Reboot, Recharge, Recycle

> an Engine Heart micromodule

> > Store Copy

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For the Programmer:

Engine Heart is a game where the humans are all gone, but their robotic servants remain. Time and entropy have begun to take their toll on the cities of mankind, leaving a patchwork of broken and repaired, maintained and decaying.

Within these ruins a haphazard collection of robots stalk, waddle, stumble and roll about, often coming into conflict because of incompatible programming.

Each of the players controls a small service robot of some kind, referred to as a player robot or a PR. These robots spend their time trying to carry out their programming orders, hunting for places to recharge their batteries, and avoiding other robots whose programming is dangerous to the PRs' continued existence.

Some robots have banded together for mutual protection or aid, while others are part of the same household or company that originally owned them in the time of the humans.

In any case, the PRs' home and owner are gone, and they are left adrift in the world.

This micro-module begins with four robots that are all from the same household. When the power finally went out for good in their former owner's home, they embarked into the wild.

The PRs have heard rumors that a garage stall nearby has working power. This particular stall, however, is at the far end of an immense parking lot, overgrown with weeds, broken up with gaping canyons, and patrolled by ravenous recycler drones.

Two sides of the parking lot are hemmed in by immense concrete structures, and another edge is bordered by a chain-link fence. The players' objective is simple: make their way across the lot and into the garage with the working charging dock.

The ReCyclone tends to stay in its lair, but its drones can be found all over the parking lot. The Programmer should introduce the danger of the drones before the PRs encounter the ReCyclone directly.

If the PRs manage to engage the ReCyclone in conversation, they may learn that it has the Rare Model defect and has been searching for another unit like itself to replace worn-out components. Until now it has made due using looted scrap metal as a stopgap solution, but any robots that located a deactivated ReCyclone for it would have its gratitude.

While some features of the lot are specified, the Programmer may add other features, objects or robots as needed.

Pothole field

A large portion of the parking lot is broken up into deep potholes filled with water. Any robot passing through a pothole field may only move at half its normal speed, unless it makes a Mobility check (TN 8).

Things found in the pothole field:

• One of the largest potholes is home to a BeaverTree aquatic logging robot that hides below the surface when recycling drones are nearby. It knows about the other locals, and can confirm that one of the garage stalls has power. The BeaverTree even knows which stall: number 24. It also knows about a length of cable hidden in the wetlands that can be used to cross the ravine and avoid the ReCyclone's lair, although it won't mention this unless the PRs ask about crossing the ravine.

Jungle

Near the ravine is the overturned and immobile remains of a giant delivery truck, barely visible under the thick curtain of tall wavy grass. The cargo compartment has been mostly devoured by the recycling drones, allowing its tons of high-intensity potting soil to spill out and become a verdant garden. If the PRs investigate the remains of the truck, a Perception check (TN 8) will reveal newlooking marks all over the metal. This is where the drones have been disassembling it, although the PRs may not realize the cause.

The recycling drones frequent this area, because the delivery truck offers a ready source of metal if they can't fulfill their daily quotas. Appetizing robots like the PRs are preferred to the hard-to-digest hull of the truck. Any loud noises (such as Jock trying to mow it down) will draw the drones if the noise continues for more than one round.

Locations around the parking lot

Pothole field Jungle Wetlands Ravine ReCyclone's lair Garage

Wetlands

Beyond the chain-link fence is a swampy mass of tall weeds, with the broken structure of an on-ramp looming overhead. The metal fence is still in good condition, although Jock's saw can cut an opening. No interaction check is needed because the fence is immobile. Size 1 robots can squeeze under the bottom of the fence by making a successful Mobility check (TN 8).

If the PRs attempt to circumvent the lot by crossing through the wetlands, each robot must make a Mobility check (TN 8). If a PR fails the check, it becomes stuck until another nearby robot can free it by making a Strength check. The target number is equal to the stuck robot's Size rating +5. For example, the TN to free a Size 4 robot would be 9.

If an attempt to free a robot fails more than two times in a row, the recycling drones will be drawn to the commotion.

Things found in the wetlands:

 The on-ramp doesn't lead anywhere (since the highway is collapsed), but it offers a good view of the entire parking lot. The TN for any Perception check made from the top of the on-ramp is lowered by 2.

Ravine

Bisecting the parking lot is a huge trench where the asphalt has been torn open. The gap is too wide for any of the PRs to cross on their own, but one of them may be able to throw BesTrap across with a line of some kind. A fall from the top inflicts 1 damage and the robot is trapped at the bottom until another robot helps it escape somehow.

