

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com



Ask Wizards - December, 2006

Ask Wizards
Friday, December 1, 2006

Do you have a question about **Magic: The Gathering** or *Wizards of the Coast*? Send it, along with your name and location, to us via this [email form](#). We'll post a new question and answer each day.

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December 29, 2006

Dear Ask Akroma,

I was wondering, if you were you to date a human, might I add who absolutely loved you, and beat his friends down with only you on the board so many times they banned you from casual games with them (**breathes**), what would you look for in such a guy?

--Josiah
South Bend, IN

A: From **Akroma**, angelic avenger:

Josiah,

What do I look for in a guy? Looks, charms, intelligence, a sense of humor. Oh yeah, and invulnerability. You see, I have some anger issues and at times I inappropriately take it out on my significant other. All couples fight. My relationships just add bladed weapons to the mix.

So Josiah, do you have good medical coverage?

December 28, 2006

Q: On April 26, 2004, Jill Schmeichel asked Elaine Chase:

"I was curious if there were any women working at Wizards in R&D?"

You, Elaine Chase, finished your witty and eloquent answer with:

"So what's it like being the only woman in TCG R&D? Maybe if someone sends that question in to Ask Wizards, I'll tell you about it...."

Well, I am asking precisely this. How does it feel, Mrs. Chase?

--Carlos
Zurich

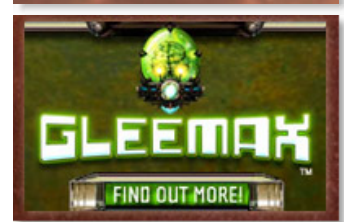
A: From **Elaine Chase**, Magic Senior Brand Manager

Well, it took someone sooooo long to ask me that I actually don't even work in TCG R&D anymore. In August of 2004 I voluntarily left the dream job of playing games for a living and moved into the business side of things. After a stint on our licensed TCG business, I am currently the Senior Brand Manager for all things **Magic**. But I won't let this small technicality get in the way of answering your very original and well thought-out question.

Honestly, my R&D experience wasn't all that different than anyone else's. I've always fit in with the **Magic** player type, and I never would have come to work here if it were any different. I did tend to get asked my opinion on things like "is there too much cleavage in this art?" (My answer was almost always "no".) I spent more time than others working on rules systems and teaching tools, but that had more to do with my background in education than the fact that I was a woman. At the end of the day, the psychographic of a **Magic** player is virtually the same regardless of gender. It just ends up that more men fit that psychographic, but that doesn't mean women don't exist in the game. So the next time you see a woman at an event, don't be afraid. In all likelihood, she will have the same interests as you and you'll probably get along swimmingly.

Why did I leave R&D? Was it the smelly basketball socks strewn around the TCG pit? The incessant stream of questions like "if you found out that you were born with a third arm and your parents had it surgically removed when you were a baby, would you be mad at them?" The endless barrage of cards thrown at my Muppets action figure collection in an attempt to knock them over? How about the time that my thoughtful workmates dumped the bones of about 2 dozen Buffalo wings in my garbage can? Or was it just the fact that no one in the public answered my obvious cry for attention in my Ask Wizards answer two years ago? I leave it up to you to decide.

So what the heck does Brand do anyway? Maybe if someone sends that question to Ask Wizards, I'll tell you about it. But given what happened last time I tried this, I won't hold my breath. Maybe by the time it comes in I'll be in Finance... 😊



December 27, 2006



Q: "What went into the decision to not bring back some of the more obscure older multicolor cards for *Ravnica*? The Golgari recieved **Dark Heart of the Wood** and the Gruul got **Savage Twister**. Why not give all the guilds throwback cards like **Diabolic Vision** for the Dimir or **Hymn of Rebirth** for the Selesnya?"

--Shane

Louisville, KY, USA

A: From **Devin Low**, **Magic R&D**:

"Hey Shane,

"A fine question. **Dark Heart of the Wood** and **Savage Twister** were put into the block to be awesome one-ofs, not to create a structured cycle of gold reprints. Without a cycle to provide political cover, any proposed gold reprint had to live or die on its own merits. And it was important than any gold reprint fit its guild as well as the new gold cards did. **Dark Heart of the Wood** fit perfectly the Golgari theme of sacrificing resources for benefits (then probably recurring them). **Savage Twister** was added by *Guildpact* Development as a synergistic combination of Gruul's red burn and green fat, to provide a red-green 'wrath' effect for Block Constructed.

