



Bullet Points

Question Roundup, Part 4

By Owen K.C. Stephens

Welcome to the latest installment of *Bullet Points*. I'm Owen K.C. Stephens, writer of a lot of material for the **Star Wars Roleplaying Game** and the **d20 Modern** game, author of the recently released *d20 Cyberscape* book, and co-author of the *d20 Apocalypse* supplement. It's my job to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky rules issues, and give you a little peek into the design philosophy of the game.


Every two weeks I pick an issue that's provoked a lot of questions or comments, begin with a general discussion of the topic where applicable, and then answer specific questions related to it. If the mailbox contains any unrelated but pressing questions, I might tackle them at the end of the column, but only if I have room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

Question Roundup, Part 4

In the course of examining various issues from specific books in the **d20 Modern** game line, I've encountered some questions that don't really fit into any of my themed installments. Just to catch up, I want to grab some leftover questions and answer them now, no matter which book they relate to.

Questions and Answers

Now without further ado, let's get down to the questions!

 **I'm somewhat confused about when the Knockout Punch feat can be used. The description says the opponent must be flat-footed. So am I correct in assuming that if the opponent is dazed or otherwise denied his Dexterity bonus to Defense (because of a successful feint, for instance), an attacker cannot attempt a Knockout Punch?**

You're correct. Knockout Punch can be used only when the target is flat-footed, and even then only for the first unarmed attack from any given attacker. If a feat or other ability is usable any time a target is denied its Dexterity bonus to Defense, the description says so specifically.


 **What is the Purchase DC for upgrading an item to make it magical or add a gadget?**

The GM is not required to let a character upgrade an item at a reduced cost. Even if your GM does allow item upgrades, he is well within his rights to make the purchase DC equal to that for buying a new item with the desired gadget or property. After all, even in real life, it isn't always cheaper to upgrade old equipment than it is to buy new. If your GM does want to allow a cost break, price the upgrade as if the character had sold her old equipment, then bought the new version at its full purchase DC.

 **What is an LCD, and how can it be sprayed onto surfaces and connected to computers?**

LCD stands for Liquid Crystal Display, which is one of the technologies used to make computer displays and television screens. At the current level of technology in the real world, an LCD can't be sprayed onto a surface (though liquid crystals themselves can). But the assumption that a spray-on LCD will be possible in the future is at least as reasonable as any other assumption made in current science-fiction literature. Essentially, a spray-on LCD would allow a character to make a visual display on any flat surface. Once the technology has reached that point, it's fair to assume the existence of some other piece of equipment that would allow a character to connect that visual display with a computer or other signal source.


The paint-on LCD gadget from the *d20 Future* supplement allows any object to become a display. Thus, a character could have a jacket that displays movies from a portable DVD player, a gun with time and temperature updates constantly running along its barrel, or gloves that display information from the wearer's HUD so that he can silently update his allies.

 **Silent suit armor (PL 7) is listed as a medium armor, but its bonus to Defense, armor check penalty, and maximum Dexterity ratings look a lot like those of light armor. So is the silent suit medium or light armor?**

The silent suit is light armor. The foregoing statement constitutes an official rules change.

 **Can a character add Street Fighting to Combat Martial Arts, or is it strictly for use with Brawling?**

Since Street Fighting can apply to both unarmed attacks and attacks with light weapons, it's reasonable to assume that it can be applied to Combat Martial Arts. This ruling is an official change that supercedes all earlier rulings.


 **I would like to run a d20 Modern game in an alternate setting, and I was wondering if I could get some guidelines for converting D&D-style core classes to d20 Modern advanced classes. My first instinct is to just add some requirements and use them as is, but I'm not sure that's the best option.**

You certainly could just use them as they are with a few added requirements, but doing so might make them much more attractive than most of the game's current advanced classes, depending on what you decided to do about action points, Defense bonuses, and so on. A more complex, but likely safer method is to start with existing advanced classes that seem similar and replace their special abilities and bonus feats with the abilities and appropriate feats from the **D&D** class. In some cases, you won't even need to go this far -- the Soldier is already a pretty good advanced class version of the **D&D** fighter. Furthermore, some advanced classes (such as the Mage) are already the **d20 Modern** versions of certain **D&D** classes.


