

INDUSTRY STANDARD

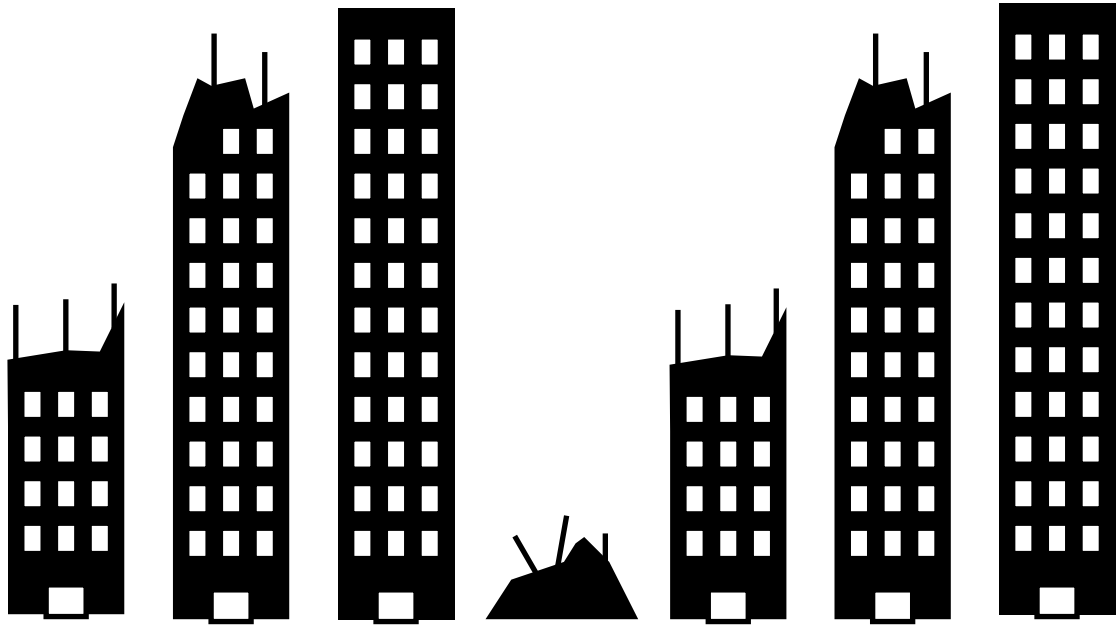
an Engine Heart module
for 2-5 robots

Thank you for helping out with this project!
Your contribution means a lot, and I hope you
enjoy this module!

-Viral

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What Goes Up

The skyscrapers marched around the edge of the city, perfectly aligned, in a wide square of real estate. Faded signs lying in the dust beyond the buildings showed dice, cards, wheels of chance.

There were no suburbs here - pilgrims passed through from open countryside to condensed metropolis with no transition, and no building was less than thirty stories high. A solid wall of windowed stone stood against the prairie, broken only by the narrow spaces between the monoliths. These channels were crowded with rivulets of work crews painted in bright warning colors that weaved and ducked between and among each other, constantly rushing to the next job site. For a city without owners, there was a startling amount of productive industry.

Skyscrapers were going up and coming down all the time, it seemed.

Trompe Towers is a city running amok in a frenzied death-spiral of destruction and rebuilding. Overrun with single-minded construction robots, its skyscrapers and towering apartment complexes rise and fall with regularity. Building permits are ignored and brand new structures are cannibalized for their pre-fab components.

As the robots and structures of Trompe Towers entropy, the buildings are starting to become dangerously unsafe. In many places useful or vital features are simply painted on, such as fire exit doors being painted onto the walls (along with the fire escapes painted onto the outside surfaces). Carpets are strung between walls with no solid flooring underneath, counterfeit charging ports entice stray robots into rooms with no escape, and everywhere is the looming threat of being incorporated into the infrastructure.

The noisy city is also home to herds of squatters - savvy locals that move into new construction as soon as the structures are finished. These locals will likely contest the player robots' presence or actively try to drive them off, although a few may be willing to explain how the housing crunch works.

Demolitions are not random, but they *are* kept secret from anything not employed (or conscripted) by the work crews. An entire economy has sprung up in their wake, fueled by robotic bookies, to convert the movements of the work crews into odds that propel the locals to migrate from building to building. Once upon a time humans came to this city to gamble - now the robots of Trompe Towers stake their existence on these predictions!