"**Hymn of Rebirth** is a green-white **Zombify** that can hit any player's graveyard - not a good fit for token-loving Selesnya. **Diabolic Vision** on the other hand, a library manipulation spell, does fit the theme of Dimir. However, **Diabolic Vision** is way less well-known than **Dark Heart** or **Savage Twister**, and therefore less exciting. It was never seriously considered for Ravnica. We were also excited about doing **Telling Time**, and the two cards are too similar to do in the same set."

December 26, 2006



Q: "I recently acquired some **Serra Angels**, and was wondering if you could give me some clue as to which set they are from. I shall set out the distinguishing features:

1. Illustrated by Douglas Schuler
2. Has no dates, the bottom of the card simply stating 'Illus. (c) Douglas Schuler'
3. Has a white border
4. The white mana symbol is old style (as seen on *Alpha* cards, for example)
5. The text reads 'Attacking does not cause Serra Angel to tap' as opposed to 'Does not tap to attack'
6. Has a light background, not the dark one (as seen in *Fourth Edition*)
7. Has a plain black line around the card artwork (i.e., between the artwork and its white border).

"Thanks, you will be saving us much grief!"

- Graeme and Andrew

A: From **Doug Beyer**, **magicthegathering.com** web developer:

"It sounds like the **Serra Angel** in question is from the *Revised* set, the set that came between *Unlimited* and *Fourth Edition*. It can be tough to identify cards in that period, so here's an unofficial **SERRA ANGEL**

IDENTIFICATION GUIDE:



"Here's how you might come to the conclusion that it's a *Revised* card. First of all, *Alpha* and *Beta* cards are black-bordered, so they're out. The *Unlimited* Serra has the old 'Does not tap to attack' wording, and has the *Unlimited* set's characteristic [bevel](#) just inside the white border. The *Revised* Serra has a washed-out look to the print, no bevel, and the newer 'Attacking does not cause Serra Angel to tap' wording. The *Fourth Edition* one has modern-style [white mana symbols](#) and a richer color saturation. *Fifth Edition* cards carry no expansion symbol, so a *Fifth* card would look similar to a *Fourth Edition* one, but Serra wasn't printed in *Fifth* or *Sixth Edition*, so that's out as well. And the *Seventh*, *Eighth* and *Ninth Edition* printings have new Serra art, and starting in *Ninth*, she has the keyworded vigilance ability.

"So there you go. Congratulations on your new *Revised* Serra Angels!"

December 25, 2006



Q: "What was the first article that appeared on [magicthegathering.com](#)?"

--Ilvaldi

Laurel, Maryland, USA

A: From **Scott Johns**, [magicthegathering.com](#) Content Manager:

"It's a little screwy how that happened actually. [Magicthegathering.com](#) officially launched on January 2, 2002. On that day it had several different things to read, including an article from Mark Rosewater introducing the site ('[In the Beginning...](#)'). The screwy thing is that the site actually published live a day before that, with an article by Anthony Alongi ('[On Your Mark... Get Set... Radiate!](#)'), but there was no true introduction on that day, and Wizards didn't publish any links our announcements about the site anywhere else on Wizards.com. Why the extra day? Wizards thought it would be fun to let people discover the site on their own before anything official had been announced. So, the site went live a day before its 'official' launch day. It wasn't until the second day that Mark's introduction article was published. Because of all that, Anthony actually gets the honor of having our first article, even though Mark's article was the one that introduced the site!

December 22, 2006



Q: "Why does 'To Arms!' have an exclamation point? Not counting 'Un' sets, I don't think any other cards have punctuation like this. What made this one special?"

--Christian
Germany, Baden-Württemberg

A: From **Matt Cavotta**, **Magic** R&D:

"Christian,

"**To Arms!** Is not the first un-*Un* card to use an exclamation point. **Kaboom!** from *Onslaught* had one as well. In the case of both of these cards, the names do not describe what the spell is, like '**Fireball**,' or what it does, like '**Discombobulate**.' Instead, they are emphatic references to the before and after effects of each spell. **Kaboom!** describes the sound (or, in some cases, sounds) that take place after the spell goes off. **To Arms!** Is the sound of the rallying call that rings out before the spell goes off. In each case, the name is trying to engage you, the player, in the excitement of the moment either before or after the spell. When I chose the name for **To Arms!**, I really hoped people would see it not just as the card name, but also as their own rallying cry, barking out '**To Arms!**' as they cast the spell, then untapping their forces and taking down marauding foes."

