

Megaman Battle Network Tabletop RPG

Introduction

Megaman Battle Network is an imagined Sci-Fi future where there are one and a half major changes from what we see today. First, the half-change. More significant when the games were originally produced, everything (EVERYTHING) is controlled by a computer of some sort. Most of these are hooked up to the internet. I'm referring to this as a half-change because, frankly, as of this writing things actually seem to be headed in this direction.

Secondly, and more significantly, advanced artificial intelligences called Net Navigators (NetNavis or Navis for short) have been produced to deal with increasingly complex coding languages and techniques. They appear in a "Cyberspace" and interface with objects and beings within that represent programs running things in the real world. As well as viruses, firewalls, etc.

Combined with the first half-change, this makes Navis integral to day-to-day life and operations, and extremely dangerous in the wrong hands.

True to anime/video game form, these AIs are marketed in devices called PETs to everyone. Including children.

The first part to figure out is: With a setting that seems to require a duo of operator and Navi to function, how do you handle PCs? There are a few options. I'll endeavor to design the system to handle most of them.

Players play both their Operators and Navis

This seems like the most straightforward option, but a major potential pitfall is losing out on the roleplaying of the relationship between the two of them.

It's certainly viable, though, if it's the group's preference. Note that the way the rules are written so far determining Bond may be an issue in this scenario.

Switching dance partners

Players can play their operators and play another PC's Navi. This also has the potential to be tricky, as does any situation where players are asked to play more than one character.

However, if players and GM can handle it it has the potential for good roleplaying.

Navis (Or Operators) as NPCs

Alternatively, the GM can just play one side of the equation or the other. Which one would depend on what focus the game had. This probably puts the most strain on the GM.

Independent Navis

These are stated to be exceptionally rare if not limited entirely to Bass.EXE, but if that's the game you want to play, sure thing. Certain game rules would have to be altered in such a circumstance.

Just Humans

It's a possibility, but given the setting premise I don't know why you'd do it. But then, maybe you want to play a game where you for some reason can't or won't use the everpresent internet. In this case I honestly would just play a different system if I were you.

Chapter One: Character Creation

Operators

The human half of the Navi / NetOp pairing. They will handle whatever needs to be handled in the real world, usually carting their PET from terminal to terminal and interacting with other NetOps.

Attributes

Attributes work on a pool of d6 dice, with the minimum being one and the maximum available at character creation being four. Later on, Attributes can be bought up to five.

Seven points are distributed at character creation between the three attributes.

Physical - Is a measure of an operator's fitness and ability to take physical abuse.

Mental - Wits, tactical acumen and academic prowess are all covered here.

Social - An operator's ability to interact with, coerce, or impress other human beings or rarely Navis.

And lastly, the special attribute:

Bond – The attribute measuring one's relationship and ability to work as a team with their Navi. It starts at two (Or one, in the case of secondhand Navis recently acquired). It only increases if the GM is satisfied that the partnership has reached a new level of understanding. It can also drop temporarily if the two are experiencing major friction, only to increase again if the conflict is resolved.

Skills

Skills are non-common areas of expertise that an operator is proficient at.

Pick three skills and add one die to your relevant pool when making a roll that would utilize one of your skills. Unless otherwise stated, only one bonus die may be achieved per roll this way.

Operator Qualities

These are resources an Operator has that they can pull to affect the course of the narrative - like a special knack for spotting good deals or connections with the Net Police.

When attempting to use a quality, make an attribute check with the tied attribute. If the check fails to garner even one success the Quality does not activate.

Qualities, once activated, will impart their benefit as listed in the description.

Each Operator starts with two Qualities.

A Quality cannot be activated when in a netbattle, unless the NetOp chooses to stop paying attention to combat for a round to do so. More details on that in the Netbattles section.

Tactics

So far the statistics of NetOps have been largely about affecting the real world. With Tactics, even a NetOp with a shoddy battlechip collection can still affect the tide of a netbattle. All Tactics must be activated by rolling the Bond attribute, similar to Qualities.