Crew bosses pay their laborers with access to the company power docks, but everyone else uses a complex system of trading in reported odds. The PRs may wish to "play the market" to acquire resources or aid.

Restaurants, nightclubs, shopping centers and day cares can also be found mixed in with the floors of residential and commercial space. Whether built by the construction workers as "planned" parts of the city or propped up improvisationally by stray robots with self-proclaimed higher purposes, these can offer temporary sanctuary and opportunities to robots that locate them.

Unfortunately, new buildings are slated for demolition almost immediately after assembly. The Programmer may choose to roll a d10 when the PRs enter a building. This is the number of hours before the construction robots arrive to tear it down. There is no eviction notice - the PRs' first clue that something is amiss might be the hordes of locals fleeing the building as the walls begin to collapse around them.

High-rises

Many buildings no longer have working lights (or even power). In these places lightbulbs and light fixtures have been painted onto the ceilings of dark windowless rooms,

Things found in the high-rises:

- Faux fixtures. Bathrooms of some residential buildings have empty crates painted to look like sinks and walls with painted-on mirrors. Naturally the reflection in the mirror is of the construction robot that painted it.
- Squatters. A multitude of different robots, leftovers from the human occupation of the city, migrate from building to building trying to keep ahead of the demolition schedules. Most squatters follow the schedules provided by street dealers, although a few have their own secretive methods.
- Talent act promoter. Not every local is involved in construction or squatting. During their exploration of the city, the PRs may come across a rogue booking agent searching for acts to hire. With no talent to promote, the agent has been forced to carry around a child's music player, setting it up wherever it can find the space. It will attempt to recruit the PRs with offers of repairs, power and shelter. If the PRs perform on stage, the Programmer may roll a d10 to determine how many minutes the show lasts before construction robots suddenly begin demolishing the club.

Locations around Trompe Towers

High-rises
Office skyscrapers
The streets
Trompe Towers

Office skyscrapers

Many skyscrapers are empty shells, totally open on the inside. The ones lucky enough to have floors and ceilings have working stairwells (for most floors, at least), but the elevator doors are often just painted replicas, along with the potted plants in the corners of each floor.

Things found in the towers:

- The remains of worn-out construction robots (along with hapless outsiders) incorporated into several buildings as wall material. These are more obvious in some places than in others.
- Office workers. Business ventures still exist, staffed by loyal robots that uproot their offices at regular intervals. Current office doors are usually labeled with "Formerly located at" signage, and a sure tip for locals that the demo crews are coming is a sign announcing "We have moved to a new location".
- A lost delivery robot with a heavy shipment of several Size 4 boxes of commercial equipment that it brought to the wrong tower. The demolition crews will be there before it has time to get the stacks of boxes to safety.

The streets

The narrow, congested streets between buildings are no refuge from the chaos. A constant stream of construction material flows around the city, and its porters are under orders not to stop for anything.

A player robot caught in traffic must make a Mobility check (TN 8) to cross a street without incident. If the PR fails, the traffic inflicts 1 damage.

Streetside doors of office buildings or other important locations have largely been replaced with residential doors, closet doors, and even hotel room doors (complete with peepholes and room numbers). Most other exterior doors and windows are just paintings.

Things found in the streets:

- Squads of construction robots of all makes and models swarming through the streets, eager to begin their next projects and greedy to reach preexisting towers before their competitors. The PRs may be able to pose as a construction crew to gain access to otherwise inaccessible areas, although they may just as easily be conscripted by genuine crews.
- Statistical robots, castoffs from competing casinos, lining the precipices between building and street, clinging to the structures for stability as they monitor the comings and goings of the construction crews. Their observations are converted into statistical probabilities for determining which buildings are scheduled for imminent demolition. Of course, their predictions are often incorrect, but nevertheless a thriving market for odds exists and the PRs may find themselves entangled in the scheme. The street dealers need reliable information, and will be very eager to acquire genuine work schedules.

Trompe Towers

Standing like an island in the center of the storm, Trompe Towers proper is four tall white skyscrapers surrounding a fifth, even larger than the others. It is usually the tallest building in the city. A wide strip of asphalt painted in shades of green encompasses the property, lit at night and heavily patrolled by work crews and conscripted locals during the day.

Only the crew bosses are allowed to venture inside. If any of the PRs are seen on the grounds they will be set upon as trespassers, a crime that merits recycling. Passing construction workers might pine for the perfectly good building materials the towers are made up of, despite the location's sacrosanct standing within their society.