Going around the ravine means crossing into the ReCyclone's territory.

Things found around the ravine:

 A mouse has made its nest inside the ravine. The mouse will flee from the PRs, but the sight of it may trigger BesTrap's Overriding Directive flaw.

ReCyclone's lair

The ReCyclone and its drones inhabit the hollowed-out casing of a huge (Size 6) robot. The boxy yellow shell may be mistaken for a deactivated but otherwise mundane robot - it still has its cameras and limbs - until the ReCyclone and its drones emerge from the torso. The area around the lair is littered with discarded bits and pieces of other robots that were dragged back here for disassembly.

Things found around the ReCyclone's lair:

 A broken EverPet is laying among the debris, and is obviously in good condition otherwise. This robot "belongs" to the Sort-N-Spin that dwells in the garage at the end of the parking lot. The PRs can attempt to repair the EverPet, but the attempt takes 1 hour. A robot that attempts to repair it makes a check using its MechaniCon + Dexterity. The TN is to repair it is 9.

Garage

At the far end of the parking lot is a long, low gray building. A series of wide metal roll-up doors stand at regular intervals all along it, spotted here and there with faded and flaking pink paint. Several of the doors have been crushed open by the collapsed concrete walls, exposing the insides to the elements, but most of them are still sturdy and closed.

When they arrive at stall 24, the door will be locked shut. The Sort-N-Spin will not open it unless they have the EverPet.

If the EverPet's Damage Threshold is still 0, the Sort-N-Spin will open the garage door just high enough to let them pass it under the door. If one of the PRs makes a Reflexes check (TN 8) it can wedge the door open, allowing the other PRs to enter the garage. If the EverPet has been repaired, the Sort-N-Spin will gladly allow the PRs to enter and use its charging dock.

If the PRs do not have the EverPet with them, the Sort-N-Spin will bargain with them to retrieve it in exchange for using the charging dock.

The PRs may be able to gain access another way. The door is too strong for Jock's saw to cut open, but the Sort-N-Spin may be tricked into thinking a human is outside. To mimic a human, the PR must make a HumanCom check (TN 8). The Sort-N-Spin then makes its own HumanCom check, and will be tricked if it does not have at least as many successes as the PR.

"I SWEAR I JUST SAW A MOUSE!"

Biofrequency Scanner

The robot has special sensors that can detect the presence of organic lifeforms. The robot can detect plants or animals up to 10 meters away per level of Biofrequency Scanner rating, even through smoke or other obscurement. The scanner only detects the presence of biological matter, and cannot determine its specific type or current state.

Enhanced Cameras

The robot has more powerful cameras, capable of seeing other spectrums or microscopic details. The robot adds one extra d10 to all visual-based Perception checks for each level of Enhanced Cameras rating.

External Container

The robot has a sealable external container mounted on the outside of its chassis. A Size 1 container approximates a cube 10 cm wide.

High Speed

The robot is faster than a similar model. The robot's maximum speed is increased by 50% (round down). This does not affect the robot's Mobility or Reflexes ratings, only its maximum speed.

Lightweight

The robot weighs less than a similar model. The TN to move the robot is lowered by one per level of Lightweight rating. The robot is also vulnerable to being moved by other things (like wind).

Overriding Directive

The robot has a single purpose that its programming mandates it to perform. Whenever the robot has the chance to carry out its overriding directive, it must make a DigiCon check (TN 8). If the number of successes is less than its Overriding Directive rating, the robot immediately abandons its current task to perform its overriding directive.

shaped like a wedge and vaguely similar in appearance to the rodents it was built to hunt. It is speedy and very hard to hit, but is also very weak and easily pushed around by larger,

BesTrap's external container is a transparent plastic box on its back where prey is stored until released. To capture a mouse, the BesTrap must make an interaction check. The TN required is equal to the mouse's

The robot's Overriding Directive flaw compels it to trap any rodent small enough to fit in its container, then move the rodent at least 100 meters from its home location (which in this situation means 100 meters from wherever it currently is).

Weak Chassis

robot's chassis cannot withstand as much stress as a similar model. The robot makes all contested Strength checks against other robots with one less d10 than normal. This does not affect the robot's Strength rating, only its dice pool for contested Strength checks.