December 21, 2006



Q: "Why don't you make a creature with creature type 'teenage' so that **Mistform Ultimus** could be a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle?"

--Bernardo
Alcochete, Portugal, Europa

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** Head Designer:

"Bernardo,

"I was in charge of creature types in *Unhinged* so I actually did think about it. The strikes against it:

- "1) It was a very obscure joke.
- 2) Creature types are nouns and 'teenage' is an adjective.
- 3) Brady Dommermuth, the person in charge of tournament-legal creature types, would have killed me in my sleep."

December 20, 2006



Q: "I'm sure you've been bombarded with the following question already, but you guys know you spelled 'Dissension' wrong, don't you? Or was that on purpose?"

---- Fabian
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

A: From **Del Laugel**, Senior Editor:

"Actually, Fabian, you're the first to ask this question. It's very disappointing, really. 'Difficult to spell' is the most important consideration that goes into selecting **Magic** set names. In my opinion, *Dissension* just didn't have enough potential misspellings to make the cut. 'Dissention' is the alternative spelling listed in the dictionary, but what else can you do with this one? It's like *Prophecy* and *Judgment* all over again!

"Ah, for the glory days of *Mercadian Masques* or *Odyssey*. Now those could really make people look ridiculous on message boards! And it's not just the fans who get to join in the fun! The typeset cards for *Apocalypse* were saved under the file name 'Apocolypse,' and the company went so far as to trademark 'Nemesis.'"

December 19, 2006



Q: "What do you do when you get a concept that goes against the established design molds for reasons such as the storyline? In other words, and as an example, if the ongoing storyline provided for the opportunity to have an elf character who is almost entirely blue in terms of the characteristics that define each colour in **Magic**, what would you do?"

--Antonio
Mexico City, Mexico

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** Creative Director:

"Good question, Antonio. Generally speaking, I think it's good to have the occasional character (or other element) that 'plays against type,' such as the brilliant goblin engineer (**Slobad**), for example. But too many of those get old pretty quickly. In other words, for characters to be more interesting by defying expectations, you need plenty of characters that *fulfill* expectations.

"To answer your question, though, one of the perks of my job is that I can always negotiate and work with the other creative professionals who work on **Magic** to come up with solutions. If, say, the author of one of our **Magic** novels wanted a blue-aligned elf character, maybe that would be fine (depending on the context, the character's importance, whether or not s/he was slated to appear on cards). Maybe the elf's blue qualities could be adapted to green. For example, blue is intelligent, generally, whereas green is wise. Or maybe the

character should be changed from an elf to some other, more blue-friendly race. As with almost everything related to **Magic**, the decision would be made collaboratively."

December 18, 2006



Q: Is there a certain order the following things happen in when making new cards?

- The illustration.
- The effect.
- The name.
- The detail.
- The rareness of the card.

Thanks!

--Muhaimin

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, **Magic** R&D:

The normal process works like this: Design creates a card that has what they consider to be a "real" cost, text box, rarity, and (where applicable) power and toughness, although card text (the "mechanic") is usually the first thing down on paper. The card has a name, but it is usually something overly descriptive or intentionally goofy like "Ripple Shock" or "Mr. Underhill." From there, development has free reign to change any of that information as the set gets worked on. Once development has made their first few rounds of changes to the cards, the art is commissioned. Once the rest of the team has seen both the art and the card text, work begins on the names and flavor text.

So the normal order is:

- Mechanic/Abilities
- Cost/Rarity/Power and Toughness
- Art
- Name/Flavor Text

Sometimes we do things in a different order, however, such as when there is a spare piece of art lying around that we feel the need to use on a card (**Ferropede** from *Fifth Dawn* was such a card). Or sometimes we have a name we want to use (like "**Lovisa Coldeyes**" from *Coldsnap*) and design the entire card around it. But those are rare cases.

December 15, 2006



Q: I have a question: Why do cards refer to themselves by full name and not by "this"? I think it would be much clearer and would make a rule unnecessary. For example, "Your opponents can't play nonland cards with the same name as a card removed from the game with **Circu, Dimir Lobotomist**" means that if you play another **Circu, Dimir Lobotomist** (say, with **Mirror Gallery**), he would also prevent opponents from playing cards removed with the previous one. That is, if there weren't that rule that said otherwise. If it just said, "Your opponents can't play nonland cards with the same name as a card removed from the game with this," it could not be interpreted otherwise. The rule could be removed, and the text would be a lot shorter (leaving more room for flavor text). Why don't you use "this" instead?