Things found in Trompe Towers:

- A casino that fills the entire floor, staffed by courteous yet pushy robots eager to badger the PRs into placing a wager or playing a game of chance. High-rollers may be treated to special perks like free rooms or guided tours of the building.
- Floor after floor of empty hotel rooms, each with its door propped open. A few members of the cleaning staff still linger, doing their best to keep things clean and insisting that the humans will be back any day. These locals may chase the PRs away or report them to nearby crew bosses.
- The executive boardroom. If the PRs hide and eavesdrop on a "meeting" they will find every crew boss simply addresses the empty room, then leaves as the next one enters. Each of them believes the other crew bosses are actually speaking with human users, and none are willing to give up the chance to be productive over a small matter like the truth.

UNIT NAME Big Buster light industrial cargo lifter

ORIGINAL PURPOSE Lift and carry heavy loads in distribution warehouse

3 RealityCom	3 Dexterity	4 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 3 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 9 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
2 HumanCom	3 Mobility	2 Buffer	
1 DigiCon	3 Perception	5 Size	
1 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	3 Power	
	6 Strength		

3 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	7 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 4	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 7 k/hour m/round
7 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)			

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
<u>Cargo Hauler</u>		<u>Conspicuous</u>	
<u>Claw</u>		<u>Environmentally Attuned</u>	
<u>External Container (Size 5)</u>		<u>Model Error</u>	1
<u>Jack</u>			

The standard Big Buster is a wheeled box built around one huge and well-braced arm.

Platoons of Busters can be seen hefting enormous crates and toting supplies all over construction sites. These ubiquitous models have also been drafted as guards, thanks to their immense size and useful *Claw* feature that can grab and hold trespassers or looters.

A whole squad of them patrols the grounds of Trompe Towers proper, although several other vital areas make use of them.

Built for the sedate cement floors of warehouses, a Buster suffers from its Environmentally Attuned defect whenever it travels over rough ground. Flashing warning lights accompany its every move, enough to warn nearby onlookers away but also to protect its own casing. For all its resilience a Buster does a poor job of repairing itself.

"I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS WAS HEAVY."

UNIT NAME Biz-Max Automated Entertainment Collaborator

ORIGINAL PURPOSE _____

4 RealityCom	3 Dexterity	2 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 7 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 6 <input type="radio"/> MAX CURRENT
4 HumanCom	3 Mobility	4 Buffer	
3 DigiCon	5 Perception	4 Size	
1 MechaniCon	3 Reflexes	2 Power	
	2 Strength		

1 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	6 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 3	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 6 k/hour m/round
6 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)			

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
<u>Biofrequency Scanner</u>	3	<u>Overriding Directive (Major)</u>	2
<u>Databank</u>	1		
<u>Manipulative Limb (Standard)</u>			

In days gone by the Biz-Max worked for a nightclub alongside a variety of human entertainers, acting as their agent, secretary and publicist. With no more humans to promote he has taken to wandering the towers, charging where he can and avoiding conscription or dismantling. Driven by his Overriding Directive flaw the Biz-Max constantly prowls for new talent.

None of the locals are interested in "breaking into the business", so his only act is a child's music player. The Programmer may treat this as a removable version of the Loudspeaker feature that only broadcasts prerecorded music. The music player's battery only lasts for 1d10 hours before running out of power, so it is often unusable.

Biz-Max's Databank feature is packed with knowledge, and although much of the information is outdated and useless he still knows more about the original workings of Trompe Towers than any other robot. Several of his former clients performed there, and he has been inside the building several times.

"DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT NOISE! YOU'RE DOING GREAT OUT THERE, KID!"

UNIT NAME MegaTemp Office Assistant

ORIGINAL PURPOSE Secretarial and custodial duties

4 RealityCom	4 Dexterity	3 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) <input type="text" value="7"/> <input type="text"/> MAX CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) <input type="text" value="6"/> <input type="text"/> MAX CURRENT
4 HumanCom	3 Mobility	3 Buffer	
4 DigiCon	2 Perception	4 Size	
3 MechaniCon	3 Reflexes	1 Power	
	3 Strength		

1 Damage from Strike (Str÷2, round down)	6 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 2	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 6 k/hour m/round
7 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)			

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
Manipulative Limb (Standard)		Overriding Directive (Major)	1
Plasma Arc Welder	1	Plastic Casing	1
Tool Set		Response Lag	1

MegaTemp (or "Meg") is a humanoid-shaped robot with faded lime-colored plastic casing. An overriding directive compels her to "maintain" the business she was originally purchased by: a multinational conglomerate now reduced to a single office.