JNIT NAME <u>Kirby</u> DRIGINAL PURPOSE Remove	dust and cle	an up spills	indoors
4 RealityCom 5 Dext 2 HumanCom 2 Mob- 1 DigiCon 4 Pero 2 MechaniCon 3 Refle	terity 3 ility 4 ception 3	Durability Buffer Size Power	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 5 MAX CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size)
Damage from Strike (Str÷2, round down)		o be struck il + Ref)	MAX CURRENT
8 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initi (1d10 1d10 -		Speed (Mobil + Ref) 5 k/hour m/round
FEATURES External Container (Size Floodlig		DEFECTS	Rati Buggy Mic

FEATURES

External Container (Size 3)

Floodlights

Liquid Dispenser (Size 3)

Prehensile Limb

Vacuum

Kirby is a simple fullyautomated household cleaning device, equipped with a flexible vacuum limb that can dust around the most delicate knick-knacks without breaking anything. Its Liquid Dispenser is currently empty, but can be refilled with the vacuum.

Anything sucked up is shunted to either the External Container or the Liquid Dispenser's tank. Kirby can reverse its vacuum and blow out the contents of the container or tank.

"WOW. THIS PLACE IS A MESS!"

External Container

The robot has a sealable external container mounted on the outside of its chassis. A Size 3 container approximates a cube 35 cm wide.

Floodlights

The robot has onboard floodlights that can illuminate an area in front of it up to 20 meters away.

Liquid Dispenser

The robot has a sealed container suitable for holding liquid, as well as some means to dispense it. A Size 3 tank holds 2 liters. The maximum distance the liquid can be projected is the robot's Size rating in meters.

Prehensile Limb

One of the robot's limbs is a flexible stalk or tentacle. All interaction checks using the prehensile limb gain one extra d10. This feature does not impart an extra limb; one of the robot's pre-existing limbs is replaced with a prehensile version.

Vacuum

The robot has a vacuum nozzle or similar device. The vacuum is too weak to move all but the smallest and lightest robots.

Buggy Mic

The robot's audio pickup system is flawed. The robot makes all audio-based Perception checks with one less d10 than normal.

Jock is definitely the hardiest of the PRs. Its high Durability protects it from most scrapes, and its Strength rating lets it plow through rough weeds and uproot even the most stubborn stumps. An onboard Liquid Dispenser is used to water flowers and lawns.

However, it make a great deal of noise when active (even when its grinding disposal and saw are not in use). and other robots can usually hear it coming.

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS		Rating
Disposal			Noisy	
Liquid Dispenser (Size 3)				
Saw				

"DON'T WORRY, I'LL GET US THROUGH!"

Disposal

The robot is equipped with an internal shredder, incinerator, or other device capable of quickly breaking up or destroying matter. The disposal inflicts 2 damage.

Resisting robots must first be grasped (this requires an interaction check), then pulled into the disposal. If the target robot is successfully grasped, both robots make contested Strength checks (TN 8). The robot with more successes is the victor.

Only robots at least one Size rating beneath the disposal-equipped robot will fit in the disposal.

Liquid Dispenser

The robot has a sealed container suitable for holding liquid, as well as some means to dispense it. A Size 3 tank holds 2 liters. The maximum distance the liquid can be projected is the robot's Size rating in meters.

Saw

The robot has an onboard rotating sawblade. The saw inflicts 2 damage. Using the saw on an unwilling target robot requires a successful interaction check.

Noisy

The robot creates more noise during normal operation than a similar model. All Perception checks to hear it approaching gain one extra d10.

RIGINAL PURPOSE Provide RealityCom Dexte		Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffe	r)
5 HumanCom 3 Mobil	ity (2)	Buffer		`
3 DigiCon 3 Perce	ption 2	Size	MAX CURREN) NT
MechaniCon 3 Reflex 2 Stren		Power	Damage Threshol (Durability + Siz	
Damage from Strike (Str÷2, round down)		o be struck	MAX CURREN	NT
_				
8 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initi (1d10 1d10 +	ative	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 6 k/hc m/ro	
^ 1	Initi (1d10	ative	(Mobil + Ref)	
FEATURES Flexible Bod	Initi (1d10 1d10 +	ative + Ref)	(Mobil + Ref) k/hc m/ro	und
FEATURES	Initi (1d10	ative + Ref)	(Mobil + Ref) 6 k/hc m/ro	und Rati

Rupert is modeled after a children's teddy bear, and is covered with a layer of synthetic fur that it tries to keep clean with Kirby's help.

The robot has a second standard Manipulative Limb, and can hold two things at once (two small things, at least). Its high Dexterity and MechaniCon ratings make it better at repairing robots than any of the other PRs. An internal compartment in its chest can hold small objects out of sight.

"OH BOTHER, I'M GETTING ALL DIRTY AGAIN."

Flexible Body

The robot is designed to be highly flexible. The robot's Mobility and Reflexes ratings are increased by one when moving through cramped areas or attempting to escape constriction.