--Jurgen

Antwerp, Belgium

A: From **Del Laugel**, senior **Magic** editor:

What a bizarre card to choose as an example! Look at the text on this guy:

Circu, Dimir Lobotomist



Legendary Creature - Human Wizard

2/3

Whenever you play a blue spell, remove the top card of target library from the game.

Whenever you play a black spell, remove the top card of target library from the game.

Your opponents can't play nonland cards with the same name as a card removed from the game with **Circu, Dimir Lobotomist**.

Circu is the one and only card in the multiverse that targets a game zone. Why? Because saying "target library" rather than "target player's library" saved two lines on the card. Brian Schneider told me that **Circu** was a cool enough card to be worthy of such an unusual template, so we did it. I even shortened the name in the third ability to just "**Circu**" in the handoff to Typesetting, but a minor revision to the policy on minimum text size made that tweak unnecessary. "This" wouldn't have helped.

Fun fact: Ever wonder what a **Grozoith** is? It's a name that makes the card's third ability fit on a single line in English. So "this" might have given us a little more naming freedom, but not any extra room.

Back to your question. Could we lessen the influence of card names on templating and vice versa by just using "this"? We call issues like this "übertemplating." Anything that doesn't depend on a given set goes on my issues list. (The note pinned to my wall right now has five things on it.) I trot it out every time a Core set or large expansion comes around. I look at each item and consider whether the alternative template under consideration is clearly better than what we're doing. Not only that, but the alternative has to be *so much* better that it's worth inflicting the change on players!

Replacing all instances of "CARDNAME" (as it appears on the playtest cards) with "this" doesn't remove a rule. It just makes "this" into a **Magic** game term. Unless it's followed by "turn" Hey, check out **Shield Dancer's** ability:

☛☛: The next time target attacking creature would deal combat damage to this this turn, that creature deals that damage to itself instead.

It took me three days to get this far, given everything else I'm working on this week. I guess I'll have to do what I would if a developer asked me this question: stick "this" on my list and get back to it for "Peanut" But again, the improvement would have to be worth the upheaval of a change, and it doesn't look to me as if that's the case here.

December 14, 2006



Q: Why did you get rid of interrupts in the first place?

--Cris
Livermore, CA

A: From **Mike Turian**, **Magic** R&D:

Hi Cris,

I laughed when I got this question. I was just another **Magic** player at the time that interrupts were removed from the game. I decided to ask around the office. Matt Place and Randy Buehler (neither of whom worked at Wizards at the time) both tell me that interrupts weren't necessary once Sixth Edition rules came out.

The addition of the stack meant that cards that previously needed to be interrupts to work within the rules (**Counterspell**, **Red Elemental Blast**, etc.) now worked as instants, because instants could target other instants on the stack without needing a special timing window. There was no need for the added confusion (and a whole second set of rules) for something that worked fine without it.

Split second is a nod to the days when interrupts existed, but we put split second into *Time Spiral* not because of the rules, but instead because we felt it was cool design space to explore.

December 13, 2006



Q: It seems to me that *Ravnica* block sparked a revival in multicolor cards. After *Invasion*, *Odyssey* had only 15 across the entire block, *Onslaught* had 4, *Mirrodin* had none, *Kamigawa* had 2, and then came *Ravnica*, with 162. Then *Coldsnap* had 10, two thirds of *Odyssey* Block's total in one set, and *Time Spiral* has 27 in one set. Seems like gold cards are much more common after the influence of *Ravnica*. Is this a deliberate decision, or a coincidence?

--Alex H
Kenosha, WI

A: From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:

We like to keep the game changing. Sometimes there are a lot of thing X running around, and then at other times there aren't. It's not the case that we made a conscious decision to have exactly this many more gold cards in the sets that followed up on *Ravnica* as opposed to the sets that followed up *Invasion*. However, we try not to repeat ourselves, so the numbers you point out are indeed the consequence of a deliberate decision - it's just a decision about a general policy rather than a more specific decision.

December 12, 2006



Q: I have some questions regarding the art used on **Magic** cards.