When the PRs meet Meg, she has just moved in after being forced to abandon the old office tower and all of the equipment inside. The PRs might be recruited to steal office supplies from competitors or scout out potential sites for the next relocation. If Meg is introduced to the lost delivery robot (mentioned in the Office Towers section above) she will use her network of contacts to rescue the crates.

Meg's *Slow Response* defect reduces her Reflexes bonus for initiative rolls from 3 to 2.

"HOW ABOUT WE MAKE A DEAL?"

UNIT NAME BildPro All-in-One

ORIGINAL PURPOSE

5 RealityCom	3 Dexterity	4 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) <input type="text" value="4"/> <input type="text"/> MAX CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) <input type="text" value="8"/> <input type="text"/> MAX CURRENT
1 HumanCom	3 Mobility	3 Buffer	
2 DigiCon	2 Perception	4 Size	
4 MechaniCon	3 Reflexes	3 Power	
	5 Strength		

2 Damage from Strike (Str÷2, round down)	6 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 3	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 6 k/hour m/round
6 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)			

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
Expandable	1	Overheating	1
Heat Resistant		Power Cutoff	
Saw		Simple Programming	
Smelter		Unreliable	
		Weak Chassis	

No job site is complete without an army of All-in-Ones picking up and helping out by producing needed components. Built for constant labor, it can run for days, converting scrap metal into useful beams and bolts with its *Smelter* feature.

Larger robots may believe that they are safe from its smelter, but the All-in-One's Expandable feature allows it to increase its Size rating to 5, widening the smelter enough to accommodate any robot of Size 4 or smaller.

Anyone who blunders into a construction zone without an escort is at risk of being chased down by BildPros and converted into simpler forms.

"COME BACK HERE!"

UNIT NAME Card Caddy

ORIGINAL PURPOSE Staff and oversee wagering on games of chance

4 RealityCom	5 Dexterity	2 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 10 MAX ○ CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 5 MAX ○ CURRENT
5 HumanCom	3 Mobility	5 Buffer	
5 DigiCon	5 Perception	4 Size	
1 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	2 Power	
	1 Strength		

0 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	7 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)
8 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 4
	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 7 k/hour m/round

FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
Manipulative Limb (Standard)		Inferior Model	
Overclocked		Loose Connections	
		Manual Feature (Overclocked)	
		Noisy	
		Overheating	1
		Plastic Casing	1
		Power Cutoff	

Jittery, talkative, always stating what's happening at the moment, the unemployed Card Caddies of the city's long-demolished casinos are the lifeblood of Trompe Towers. Without their predictions, the locals would have no way of knowing when their locations were about to be torn down.

The PRs may find temporary employment with the Card Caddies that line the streets, either running numbers (literally) from one bookie to the next or the more dangerous task of infiltrating a work crew and getting insider information.

While their manufacturers forbid such a thing, nearly every Card Caddy has been modified to possess the *Overclocked* feature. Unfortunately their programming won't allow them to actually use it, and so they rely on each other (or nearby outsiders) to get around this Manual Feature defect.

"HEY I GOT TWENTY ON WEST AVENUE, THREE TO ONE ON GREEN STREET EAST, TAKING ALL NUMBERS RIGHT HERE!"

UNIT NAME Work-King Industrial Oversight Unit

ORIGINAL PURPOSE Supervise automated construction crews

4 RealityCom	3 Dexterity	4 Durability	OS Threshold (DigiCon + Buffer) 8 MAX ○ CURRENT Damage Threshold (Durability + Size) 8 MAX ○ CURRENT
3 HumanCom	4 Mobility	4 Buffer	
3 DigiCon	4 Perception	4 Size	
5 MechaniCon	4 Reflexes	2 Power	
	3 Strength		

1 Damage from Strike (Str+2, round down)	8 TN to be struck (Mobil + Ref)
7 Interaction Pool (Dex + Ref)	Initiative (1d10 + Ref) 1d10 + 4
	Speed (Mobil + Ref) 8 k/hour m/round

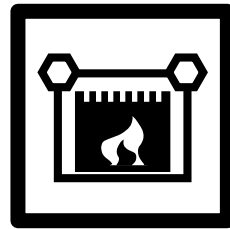
FEATURES	Rating	DEFECTS	Rating
Floodlights		Noisy	
Loudspeaker		Overheating	3
		Unreliable	

Programmed to give orders, the Work-King is an intractable adversary to anything in the way of its next job site. This means every crew boss in the city is a rival to every other work crew, a fact that drives them to claim resources before anything else can get to them.