Internal Compartment

The robot has a sealable compartment inside its chassis. A Size 2 container approximates a cube 10 cm wide.

Manipulative Limb

The robot has an additional standard limb. Note that all robots start with only one standard manipulative limb unless more limbs are purchased as features (such as this one). Robots may only make one interaction check per round, regardless of how many limbs they have.

Secondary Battery

The robot has a smaller secondary battery. This battery must be charged like a normal battery; it does not charge in tandem with the main battery. If the robot fails its daily Power check, the secondary battery allows the robot to continue operating for a full 24 hours of use before its attribute ratings begin to degrade. The secondary battery is drained after use.

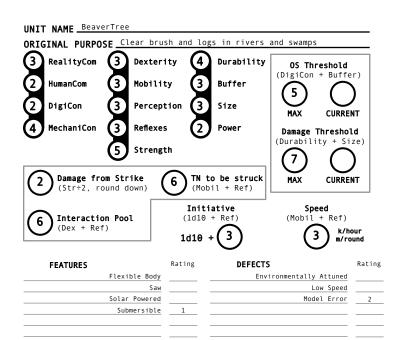
Plastic Casing

The robot's external casing is made of low-impact plastic. Each level of Plastic Casing rating lowers the robot's maximum Damage Threshold by 1.

Rusting

The robot's chassis is rusting. Any time the robot makes a check using its Reflexes rating, every d10 that rolls a 1 cancels out a success.

For example, Rupert has Dexterity 3 and Reflexes 3. It makes a check to strike another robot, and rolls 5, 1, and 8 for its Dexterity and 9, 1, and 5 for its Reflexes. Because Rupert rolled two 1s, two successes are cancelled out.



The BeaverTree originally worked in a swamp far from the parking lot, but migrated here after a dam broke and swept its jurisdiction away. The robot is at its best in water, where its Submersible rating is added to its Mobility rating. The Flexible Body feature increases its Mobility and Reflexes ratings by 1 when moving through cramped areas or to escape constriction.

Conversely, its Environmentally Attuned defect hinders it when moving on solid ground, reducing its RealityCom, Mobility and Perception ratings by 1 each.

Because of its Low Speed defect, the BeaverTree prefers to hide underwater instead of fleeing from the ReCyclone and its drones.

Finally, it suffers from the Model Error defect, reducing the dice used for repair checks by its Model Error rating.

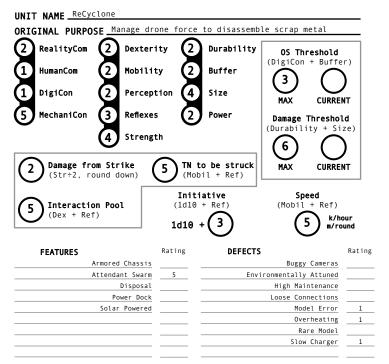
"I MIGHT KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT THAT."

UNIT NAME Mouse			
ORIGINAL PURPOS	E Forage for cons	umable organic m	atter
3 RealityCom	2 Dexterity (1 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer)
1 HumanCom	4 Mobility	1 Buffer	(bigicon + Burrer)
Θ DigiCon	4 Perception (1 Size	MAX CURRENT
1 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	1 Power	Damage Threshold
	⊙ Strength		(Durability + Size)
O Damage from (Str÷2, rou		N to be struck	MAX CURRENT
6 Interaction (Dex + Ref)	Pool (10	nitiative	Speed (Mobil + Ref)
(Jex + Ker)		10 + 4	8 k/hour m/round
FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
	Flexible Body	_	Plastic Casing
Enhanc	ed Microphone		
		_	

Mice were common in the time of the humans, and at least one is still alive, lurking in the parking lot. The Programmer may decide that more mice live in the broken garage stalls, the delivery truck in the jungle, or elsewhere around the lot.

They are very fragile, and a single point of damage will kill it. Mice may not be repaired.

"SQUEAK!"



"YOU'LL DO FOR NOW."

The ReCyclone is a menace to anything crossing the parking lot. Its Armored Chassis lets it ignore 1 point of damage from every attack, and its Disposal is large enough to threaten the PRs. It also controls five drones that are dangerous in their own right.

Its Buggy Cameras defect reduces its visual Perception rating by 1, and if tricked into leaving the paved area around its lair (perhaps into the wetlands or the pothole field) its Environmentally Attuned defect reduces its RealityCom, Mobility and Perception ratings by 1. It overheats easily, and if it attempts more than one interaction check without pausing for at least a round, its interaction pool is reduced by one die until it cools down.

