Crunch Dial

Alternative Dice Mechanic for Neon Arcana

Licensing Information

Dice Pool = Attribute + Skill

When you are solving a problem that is time sensitive, important and dramatic, the game master may call for a dice roll.

You assemble the dice pool by adding the appropriate attribute (such as Strength, Agility, Perception, Charisma or Willpower *– list to be decided later*) and the relevant skill. For starting characters both attributes and skills are in 0-4 range, but may go higher.

But before you roll the dice, the **difficulty** and the **progress bar** of the task must be established. A task is declared as two numbers, such as 'two fives' or 'one three', where the first number is the progress bar and the second number is the difficulty.

Task Difficulty

Task difficulty can be narrative or modular. Both can be used in the same game, based on the situation. These are two alternative ways to determine how difficult the task should be.

Narrative Difficulty (Low Crunch)

For a narrative difficulty, the game master eyeballs your chances holistically, without looking into a detailed modifier breakdown.

You…	Difficulty
… are taking candy from a baby	Solved!
… are playing with your food	⚁+
… are performing a routine drill	⚂+
… brought the right tool for the job	⚃+
… are punching above your weight	⚄+
… are hopelessly outgunned	⚅+
… have no chance at all	Failed!

When using narrative difficulty, the game master may start the difficulty at ⚃+ and then adjusts it up or down by one pip for each relevant circumstance (advantage or disadvantage).

Modular Difficulty (High Crunch)

Modular difficulty allows you to factor in your gear, position, preparation and other advantages to the mission's objective and other situational modifiers to determine how difficult the task is for you.

1. Calculate your performance rank: gear + augmentations + all the positive things you have going for you that apply.
2. Calculate your task rank: gear + environment + visibility + cover + alarm level + all the things that are going against you that apply.
3. Compare the two numbers.

Your performance rank is…	Difficulty
three times as high as the task rank	Solved!
twice as high as the task rank	⚁+
greater than the task rank	⚂+
equals the task rank	⚃+
less than the task rank	⚄+
less than half the task rank	⚅+
less than 1/3 of the task rank	Failed!

In most cases it will be simply the rank of the tool you're using (a bug scanner, a burner phone, a gun's lethality) vs the rank of whatever you're using it on (a hidden device, a call tracer, body armor).

You are returning fire at a couple of goons. They're wearing some body armor under their coats, as it turns out, so at this short range the lethality of your trusted sidearm and their vests' warranties are the only factors. Your gun's rank is 5, their vests are ranked 3 on the cheap armor scale. 5 > 3, but not twice over, so you will hit those guys on a ⚂+ (pronounced three plus, or three or higher).

Progress Bar

Progress bar is like a bunch of hit points or check boxes. Each die that meets the difficulty of the task is called a hit, because it marks off a box. Once they're all filled, the problem is solved. If you don't

complete the whole bar in one go, you need more time, but you don't (usually) fail outright.

You are being chased along the rooftops and need to make a daring jump across a wide alley. You roll Strength + Athletics (6 dice), and you need 4 fives, per game master's eyeball. You roll and the dice come up ⚁, ⚁, ⚁, ⚁, ⚅, ⚅: you rolled only two. You caught onto the ledge and are now dangling from it, but at least you didn't fall. Climbing back up will cost you precious time, with two more fives to go.

Glitches

If you roll no hits, you suffer a glitch: something awful that makes further progress unlikely or outright impossible. Or maybe something else goes sideways that complicates the overall story, but pushes it forward: you might have to find another way to get what you want. The details are up to the game master.

Sixes Rule

When you roll a ⚅, you can roll an extra die. If that die rolls another ⚅, keep going recursively.

Ones Rule

When you roll a ⚀, you can spend it to make a special maneuver, like a grappling hold or a head shot, or to activate a tag on your gear. You can also spend it to cancel any of the above being done to you, ⚀ for ⚀. When you spend a ⚀, remove it from the dice pool until your next turn.

Stances

Included for big picture perspective

You can assume one of four stances, and by default are in neutral stance. You can switch to a new stance when you roll initiative or on your turn, before you make any dice rolls.

Neutral stance: you have no bonuses or penalties.

Defensive stance: your rank for everything but defense drops by 3, but defense rank increases by

3. In narrative difficulty you have advantage 1 on defense and disadvantage 1 on everything else.

Aggressive stance: your rank for everything but offense drops by 3, but offense rank increases by 3. In narrative difficulty you have advantage 1 on offense and disadvantage 1 on everything else.

Focus stance: your rank for everything but tasks with a specific skill drops by 3, but that skill rank increases by 3. In narrative difficulty you have advantage 1 on the affected skill tasks and disadvantage 1 on everything else.

Action Economy and Dice

Included for big picture perspective

On your turn you get two actions. If you choose to move, that's one of them (10m + Agility). Moving twice is sprinting.

Certain gear and augmentations grant you bonus actions of specific kind, for interaction with devices, shoot outs or for personal combat.

Regardless of how many actions you have, roll dice just once, for the first action you will attempt.

If your second action uses the same dice pool, reuse the dice roll, but take away one highest die.

If the second action uses a different dice pool, scale it down to size by removing the highest dice if it is smaller or by rolling extra dice if it is bigger, then take away one highest die.

Repeat until all your actions are complete or if you suffer a glitch, which ends your turn.

Keep the ⚀'s you haven't spent in front of you until the next turn for the off-chance someone decides to play a trick on you.