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Rechnergeist

Manifestations: Voices or pictures forming in what should be random static or noise. Electronic devices or electronically-controlled machinery behaving oddly, particularly in ways that defy how they are supposed to work. Computers, in particular, are subject to the strange behaviour that hints of a controlling intelligence.

Agents: Rechnergeist agents have no physical form, but rather a personality that infests computers and electronic machinery. Where they become visible on monitors or heard through speakers, they appear only very briefly. The object they inhabit may appear to function normally most of the time, but in fact it is completely under the agent's control at all times. Despite the inherent interconnectedness of computer networks, the agent restricts itself to one identifiable physical device.

Power: People with this power can exert control over machines in a similar way to Rechnergeist agents. However, they can only influence machines in a way that manifests and can be described solely physically. For example, it can change the picture on a computer monitor or cause a car to steer against its driver's wishes but cannot be used to find 'a list of people with a red Mondeo' in a given database. Similarly, it can't be used to pass information directly from a computer to the person with the power. The opposite can be done, but only in a way that requires no great finesse- for example writing over an entire hard drive with a single word.

Doom: Failing the respect the line between the physical and the virtual has its price- losing all physical existence. While someone who suffers this doom might leave recognisable traces in nearby electronics, their consciousness is gone for good, subsumed into the crude algorithms within them. For an agent of the Rechnergeist, this essentially amounts to a return to the non-existence from which they came.

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"You take my advice boy, and never go near loom number 4. I don't care what need fixin', or who tells you to get to it, you stay away and stay safe. That looms a killer. 3 men killed in this factory, and all by that loom.

"These days they're all driven by computer, and all we have to do is go nursemaid them when one of them loses a shuttle or screws up somehow.

"Thing is, there's something just plain not right with number 4. It goes haywire, spinnin' all kinds of crazy patterns, and the only way to stop it is to cut the power. Hell, one day I saw it make nothin' but spiral patterns, one after the other.

"I'll never forget the day ol' Todd checked out. He got his sleeve caught when it started up of a sudden, and got the shuttle right between the eyes. I swear, the damn thing waited until he turned around, so he could see it comin'. The boss said he musta left the breaker in, but saw him take it out with my own eyes.

"I ain't a superstitious man, but I was fixin' to get a preacher, but then Sam said he'd fix it good an proper. Tole me he'd left a window open in the head, and would get come in the night and smash the thing up.

"We came in the next mornin', and Sam was wound round the main spindle, hammer still in hand. You don't forget that kind of thing, boy, not ever.

"So I don't care if the Almighty hisself tells you to get under that machine- you do no such thing. Just turn it off and on 'til it plays nice."