About how large is the average painting before it's fit onto a card? How many paintings are done for a set on average, and is every painting used? What types of media are used to make the paintings? How long do the artists work on their pictures, and what are they given to work with to determine what to create? And lastly, what are the qualifications for becoming an artist who creates for **Magic: The Gathering**?

Thanks,
--Kainoa
Kailua, HI

A: From **Jeremy Jarvis**, **Magic** Art Director:

Hi Kainoa,

I'll try to knock these out for you one at a time:

1. About how large is the average painting before it's fit onto a card?

I would say the average is around 8 1/2 inches x 11 inches. That's just a guesstimated ballpark, as our freelancers are allowed to work at whatever size they see fit. In general, most illustrators work at the smallest size they can (for the sake of deadlines) weighed against the ability to achieve the level of detail and finish that is required/expected.

2. How many paintings are done for a set on average, and is every painting used?

One painting per card in the file. We are not in the habit of over-commissioning art for the sake of over-commissioning art. Now, sometimes that card file changes... cards are dropped and replacements added... or just changed enough to render the art we commissioned no longer appropriate. When this happens we have to re-commission a new and appropriate painting and the 'old' one is moved to 'The Graveyard' where it lives until we can find a new, appropriate home for it on an upcoming card. One of (what I consider) my own best paintings still haunts The Graveyard from this exact sort of card change in the *Ravnica* block.

3. What types of media are used to make the paintings?

We don't dictate how or in which medium our artists work, so long as the end result is of the quality, and look/feel, that makes **Magic** what it is. We certainly have illustrators creating card art in oil, acrylic, gouache, watercolor, the increasingly popular acrylic gouache, digital (Photoshop and Painter are usually represented), and various mixed media techniques. In years past there have even been some less traditional card art examples created with sculpture and photography.

4. How long do the artists work on their pictures?

Easy. 'Til they're done. :)

Honestly, this is as wildly varied as each piece of art created by each individual painter. Some guys/girls can crank out a top-of-the industry illustration in literally a day. It takes others 2 weeks. It depends on the artist and the image. I would say, on average, a realistic ballpark would be 3 to 5 days for a painting.

5. What are they given to work with to determine what to create?

For each card there is an art description (which is fleshed out from a card concept, which is derived from the mechanics of that given card in the file). That art description might be as general as "design us a cool flying thing that 'feels blue'" or as specific as "Show Glissa in the Razor Fields being attacked by two Ogre-Dragon hybrids. She should look capable, but the threats need to appear very real". I made that up just now... don't bother guessing the card.

For world-specific sets, there is a style guide that gives visual design parameters and examples and written world detail as a jumping-off point for the illustrators (and writers).

6. What are the qualifications for becoming an artist who creates for **Magic: The Gathering**?

The only qualification is the work. I don't care if an artist went to a pricey art school or a state college, or is a high school drop out. At the end of the day the work is either good enough, or it's not. Illustration is a competitive industry, with a lot of people fighting over a finite amount of work. The answer to your question, if I'm being honest and pulling no punches, is surgically simple: The way to get work is to be good enough to win it from someone else.

Good lord, you guys are going to force me to learn to type. :)

JJ

P.S. For any of our readers/players/fans who think they might have the chops to create original illustration for **Magic** (or any of our brands at Wizards), here is how to go about getting your work seen:

Send an email with your info and either jpegs or a link to your website to artdrop@wizards.com.

All of Wizards of the Coast's art directors use this resource to find new talent.

December 11, 2006



Q: Why is the creature type Rebel in white? Since white is the color of laws, rules, and conformity in groups, rebels seem out of place.

--Danny
Denver, CO

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, Head Designer, **Magic** R&D:

Danny,

Remember that there were two different races in *Mercadian Masques* - rebels and mercenaries. Mercenaries were looking out for themselves and thus very selfish, a black trait. The rebels were a team that were working together to take down what they thought was a corrupt empire. That felt white to us, despite the nonconformist name.

December 8, 2006



Q: "Back in the old days the colour Red had an affinity with two elements: Earth, and Fire. Earth was represented with cards like *Wall of Stone*, *Earthquake*, *Earth Elemental*, Minotaurs, Dwarves, Giants, etc. These days, Red seems to be all about goblins, fire and blowing things up: the chaotic fire side of red, while the Earth Side of the colour seems to be forsaken. Was this a conscious decision?"