Tactics are divided into two categories, Active and Passive.

Passive Tactics last for a round of combat. Active Tactics can be activated within a combat round if the NetOp has not yet declared a tactic for the round, provided the action they're trying to influence has not yet been resolved.

NetOps start with two tactics, one Active and one Passive.

Chip Folder

The NetOp has a folder of battlechips for use in Netbattles. It can hold 30 Chips at maximum and is customizable by finding / purchasing new battle chips. Battlechips each have an amount of memory they take up in the folder, as well, with the starting limit being 50MB in total.

Notably, each battlechip is only useable once per Netbattle.

For game purposes, this is a deck of marked cards.

NetNavis

The internet-bound AIs that accompany an operator. They bust viruses, fight other Navis, or simply act as personal assistants or companionship.

Attributes

Attributes for Navis are also a pool of d6s, and can be bought up to a max of four at character creation and a max of five later. They exist in a different world, though, and thus don't have quite the same kind of attributes as humans do.

As with NetOps, Navis get seven points to distribute through their three attributes.

Power – Raw force of programming. Used to attack things, primarily, but it also measures a Navi’s ability to “physically” affect their environment.

Finesse – Speed, subtlety and understanding of systems. Finesse is used in bypassing security without breaking it, dodging, and other tasks that are more delicate.

Interface – Ability to communicate with and influence programs and other Navis, including speaking and healing.

HPMemory

Navis start with 20 Hit Points, measuring their ability to take hits in a netbattle.

Skills

Skills work identically to their NetOp counterpart, but are of course tailored to the Net. Each Netnavi starts with three Skills.

Netnavi Qualities

Netnavis also have Qualities, which do not affect Netbattles. They would be things such as renown they can call on for being a tournament champion, pulling relevant information from a network of message boards, and many others.

Netnavis start with two Qualities.

NetNavi Abilities

Instead of Tactics, which are the NetOp’s responsibility, Netnavis have Abilities. An Ability is basically a battlechip that the Navi will always have available to them regardless of what is pulled from the chip folder that turn.

Pick one battlechip of (Reasonably small amount of) MB or less as a Netnavi’s starting Ability.

Chapter Two: Rules and Systems

Task Resolution

In an unopposed roll, the character’s player rolls their most relevant pool plus or minus any circumstantial modifiers. A die that comes up a 5 or 6 is considered a success. Only one success is required to succeed at a short task or activate Qualities, etc.

If circumstantial modifiers reduce a pool below one, the player should be given the option to reconsider. If they decide to continue, the player should roll a single d6. If they roll a 6, they have managed to succeed through sheer luck. If they roll anything but a 6, they fail and something unfavourable happens in addition, usually related to how they failed.

In an opposed roll both opponents roll their relevant pool and whomever has the most successes wins. In a tie the defender wins, if there is one. If they tie and neither could be categorized as a defender, then they roll again.

For longer tasks, like putting up a firewall or completing an essay, the GM sets a target number of successes based on how difficult and complex the task is and the player rolls in reasonable time increments to complete it. They do have to be dedicating their full attention to completing a task this way, though. Interruptions can cause penalties if ignored and abandoning that roll attempt if the character wanders off to save the world instead or something of the like.

Focus

In Battle Network, there is a dichotomy between the real world and the internet. In a game like this, both NetOps and Navis will have necessary parts to play, but usually not at the same time. Focus is what side of the coin is currently taking important narrative actions.

When the focus is on the Real World, Navis can only take limited actions. They can communicate through the PET and rest to recover HP. NetOps get their full range of abilities minus those used in Netbattles, and can make attribute rolls.

Conversely, when the focus is on the Net, Navis get free range and their operators can only give verbal input and help out in Netbattles.

Change in Focus is suggested by the players once they've decided on a course of action and finalized by the GM.

Netbattles

Netbattles are the real meat of the Netnavi conflict experience, and occur between Navis and Viruses or other Navis.

