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Many current **Magic** developers were avid control players before they started working here. So, what bias did they bring to the job? Take a look at some modern control decks and judge for yourself.

Gabriel Nassif

Worlds 2004 Top 8 / Blue-white Control

Nicholas West

2005 Pro Tour Columbus Top 8 - Scepter Control

Pretty impressive stuff. If you are familiar with the people working in R&D today, you might notice their subtle influence coming through in those decks.

What are Control Cards?

I'm sure some of you don't know quite what R&D means when we talk about "control cards." Yes, Control Magic is a control card, but there are others that don't have the word "Control" in their title. Here are a few examples:

- Counterspell
- Swords to Plowshares
- Spire Golem

Hopefully that list explains what we're talking about. Occasionally people try to add other cards to that list, like Wrath of God and Roots, but I'm most comfortable with it when it is only three lines long.

The Role of Control Decks in Magic

Decks can often be classified in one of three ways: aggro, combo, and control. These three deck types form what is classically known as the "Rock-Paper-Scissors" metagame.

Each deck type has its place within the metagame structure. If you consider aggro decks to be "Rock" and combo decks to be "Paper," that usually means that control decks fill the role of "Scissors." Of course, depending on the environment, aggro could be "Paper" and combo could be "Rock," in which case control is still "Scissors," but probably a different kind of scissors.

In a nutshell, the purpose of control decks, at least in the way R&D looks at things, is to beat some decks while at the same time losing to other decks (we sometimes call this phenomenon "maintaining the health of the environment," one of the most important things we do).

The Future of Control

If you've been paying close attention to the structure of sets and blocks over the past several years, you may have noticed that there are some control cards in every set. For instance, *Champions of Kamigawa* has Myojin of Cleansing Fire and *Betrayers of Kamigawa* has Minamo's Meddling. Not a clear pattern, but a pattern nonetheless. **Magic** is a subtle game sometimes.

I can assure you that we have no plans to deviate from that model in the foreseeable future.

Thanks for reading; I hope this has clarified some of the misconceptions about control decks that have been floating around lately.

Last Week's Poll:

Have you ever drafted one-on-one?		
No	4567	62.3%
Yes	2762	37.7%
Total	7329	100.0%

This Week's Poll:

The next large expansion was codenamed "Control." Do you think there will be control cards in it?Yes

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