

An introduction to the exciting world of Space: The Convergence Space Academy: Lesson One

Kelly Digges

Monday, February 26, 2007

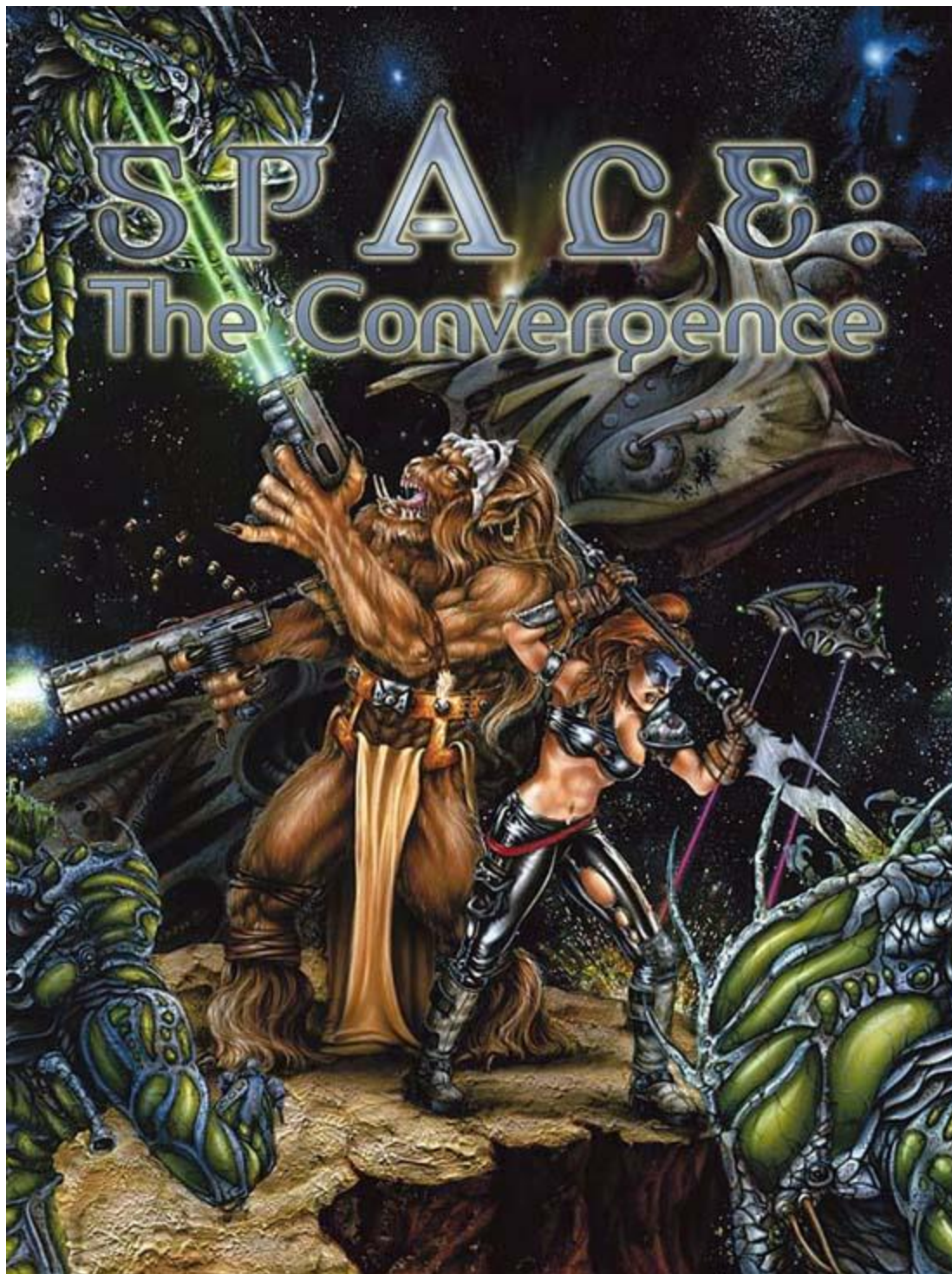
- 
- 



- [Kelly Digges Archive](#)

Deadly machines exchange laser volleys over a pockmarked battlefield... Strange creatures stalk human colonists through dark and twisted jungles... Desperate outcasts tear through sunbaked deserts in ramshackle buggies...

Welcome to the future. Welcome to **Space!**



Space: The Convergence is the trading card game dedicated to recreating titanic battles between powerful warlords vying for control of distant planets. Designed by Richard Garfield in 1993 and published by Wizards of the Coast, **Space** was the first trading card game. If you're familiar with the game, check out some of our advanced articles. If you're just getting started, you've come to the right place. Our Space Academy articles will get you up to speed.

