



GARY JACKSON'S UNDERSTANDING HACKMAGICK

by Gary Jackson©

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PART IV: MEGA-CAPACITY MAGIC ITEMS

Thus far in this seminar, we have covered the underlying mysteries of such magic items as intelligent swords, chained-spells, and battle magick. Now, gentle reader, let us turn our attention toward those items which are listed in the **HM-DMG** appendices under the heading, **Mega-Capacity Storage Devices (MSDs)**

Of all the **HackMagick™** items thus far presented in the rules, these items by far are among the most misunderstood (*and the most abused*) by player and GM alike.

Judging from the questions we receive here at the **HardEight** studios there seems to be a great deal of confusion concerning these items. Fortunately, the \$237 tuition you shelled out for **GameMasters Camp** has proven to be a wise investment on your part. For you are about to learn one of the best kept secrets of the **HackMaster** multiverse.

DISPEL CONFUSION

I had every intention of presenting a very detailed explanation of MSDs in **HackMaster 3rd** edition, but the inclusion of several new chapters to those books (*Chiefly, "Dwarven Metallurgy" and "Small Kingdom Administration"*) forced me to make some tough editing decisions. My editorial staff talked me into pulling the material at the last moment prior to going to press. It is a decision I soon lived to regret.

Shortly thereafter, some scurrilous individual here at our studios (*who, incidentally is no-longer in our employ and has since moved on to the illustrious job title "Assistant Deep Fryer Attendant" at a local fast food eatery*), leaked portions of my notes to several **HackMaster** newsgroups on the usenet.

Immediately, numerous "unqualified" and "inept" rule-hacks took my stolen notes and expanded upon them. Then these same morally-destitute slime-weasels 'reposted' the revised material and attempted to pass it off as my own work with the implication it was somehow 'official'. [*Incidentally, Hard Eight is offering a \$1,500 reward (in product) for any information leading back to these perpetrators. Please e-mail Antignanobro@machine.com for more information.*]

Like a nagging mother wagging her finger, I have warned both GM and Player alike, repeatedly that they should avoid the plethora of unofficial hackmaster newsgroups that infest the internet like a plague. (*not to mention the hundreds of bbs sites that have cropped up in*

the last few years). These groups have become nothing more than thieves markets where bootleg copies of **HardEight** product are electronically exchanged. Much of this 'illegal' material has been altered from the original - hopelessly contaminated with homebrewed rules.

The end result of all this unofficial material being churned out on these groups? The fragmentation of the game we all love so much. There are now dozens of different schools of thought on the nature of MSDs and just how they work - all because of the aforementioned material which is being proliferated by rule-hacks. Are you angry yet?

You should be. Those who would do harm to the game ultimately do harm to Joe Gamer. And that, dear reader, greatly offends me.

One poor player discovered my intolerance for such rule-hacks while I was running a tournament module at **GaryCon** last fall when he had the audacity to question a 'call' I had made regarding a **Bag of Hefty Capacity**.

"On what basis are you making your challenge?" I asked incredulously.

When he began quoting the illegal material I mentioned above, I was compelled to thoroughly lambaste the ignoramus without mercy and I continued to do so until he broke out in tears. (*As for the rumors that I dropped the book, they are untrue. Though I do regret a missed opportunity to do so.*)

Tears, dear reader, do not move me and I must confess it gave me great pleasure to tear his character sheet into tiny pieces and run his ass off the premises. (*all of this, mind you, took place in front of his wide-eyed peers who most certainly learned a valuable lesson by his example.*)

My only regret was that we weren't playing in some southeast Asian country where the law on whipping and flogging are a little more lax than here in the states.

I am quite sure the individuals who write and spread such material under the delusion that they are somehow 'qualified' to 'tweak the rules' are very pleased with themselves. Sadly, some Players and even a few accredited GameMasters have been duped into using this material thinking it 'harmless' to do so.

The fact of the matter is this — these rule-hacks have done a terrible disservice to **HackMaster** players and GMs everywhere. They have blurred the rules and by doing so have created chaos.

Not to worry gentle reader, my original notes on mega-capacity magic items will be published in the next revision of the HackMaster rules (4th edition - still several years away.) Then, almost as if a global "clarity spell" had been cast, the record SHALL be set straight and the rulehacks silenced.