Most importantly, it has the Loose Connections defect. Whenever its Damage Threshold is lowered from a jarring impact, the Programmer must roll a d10. If a 1 is rolled, the ReCyclone shuts down for 1d10 rounds while it reboots.

ORIGINAL PURPO	SE Seek ou	t and cut ap	art scrap me	tal	
1 RealityCom	2 Dexte	erity 1	Durability		eshold
1 HumanCom	1 Mobil	lity 1	Buffer	(DigiCon	+ Buffer)
1 DigiCon	1 Perce	eption 1	Size	MAX	CURRENT
1 MechaniCon	1 Reflex	ces 1	Power	Damage T	hreshold
Damage fro	1 Strer		o be struck	(Durability	CURRENT
	ound down) on Pool	Initi	ative + Ref)	Spe (Mobil	ed
FEATURES	Cutting Lase	Rating	DEFECTS		Rat
	Display Scree	n 1			

HINTT NAME Recycling Drone

Recycling drones are slow and feeble, but highly dangerous if they manage to sneak up on their prey. Every one of them possesses a Cutting Laser that inflicts 2 damage. The laser has a range of 10 cm.

They do not have any manipulative limbs, but each one has a monochrome display screen on its front - this displays a simple "face" when the drone is working. The face was intended to look as if the drone was concentrating, but instead has the appearance of hostility.

Drones can be found all over the parking lot. They are attracted to loud noises, and the Programmer is encouraged to set them against the PRs. If one is damaged, the ReCyclone may be able to repair it.

The drones recharge their tiny batteries by plugging themselves into the ReCyclone's Power Dock feature.

"JUST WHAT WE WERE LOOKING FOR."

UNIT	NAME Sort	-N-Spin				
ORIG	SINAL PURPO	SE <u>Organize</u> r	rooms and	d warehouses		
3	RealityCom	4 Dexteri	ity 2	Durability	OS Threshold	
2	HumanCom	3 Mobilit	:y (2	Buffer	(DigiCon + Buffe)
3	DigiCon	3 Percept	:ion 4	Size	MAX CURRE	NT
3	MechaniCon	2 Reflexes	· (2	Power	Damage Thresho (Durability + Si	
		4 Strengt	:h		6)
(2	Damage fro	om Strike ound down)		to be struck	MAX CURRE	NT
(5	Interaction (Dex + Ref			tiative + Ref)		our ound
	FEATURES		Rating	DEFECTS	i	Rating
	Manipulative I	Limb (Standard)			Inferior Model	
	Spe	ecialty Chassis				
	Teles	scoping Limb x3				

The Sort-N-Spin has lived in the garage since the time of the humans, when its last assignment was to tidy up the garage. It has zealously guarded its territory for years, and very few robots have been allowed to use the stall's charging dock.

At some point it "adopted" a robotic EverPet from a nearby stall and provided free access to the charging dock. However, the simple toy robot recently ran away from the garage, and the Sort-N-Spin is nearly frantic to get it back.

"BARKZIE, IS THAT YOU?

UNIT NAME Bark:	zie				
ORIGINAL PURPO	SETempor	arily amuse	and distrac	t human children	
1 RealityCom	2 Dext	erity (1	Durability	03 TILLESHOLU	>
1 HumanCom	2 Mobi	lity 1	Buffer	(DigiCon + Buffe	r) \
1 DigiCon	1 Perc	eption (1	Size	MAX CURREN	/ NT
1 MechaniCon	2 Refle	xes 1	Power	Damage Threshol	
	1 Stre	ength		(Durability + Siz	ze))
Damage from (Str÷2, ro	om Strike ound down)		to be struck bil + Ref)	MAX CURREN	(T
Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)			:iative) + Ref)	Speed (Mobil + Ref)	
C (BEX - KC)		1d10	+(2)	6 k/hc m/ro	
FEATURES		Rating	DEFECT	rs	Rat
	High Spe	ed		Lightweight	
				Noisy	

Weak Chassis

Small, simple, and cheap, the synthetic EverPets were an ubiquitous feature of the time of the humans.

Barkzie is no exception. This neon-blue puppy can do little besides bark, yip and chase after anything that moves. It can understand the PRs, but its intelligence is extremely limited compared to that of most other robots.

EverPets are typically created using the rules for drones, as described in the Attendant Swarm feature. They have 19 points for attributes and features (instead of the normal 100 points), and may have a maximum of 10 points of defects. Note that at least 13 points must be spent on attribute ratings to ensure that every rating is at least 1.

"YAP. YAP. YAP."