Investigator
- Rebel
- Street Punk
- Technomancer

5.1.3 Relationships

5.1.4 Personal Items

5.1.5 Powers

5.1.6 Vices

5.2 How to build your own character?

5.2.1 The standard method

5.2.2 Some example characters

5.2.3 Things you can tweak (and might want to)

5.3 Non-Player Characters and the Supporting Cast

5.3.1 Supporting Characters

5.3.2 GMPCs & NPCs

6 Overview of Mechanics

7 The World of the Crash

8 Advice for GMs

9 How to Plan a Session

10 How to Build a Campaign

11 What makes up a GMPC?

12 A treatise on Cyberpunk

Index

Attributes, 12

Fighter, 13

Investigator, 13

Labels, 12

Rebel, 13
Role Classes, 13

Street Punk, 13

Technomancer, 13