Heavy Psi

In **Space**, you take on the role of an interplanetary warlord harnessing powerful energy (called *psi*) to teleport soldiers, creatures, and machines - *units* - to fight for you. You and your opponent each start the game with 20 *control*, and it's your goal to reduce your opponent to zero control - winning the game.

There are five types of *psi*, known as *alignments*. *Psi* is drawn from *resources*, and each type of *psi* is associated with one of the five types of *standard resource*. Moreover, each alignment has a particular philosophy and outlook that colors its view of the world and its approach to the game.

Each type of *psi* originates from a different planet in the galactic core, spread outward from there by warlords eager to harness its power. The only means of quickly traversing interstellar distances is the spacefold (or *teleport*), and *psi* is necessary for spacefold technology to function.

When a certain type of *psi* is used to teleport something, it warps and changes that thing - be it a piece of technology, an animal, or a person. Only certain types of complex electronics can be teleported without being altered somehow.

Entire worlds are distorted by *psi*, coming to resemble the world where that alignment of *psi* originates. There are hundreds of thousands of worlds spread throughout the galaxy, countless warlords struggling to dominate them - and only five types of *psi*.

The Five Alignments

Crystal. Crystal is the alignment of order, unity, structure, peace, and justice. Crystal planets are bright, clean utopias, with technology so advanced that it may be indistinguishable from magic at first glance.

Crystal *psi* emanates from Aerulon, a beautiful planet whose citizens live in harmony with their environment and with each other. Aerulon has neither crime nor hunger, having dispensed with such unpleasantness



eons ago. When outsiders visit - which is seldom - any breach of Aerulon law is dealt with harshly.

Crystal psi is drawn from *lux* - small, clear crystals that collect, store, and release sunlight. Thus, crystal psi is ultimately created by the stars, which the Aeruloni view as pure expressions of order and structure.

In game terms, crystal is the alignment that most focuses on protecting itself and its units. It can use political means to regain lost control, and although its units - like Aegis Infantry - tend to be weak, they work well together in concert.

Cryo.

named
gas at
at lower
cryo psi
below
lower
little

psi
dirty
crossed

The

entirely
drained
may not
settled
epoch
silent on this matter - and many others.



Cryo is the alignment of cold, thought, memory, manipulation, and time. It is so because it is drawn from *gelidine*, a useless room temperature but a potent energy source temperatures. Thus, planets dominated by are kept - either naturally or artificially - just the freezing point of gelidine, which is slightly than that of water. Most cryo planets have environment left to speak of. They are impersonal as well as cold, with sparks of pure energy arcing between towering spires and snows falling from steel-grey skies criss-by contrails.

source of cryo psi is Vargos, home of the enigmatic Viin. The surface of Vargos is covered by structures, its oceans long since away as drinking water. The cryophilic Viin be native to Vargos - may, indeed, have a green and living world in some forgotten and *moved it* further from its primary. They are

Gelidine is the source of cryo psi. In its gaseous form it is inert and difficult (if not impossible) to use. Once frozen, however, it stores and releases massive amounts of psi for its weight.

Cryo cards often allow you to draw more cards from your archive, take command of your opponent's units and resources, or disrupt your opponent's teleports as they play them (such as with Spacefold Mishap or Grid Disruption). Cryo units are usually weak in combat, but they can often evade enemy units and hit the opponent directly.

Shadow. Shadow psi, born of the demise of an entire planet, is the alignment of death, darkness, underhanded tactics, and illegal technologies. It is also associated with disease, greed, and ambition. Warlords who seek power regardless of cost are attracted to shadow psi. Shadow planets are twisted places where cloud cover blocks out the sun, the air is toxic to the unacclimated, and clouds of rogue nanites remake everything in their path.

Shadow psi emanates from Halakhus, the husk of a living world. Once a teeming world-city, the planet suffered an unknown calamity - believed to be a plague from beyond the galactic rim - that killed more than 95% of its population over the course of a year. Infused with shadow psi, infected with the alien plague, and altered by nanites, the remains of the dead coagulated into *necroleum* - a thick, black, oily liquid used by shadow warlords to fuel their quest for power, glory, and immortality.

Shadow cards may annihilate your opponent's units, cause him or her to lose control directly, or offer great rewards at the cost of forfeiting resources, units, or control. Shadow also excels at attacking the opponent's hand and archive directly with cards such as Cortex Dump, as well as using illegal nanite therapy to bring units back from the void (discard pile).

Pyre. Pyre is the alignment of fire, passion, violence, and anarchy. Pyre worlds are wastelands wracked by constant warfare between small tribes and gangs. Society has collapsed because no one has bothered to maintain it; technology is kept working only in the most rudimentary and necessary capacity.