In the meantime, stalwart GameMasters, what follows is a greatly condensed version of my notes.

A NOTE OF CAUTION

Everything presented here is 'official' HackMaster and can be used/acted upon accordingly. I caution, you however — do NOT divulge this information to your Players. Let them glean what few details they can during the normal course of play - that's fine, but guard the knowledge you are about to be given. Do not hand your players the mattock with which they will bring your campaign crashing down around you.

For there is a great risk, as will be pointed out, of player-abuse of what's presented here. With that warning in mind....

TYPES OF MEGA-STORAGE DEVICES

So what is a mega-storage device? To quote the HackMaster's GM's Guide™ an MSD is "a device/container into which other items can be placed (stored) and later retrieved. The device itself is a 'portal' into another dimension through which a nearly limitless number of items can be placed."

What this means to the player is he can throw a LOT of junk in an MSD without affecting the device's size or weight. In short it's a damn good way to haul around a lot of crap without regard to one's own encumbrance or carrying ability.

However, not all MSD's were created equal. There are two basic types of mega-storage devices in HackMaster; *Non-Dimensional Based* and *Trans-Dimensional* based.

Type I. Non-Dimensional Space.

Most of you are only familiar with the *Non-dimensional* type of MSDs. These are the simpler and most common of the two forms. As such there's really no need to devote time talking about them here other than briefly retouching on them and pointing out their differences from the Type II variety.

MSDs of this type basically represent a 'closed system'. The portal (*mouth of the bag/container*) opens up a bit of non-dimensional space which has a specific (*fixed*) volume. (i.e. *there is a limit to what you can place into it.*) The amount of available storage space in these types of MSDs varies from bag to bag but each particular bag's capacity is 'fixed' and can't be altered.

One of the main differences between Type I and Type II MSDs is that a Type I bag or container can be turned upside down and its contents will pour out. Indeed, this is the surest and quickest way to identify a bag's type.

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Type II. Trans-Dimensional Space.

An MSD of the *Trans-Dimensional* variety works on an entirely different set of principles than the *Non-Dimensional* variety and is based on an 'open system'.

An MSD of this type, when opened, creates a portal into a **specific** alternate plane of existence. The size of the bag dictates the size of the portal only. The size and dimension of the bag itself is of no import. It is the actual mouth of the bag, or the opening, which is the portal.

For purposes of this article we will call this plane, **Bag World.™** (~~So far only one trans-dimensional plane has been associated with type II mega-storage devices though it is certainly there.~~)

Every Type II MSD, when opened, creates a portal over a specific and precise point in Bag World. This point is known as a 'bag zone'. (Note: No two Type II MSDs have the same bag zone.)

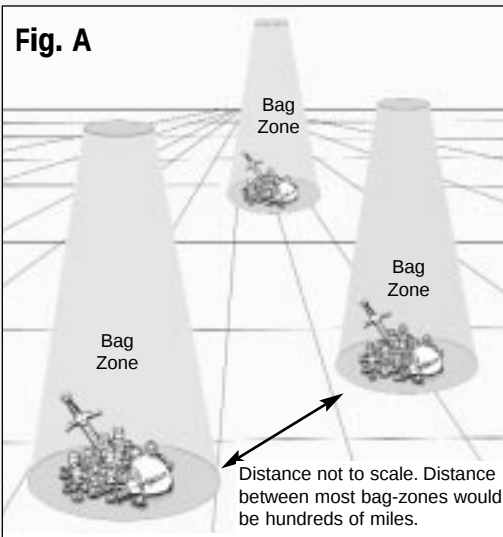


Figure A illustrates how Bag World is set up. When a Type II bag is opened, the portal (*or aperture*) opens up over its designated bag zone. The number of items placed in the bag is limited only by the owner's reach. (*more on that later*) If one were to step inside a Type II **Bag of Hefty Capacity** he would find himself standing in a world of subdued light. Without the aid of any form of artificial light, visibility is about twenty feet. Anything beyond that appears to be swallowed up by the darkness.

If the bag is opened, a bag-traveler (**Figure B**) would notice an aperture suspended in the sky. This aperture would appear to be anywhere from 40 to 100 feet in diameter, depending on the actual size of the bag. The aperture would also appear to hover anywhere from 100 to 400 feet above the surface of Bag World (*Making it impossible for the bag-traveler to step out of the bag unless aided from the outside, or if he were somehow flight-enabled*).