When the characters enter a netbattle:

- Players/GM must roll initiative for whichever Navis are involved (Opposed Finesse roll)
- Focus is shifted to the Net if it was not there already
- GM describes / draws battlefield
- NetOps begin the first phase of battle

Phase One - Operators

All NetOps make their actions effective simultaneously, drawing five cards from their chip folder. They choose a Passive Quality for the round if desired and make the activation roll (Always a Bond roll) immediately. They may also pass on activating a Quality now to use an Active Quality in Phase Two.

Then they decide which battlechips they want to send to their Navi by setting the chosen cards in a pile, face down, to whomever is playing their Navi. Possibly themselves.

A NetOp may also choose to mulligan their current hand, shuffling it back into their deck and pulling five new chips at the expense of being able to send their Navi any chips this turn.

Then everyone has the chance to talk, make dramatic exclamations, tell their Navis valuable information, monologue if they're a villain, etc. This shouldn't go on too ridiculously long, as there is a battle going on, but give them the time to roleplay a little.

Phase Two - Navis

In phase two, Navis act in the order of initiative, able to take one combat action and one strategic action per turn. They may take those two actions in any order they want on their turn.

Active Tactics may be declared at any point before the roll it's intended to affect is made.

Phase Three – Wrap-up

If any Navi was taken down to zero or less HP during Phase Two, they are now either forcibly logged out or deleted. The Navi that strikes the final blow is responsible for the decision. Viruses are just deleted. If there are no opponents left, the winner or winning team is declared.

Any unused battlechips are now discarded and the effects of Passive Tactics are ended for the round. Some battlechip effects may continue into the next round. If there is a duration on a chip, in rounds, it will end when it has passed through that many wrap-up phases.

When everything in Phase Three is complete, if combat continues, go back to Phase One and repeat until combat ends.

Combat actions

Attack – A Navi can attack without a battlechip (Or ability), with a pool of their Power minus 1. More commonly, though, they will be attacking with the aid of a chip. The pool for any individual weapon chip is found on that chip, and is added to a Navi's Power pool when rolling.

When a Navi attacks another Navi it is an opposed action versus the other Navi's Finesse pool. Tactics and battlechips can alter the respective pools.

Any successes the attacker has over the defender is damage to the defender's HP.

Defend – In the case of holding out for better battlechips (Or other circumstances) a Navi may want to sacrifice the ability to deal damage for an increased chance of avoiding it. They add two dice to Finesse pools for dodging.

Heal – A Navi can only do this if they have an ability or battlechip that allows them to do so. The Navi rolls their Interface Pool plus or minus modifiers and heals one hit point per success. To heal another you must be in melee range with them.

Strategic Actions

Adjust Initiative Order – The Navi changes their place in the initiative by one place, effective next round.

Interact with Environment – The Navi either uses a battlechip that changes the field of battle or interacts with a previously described set piece. They can gain an extra die if they can justify the tactical use of it (ie. You said there were lots of jutting servers around, so I use one as cover to add to my defensive pool).

Aid Ally – A Navi can add a die to one of their teammate's pools if they act before them in initiative order.

Movement – The Navi moves into another area of the combat zone.

Range

Certain battlechips require the attacker to be in melee with the defender to use. These generally have the upside of dealing out more damage compared to ranged chips of that caliber. In a Netbattle combatants are not usually in melee range at the start of combat.

The Field

WIP; Needs to smoothly handle features that can be strategically taken advantage of and accommodate chips that affect the battlefield.

Chapter Three: Qualities

Format:

Quality Name

Tied Attribute

Description of quality, which should clearly outline the mechanical effect as well as the fluff.

Example:

Rich Parents

Social

The character's parents are loaded and can be persuaded to part with an advance on their allowance if the character asks them pretty please with sugar on top. Once activated, they transfer the character enough zenny to buy an item, but they expect that it will be used on what the character says they needed it for. Big ticket items may impose a penalty on the activation roll.

Chapter Four: Tactics

WIP

Chapter Four: Battlechips

Format:

Battlechip Name

Type (Combat or Strategic)