Seketh, the source of pyre psi, is much like any pyre world. Once an idyllic place, it suffered centuries of warfare after its climate began to change, more and more land changing to desert as the world grew warmer and dryer. Large-scale war gave way to a brutal struggle for survival as technology regressed and wandering bands turned on one another. By the time a plentiful energy source was discovered underground in the form of *carbos* - the psychic residue of centuries of fighting and the source of pyre psi - it was too late to save Seketh from itself.



Carbos is burned as fuel on pyre worlds, its psi providing more energy than any mundane compound. Even woefully inefficient vehicles and machines function (mostly) smoothly when powered by carbos - so of course, most vehicles and machines on pyre worlds are woefully inefficient.

In the game, pyre cards excel at inflicting damage. Some pyre units, such as Inferno-Pattern Marauder and Biker Gang, have *speed*, allowing them to attack the same turn they're teleported; other pyre cards can inflict damage straight to your opponent's control.

Xeno. Xeno psi represents - and manipulates - the very building blocks of life. As humans spread throughout the galaxy, they discovered, to their wonder, that life was everywhere. They later discovered, to their horror, just how dangerous that life often was. Xeno is the alignment of life of all varieties, vicious aliens, genetic experiments, and feral instincts. Xeno worlds may take many forms, but they are invariably wild and untouched, populated by the strange and dangerous creatures that arise when life evolves and mutates unchecked.

The source of xeno psi is a planet covered in dense and forbidding jungle. It is called Prydek on star maps, but it is uninhabited by sentient life, and the origin of the name is lost. Overrun by life in every possible permutation, populated by plants, animals, fungi, and stranger things of every description, and with a gradient of competition so fierce that evolution is constant and vicious, the surface of Prydek is exceedingly hostile to sentient life. Warlords who devote themselves to xeno psi are not pledging themselves to a cause but hoping to harness a primal and dangerous force.



Xeno psi is harvested from *biolute*, a green soup of living cells that contains every possible combination of DNA. It is excreted by some plants and animals that are infused with xeno psi - though whether it is the byproduct of a biological process or the end result of one is unknown.

In game terms, xeno cards focus on powerful units such as Crushing Xenigoth, increasing psi production and resources, growth and evolution (both sudden and gradual), and annihilation of devices and augments (with cards such as Short Circuit).

Just

There

Each

Units.

vehicles
of a

unit

to
have
can't be
your



My Type

are six card types in **Space**: units, resources, augments, devices, strategies, and tactics. has its own unique properties and characteristics.

Units represent the people, creatures, and that a warlord teleports in to fight for control planet. The numbers in the bottom center represent *power* (the amount of damage the inflicts in combat, on the left) and *durability* (the amount of damage required annihilate the unit, on the right). Units may text that specifies additional abilities. A unit used to assault the turn it comes into play on side, but it can be used to intercept.



Resources. In order to play teleports, you have to have psi, and resources are the most common way of getting it. Resources represent the physical objects and places from which psi is drawn. In addition to the five standard resources - lux, gelidine, necroleum, carbos, and biolute - there are other resources that may provide more than one type of psi or more than one psi at once. When you tap a

resource for psi, add the appropriate psi to your psi cache. You spend psi from your cache to play teleports.

Although resources are the source of psi, they have no alignment themselves.

Augments. Augments are modifications to the structure of a person, place, or thing through any means. Some augments modify the battlefield, while others - called *grafts* - have the *modify* keyword, which attaches them to a particular card (or player!).



Devices. Devices represent electronic equipment that's unaligned with any particular type of psi. Psi of any alignment can be used to pay their psi cost. Some devices are device units, which function just like other units, except they are devices and have no alignment.



Strategies and **Tactics**. Strategies and Tactics are cards that are played, have an effect, and are immediately put into the void. Strategies can only be played on your turn when you could play a unit, but tactics can be played any time you have priority.



Just Getting Started

By now hopefully you know enough about **Space** to read the cards and start to see how they fit together. Next time we'll go into more depth about the flow of the game - playing resources and teleports, assaulting and intercepting, and inflicting damage on units and players. You'll be ready to dominate the galaxy in no time.

[What is 'What If?' Week?](#)

It's "What If?" Week here on magicthegathering.com, and in the spirit of *Planar Chaos*, we're presenting you with a variety of "What If?" alternate reality scenarios. Some of them, like [Mark Rosewater's column](#), explain the premise up-front; others, like this one, encourage you to figure out the "What If?" on your own. Ask Wizards and Card of the Day are in on the fun as well, containing implied "What If?" questions, but Arcana is "normal" - we didn't feel alternate reality scenarios would play well in that format. Thanks for reading, and enjoy "What If?" Week!