Bug Rapport

by Jacob Cordeiro

There are three **towers** built along the snowy mountains. They receive radio signals for unknown purposes.

Ambits are giant vermin improved by motors and plastic, programmed with simple roles. Some might be told to kill all intruders, even while others throw a party in the same room.

The players are **technicians** who aren't paid nearly enough. Their job is to inspect the towers, and optionally, to get out alive.
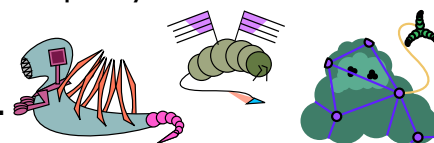
Setup:
Distribute these tools between the players.
Welder: Helps to attach cables. A decent weapon.
Laptop: Helps to reprogram electronics and ambits.
Magnet: Helps to climb, and messes with electronics.
Hook: Reaches objects from afar. A decent weapon.
Railgun: Fires small objects, including ends of cables.
Instrument: Entertains ambits. May have other uses.

Ambits:
Every ambit has an organic body and one of many wild personalities, but they're enhanced and sometimes controlled by servos and microcontrollers with mysterious purpose. Their mechanical parts--wiry limbs, or plastic exoskeletons, or elaborate wings and weapons--sometimes take over the ambit's actions. Ambits may be reasonable and helpful, but they can't speak, or resist the commands given by their roles. The players must be careful not to activate them.

Rooms:
Each room on the map is labeled with the room number (see "Goal"). It also suggests the room type, the game mechanic players might find, and the hazard they might face. Each suggestion is just one word, which the game master can interpret however they want. For a one-session game, try using 3 mechanics and 3 hazards, briefly mentioning other features to establish atmosphere. One hazard may expand into an overarching threat.

Goal:
Every minute a packet arrives, a radio signal containing a random (d6) number that's picked up by the top of a tower and travels to the bottom. Each room also has a number, as shown on the map. The players' goal is to "unlock" as many rooms as possible, by sending each one a packet with a matching number.

Every room has a locker, an outlet, and a console. The locker provides items, weapons, information, and other rewards when the room is unlocked. The outlet allows rooms to be linked by electrical cables (see the map) which can be removed and reconnected. The console is how players decide what happens to a packet as it passes through the room. Each console can have one of the following commands:
NOP: (default) The packet is sent on to the floor below.
WAIT: The packet stays in place until further notice.
SUM: The packet stays in place until a second packet arrives. Then the two numbers are added together.
COPY: The packet moves through, and a copy of the packet is sent through the cable attached to this room.
DEL: The packet is deleted.

Each operation takes a few seconds to process. Characters may spend hours of in-game time to solve a puzzle with brute force. Give them a time limit!

Tower 1 (left)
Room	Function	Mechanic	Hazard
45	Radio Station	Hints	Surveillance
12	Hangar	Trade	Mischief
200	Laboratory	Scavenge	Hunter
1081	Lobby	Buried	Darkness
8	Basement	Debris	Sleepers
5040	Generator	Circuits	Electricity

Tower 2 (middle)
Room	Function	Mechanic	Hazard
10	Lookout	Injured	Blizzard
33	Workshop	Copycat	Limbs
9	Lounge	Helpers	Scouts
1024	Offices	Music	Projectiles
7	Staff Room	Malfunction	Guards
121	Boiler	Lonely	Burnout

Tower 3 (right)
Room	Function	Mechanic	Hazard
923	???	Boss	Boss
31	Canteen	Persuade	Collapse
15	Storage	Party	Mayhem
10	Factory	Climb	Weaponizing
27	Hive	Production	Mutiny
600	Panic Room	Bulkhead	Freezing

The room's function. "Canteen" could refer to an abandoned mess hall, or a food pile made by ambits.

A new game mechanic. "Music" could mean that ambits' behavior is affected by the music playing in this room.

A room hazard. "Guards" could mean that a few of the ambits turn to "kill mode" if the players trip security.

The danger escalates as the players complete their goals. Near the end of the game, players should be rushing between safe rooms, swinging from cables, and making desperate plans to solve the last few puzzles.