--Matthijs
Arnhem, The Netherlands

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** Creative Director:

"On our own boards, in a thread I'm too lazy to dig up, some players began to polarize between the 'value' definition of the five colors and the 'elemental' definition. For example, is blue about water and air, or is it about knowledge, logic, and manipulation? Is red about earth and fire, or about passion, impulse, and rage? My answer, I think, is 70/30 in favor of the value definitions. Why? Mainly because the elemental definitions get repetitive and monotonous pretty fast, whereas the value definitions open up more options and more interesting options.

"The particular issue of red's connection to earth and stone has another aspect as well, though. Red has and will continue to have earth/stone-themed cards. But green wants to be connected to earth as well, in the soil sense. So red gives up a few of its 'earth' cards for green's sake."

December 6, 2006



Q: "I was doing a trade recently and I saw a **Plateau** with a different picture. I was told these were made during *Unlimited* but were not continued into *Revised*. I was wondering why you changed the picture and how many of them were made (as I now have one and I'm wondering how rare they are).

--Tom Cadden
Glasgow, Scotland

A: From **Elaine Chase**, **Magic** Brand Manager:

When we were getting *Revised* ready to print, the image file of the original **Plateau** was corrupted. We contacted the artist, Drew Tucker, to see if we could use the original painting to make another scan. Unfortunately, Drew couldn't locate the piece. By this time, art for the *Ice Age* lands had already been commissioned but wouldn't be needed for a while, so one of those was snagged to be the new **Plateau**. The artist for the replacement piece is actually Cornelius Brudi, although it is misattributed to Drew on the actual card. The original **Plateau** art is on *Alpha*, *Beta*, and *Unlimited* versions of the card. The second painting only appears in *Revised*.

December 5, 2006



Q: I'm curious as to R&D's thoughts on the complexity level in Standard. Between the new keywords (10 in *Ravnica* block, 2 in *Coldsnap*, 3 in *Time Spiral*), the reprinting of old ones (1 in *Coldsnap*, 8ish in *Time Spiral*), and the unprecedented sheer number of cards in the available pool, what is the concern level regarding newer players being overwhelmed by the current state of Standard?

--Gregory Krajenta
Chicago, IL

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, Lead Developer, **Magic** R&D:

While the number of keywords in Standard is higher than usual, I don't think the format is too unbearably complicated - largely as a result of our reminder text policy. Every card (with a few exceptions for wordy rares) has the basic information you need to play it printed right on it.

It's more confusing to new players, I think, to run into an ability like protection, which is understood rather than clearly defined on the cards. Figuring out what exactly these complicated but "basic" abilities do presents more of a challenge than even a large number of keywords whose reminder text spells them out clearly on the card.

That said, in less nostalgic times we probably won't have quite this many keywords in Standard at one time.

December 4, 2006



Q: What is the logic behind the "flip a coin" mechanic in **Magic**? And why does R&D keep it in play after so many sets... Do you all like it?

--Kutay

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, Head Designer, **Magic** R&D:

Kutay,

You ask if we like coin flipping. I think the real question is whether enough of the player base likes coin flipping, and the answer (according to market research and other feedback) is yes. Our job is to make cards that make the players happy. Coin flipping makes a certain segment very happy (a subset of Timmy if you're interested - we can also interest Johnny if we allow you to manipulate the flips with cards like **Krark's Thumb**). Thus, we've made the conscious choice to keep printing coin flipping cards.

What makes coin flipping a unique case is that it makes other players unhappy (the ones who don't like "luck" in the game - this group is a large subset of Spike). This is why we've made a conscious effort to keep coin flipping out of tournament play.

As far as whether we like it, I have to say that opinions in R&D run from "Absolutely!" to "##%^\$ coin flips!"

December 1, 2006



Q: How do counterspells work in the flavor world of **Magic**? Please use excruciating detail.

--Victor
New York, NY

A: From **Brady Dommermuth**, **Magic** creative director:

There isn't just one way in which spells are countered in **Magic** (mainly because that would get stale and would prevent variety in card concepts). Here are some examples of how countering can work:

- Counterspells are like the resonating frequencies of other spells, causing them to collapse under their own metaphysical 'vibrations.'
- Mages can set up ablative counterspell membranes that dissipate an incoming spell and are destroyed in the process.
- Some countering magic acts as a mana vacuum, depriving the spell of its 'fuel' before it can come to fruition.
- Other counterspells can create small, localized 'stutters' in time. The target spell fails when its casting attempts to bridge one of these minor temporal wrinkles.



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