

From Encyclopaedia of the Ludic Sciences

Universal Cards: Competitive world-building and storytelling card game utilizing a deck constructed from individual cards taken from pre-existing games.^[1] The game arose in the poorest urban centres in the wake of the Great Collapse of the mid 2020's. In the slum markets of the barter economy that persisted well into the early 2060's children and younger adults would trade for single cards from broken up games of all sorts and improvise rules that allowed some sort of rudimentary play in the few minutes of the day not devoted to basic survival needs. During the fragile early years of the Reconstruction Era the game was formalized into the highly convoluted spectacle that enjoyed a brief period of remarkable popularity in the last decade of the twenty-first century. The overwrought complexity of the rules had by this point become such that the game was famously described as "damagingly enervating to learn and fundamentally impossible to master".^[2] This negative perception became increasingly prevalent following numerous deaths and psychological breakdowns within the upper echelons of players and a rapid decline in popularity soon followed.

Notes

1. In its final form (Altkin Rules 14th Edition) the deck is constructed by the 'cardholder' from fifty cards each from a different pre-existing game. The cards are dealt to the players as hands of five cards each. Players laydown one card in each of the five phases of a game – Mythos, Avatar, Gift, Challenge and Conflict. Each laydown must be justified by reference to rules, precedent, story coherence and any extraneous explanation the player might introduce; opposing players may challenge and also introduce further 'speculations and considerations' in relation to the card played; all justifications are allowed or disallowed by a team of judges. Victory is decided by the judges on the basis of inventiveness, dominance and subtlety. Games may last from fifteen minutes to three weeks.
2. Albertine Crank in her autobiography 'The Grandmaster Regrets' (UCpress, 2105, p.117).

Further Reading

1. Altkin, R.X., Universal Cards Tournament Rules 14th Edition, UCpress, 2097.
2. Gesundheit, G., On the Cards: Semantic Mania from the Ashes of Ultracapitalism, JCP, 2115.
3. Nemo, A.B., Everything and All at Once, KU Publications, 2102.
4. Plotkin, N.N., The Terror of Unstoppable Proliferation, Last Books, 2112.
5. Speak, I., Crazy Cards: A Short History of UC, Dangerous Books, 2109.
6. Toss, U., UC: From Favela to Fantasy, UCpress, 2102.
7. Wangler, T.T., Creativity Dethroned: The Fall of Universal Cards, ZZZ Media, 2137.