Another possible solution is just to take the elements from the **D&D** class that no advanced class can replace and put them together into a prestige class. The *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting*, which I strongly recommend for anyone wishing to blend more **D&D** into a **d20 Modern** game, offers some good examples of such prestige classes.

 **What is the benefit of using a PL 8 regen wand instead of a PL 7 medicomp sensor? They both have the same weight, size, and modifier, and in fact, the regen wand really doesn't have the ability to heal anyone.**


A medicomp sensor does not replace a first aid kit or medical kit. So a character who makes a Treat Injury check with just a medicomp must still take a -4 penalty for not having a kit, though that penalty is exactly offset by the +4 equipment bonus of the medicomp. A character with a regen wand doesn't need to carry a medical kit around too, so she takes no penalty on the check and actually gains a benefit from the item's +4 equipment bonus. Since a medical kit weighs 5 lbs., the regen wand represents a considerable savings just in terms of convenience.

 I GM two different campaigns, both of which use the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting* with additions from the *d20 Menace Manual*. These two books fit together almost perfectly, but I had an idea for a new campaign after one of the two I'm running finishes. I was thinking of setting it between a few decades and a century in the future, during the next Age of Shadow. Do you know of any particularly compelling reason why *d20 Future* and parts of the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting* can't work together?

I see no reason at all. Have fun!

 My GM and I had a disagreement about class bonus to Defense. When an opponent makes a touch attack against a character, is the target's class bonus to Defense negated, or is just the bonus from the armor worn? My 7th-level Fast Hero has Defense 26 with his class bonus, Dexterity bonus, and light armor. So when an attacker makes a touch attack against him, does he lose his +6 class bonus to AC as well as the bonus from his light armor?

The definition of touch attacks on page 132 of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* specifically states that while a character gets no armor or equipment bonus to Defense against a touch attack, he does get all of his other modifiers, including class bonus. It's also worth noting that a character who loses his Dexterity bonus to Defense does not also lose his class bonus in the same circumstance. So a flat-footed character still gets his class bonus to Defense.

 Does a character who stands up from a prone position provoke an attack of opportunity from an adjacent enemy? In the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* it says no, but in *d20 Future*, under Mecha Critical Hits, it says yes. Which is correct?

The *d20 Future* ruling is correct. In the *d20 Modern* game, a character who stands up from prone does provoke an attack of opportunity. This is an official rules change (and is why the 2nd level Daredevil ability specifically says it does not provoke an AoO).

 I've searched and searched through *d20 Future* for a reference to the damage radius of the starship missiles and have come up empty-handed. Were they omitted, or am I just blind? What is the explosive radius for starship missiles? I'd assume 2,000 feet, but I wanted to make sure.

As written, missiles don't have a damage radius. When they hit a starship, they damage the target and nothing else. While this rule may not be entirely realistic, the simplistic approach does have significant benefits. For example, the missiles also don't have Defense ratings, or hp (which would allow foes to shoot them down), or movement rates (which would force you to keep track of how far they've flown).

Do you have a rules question about the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*? Send it to bulletpoints@wizards.com.

For the quickest possible answer, please put the topic of your question in the subject line and keep the question as succinct as possible. If you have more than one question, feel free to send two or more emails -- but for best results please include only one question per email unless your questions are very closely related to one another. Please don't expect a direct answer by email. Check back here every other week for the latest batch of answers!

About the Author

Owen Kirker Clifford Stephens was born in 1970 in Norman, Oklahoma. He attended the TSR Writer's Workshop held at the Wizards of the Coast Game Center in 1997 and moved to the Seattle area in 2000, after accepting a job as a Game Designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Fourteen months later, he returned to Oklahoma with his wife and three cats to pick up his freelance writer/developer career. He has author and co-author credits on numerous **Star Wars** and *EverQuest* projects, as well as *Bastards and Bloodlines* from Green Ronin. He also has producer credits for various IDA products, including the Stand-Ins printable figures.

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