Fat tires let it roll over almost any surface, and its tendency to be confrontational may lead to the PRs being conscripted or threatened with smelting. Most Work-Kings each have a platoon of robots under their supervision, but some crew bosses have lost their crews and are desperate for volunteers.

Regardless of how many robots work for it, every Work-King makes regular pilgrimages to Trompe Towers, leaving its underlings outside while it joins its hostile peers.

"YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE ANY CONSTRUCTION UNIT I'VE EVER SEEN..."



Features and Defects

The following features and defects may be used in addition to the ones described in the Engine Heart rulebook. The Programmer may decide to forbid any or all of these options.

New Features

Claw

Cost: 10

The robot has a grasping claw that can attach to objects or other robots.

If the robot makes a successful interaction check with the claw, the target robot must remain within reach of the robot using the claw. This condition will persist until the robot using the claw releases its grip, or until the Damage Threshold of the robot using the claw falls to 0.

Either robot may attempt dragging checks as normal.

Electromagnet

Cost: 10

The robot has an electromagnet that can attract ferrous metals. The robot may make a Strength check to drag remote metal objects toward it, using the normal rules for dragging objects. The range of the electromagnet is equal to the robot's Power rating in meters. For example, a robot with a Power rating of 4 would have an electromagnet with a range of 4 meters.

The Programmer may decide that certain objects are too heavy or secure to be attracted. The robot may attract itself to immobile objects by making a Power check (TN 8). The number of successes required is equal to the robot's Size rating -1. Failing this check drains the robot's battery.

Overclocked

Cost: 10

The robot may attempt two interaction checks during its turn. The robot automatically inflicts 2 damage on itself if it attempts the second interaction check.

This damage may not be prevented by the Armored Chassis feature or by the robot's Durability rating. Damage incurred by use of the Overclocked feature may be repaired normally.

Reinforced

Cost: 5

The robot is more durable than normal.

The robot's Damage Threshold is increased by 1. This does not affect the robot's Durability or Size rating.

Simple Assembly

Cost: 5

The robot is constructed with basic components, and is easily repaired.

The TN required to repair the robot is lowered by 1. A robot's TN to be repaired may not be lower than 2.

Smelter

Cost: 12

The robot has a smelter that can convert immobile robots to simple tools.

Every 5 points of Damage Threshold fed into the smelter creates a simple tool with Durability and Size ratings of 1. For example, smelting an immobile robot with 10 points of Damage Threshold would result in a prybar, hammer or other simple object with a Durability rating of 2 and a Size rating of 2. The target robot is consumed at the rate of 1 damage per round until its Damage Threshold is 0.

Excess or insufficient metal results in useless slag that cannot be recycled. A robot may not convert robots with higher Size ratings than the robot with the smelter.

The Programmer may decide that certain other objects can be smelted as well.

Wind Turbine

Cost: 6

The robot has a wind turbine that can recharge its battery over time.

If the robot's battery becomes drained, it will recharge if the robot remains immobile for 12 consecutive hours. The robot must be outside or in a windy area to make use of this feature.

A robot with this feature may not have the Nuclear Battery feature. A robot with the Secondary Battery feature requires an additional 6 consecutive hours to recharge the secondary battery.

New Defects

Partial Casing

Gain: 5

The robot's casing has gaps that leave its interior unprotected.

Any damage inflicted on the robot by another robot or object is increased by 1 point.

Response Lag

Gain: +2/rating

The robot's modifier for initiative checks is lowered by 1. This does not affect the robot's Reflexes rating or any other check.

A robot may not have a Response Lag rating higher than 5.

Salvaged

Gain: 3

The robot's chassis is in poor condition or made of nonstandard parts, making repairs on it more difficult.

The robot's TN to be repaired is increased by 1. A robot's TN to be repaired may not be higher than 10.

Weak Motor

Gain: 3

The robot's servomotors are weaker than a similar model.

The robot's Damage from Strike is reduced by 1 point. A robot with a Damage from Strike of 0 may not have the Weak Motor defect.