There is a 1:100 size difference ratio between the 'Outside' world and Bag World. Thus, if the bag traveler were six feet in height in the outside world, to an observer outside the bag peering in, he would appear to be roughly

3/4 of inch tall (.72 inches) To a bag-traveler inside the bag, the observer, peering down at him from the sky, would appear to be giant sized.

This size-reduction, (which takes place when placing an item into a Type II bag) only takes place once a person or object passes ENTIRELY through the aperture. If ANY portion of the person/object lies on the other side of an aperture no reduction in size takes place. (the same being true in reverse when removing a person/object)

For example, if you were to swing one leg into a bag of holding you could stand with one foot on the outside-world and the other leg on the surface of Bag World.

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Once swinging your other leg into the bag you would be standing in Bag world but your upper body would still be in the Outside world. To an outside observer you would appear as a normal sized person standing chest high in bag. To someone inside the bag (in Bag World) you would appear as an enormous giant - two towering legs stretching upwards and disappearing into the aperture suspended in the sky. To fully enter Bag World you would have to kneel. Once your head cleared the aperture you would instantly be reduced to Bag World dimensions.

Likewise, when you reach into a Type II bag to grab an item and pull it from the bag it remains in a reduced-stage until it fully clears the bag's mouth whereupon it would return to its full size.

Bag Zones: As I already mentioned, each Type II bag has its own 'bag zone' in Bag World over which it opens.

A bag's aperture is 'fixed' over its zone and, with the exception of a phenomena known as 'shuffling', (see below) cannot be changed.

A bag zone has no physical boundaries. It is normally defined as being the area within 'arms reach' when placing items into, or removing them from, the bag. Thus, it is possible for a person to climb into a Type II bag and travel between bag zones. Such a person would have to be well-provisioned, however. Typically, bag zones are separated by hundreds of miles (1d10x100 miles).

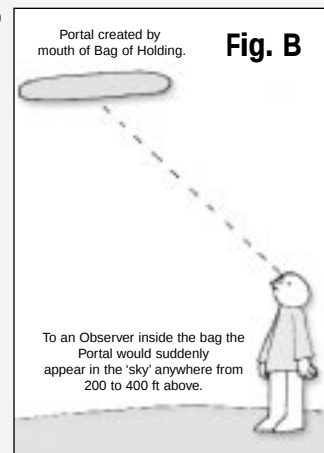
So, it is possible to enter a Type II bag and journey within Bag World until the bag zone of another bag is located (And actually loot any contents/treasure found there).

In fact, many notorious individuals in **Garweeze World**[™] have learned this secret and have exploited it to the fullest (See Bag-Raiders).

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It is also possible to enter a Type II bag, journey within Bag World to the bag zone of another bag, and (if aided of course by someone on the outside) exit Bag World from that bag. Keep in mind that the bag you entered and the bag you exited could be separated by thousands of miles in the Outside World, while in Bag World their respective bag zones could possibly be only a few hundred miles a part.



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Shuffling: Shuffling results when one Type II bag is placed into another. (Type 1 bags appear to be immune.) This causes the bag actually being placed into the other to disappear in a flash of blinding light. The second bag's aperture (into which the first was placed) immediately jumps to another random point in Bag World where a new bag zone for that particular bag is established. If the new bag zone is already assigned to yet another bag - that bag's zone is bumped and another random zone is assigned for it. This often creates a series of bumps and bag zone reassignments affecting dozens or even hundreds of different bags. (Hence the term 'shuffling').

So it is quite possible for a Type II Bag owner to lose the contents of his bag when its bag zone is bumped or shuffled. Likewise, it is possible for an owner of such a bag to open it to find his own belongings gone, only to be replaced by those of the bag which his bumped in the shuffling process.

Bag Raiders

Because of the nature of 'bag zones' and the fact that it is possible for a group, or individual, to travel between such zones, there are many enterprising individuals who have attempted to exploit what they see as an opportunity for ill-gotten gain.

The most famous of these 'bag raiders' is **Jonid CoinCrawler**. (Yes, this is 'Jonid's secret' which I alluded to in the NPC notes of **Module V7: Let's Make a Steal**.)

Jonid learned that a Type II **Sack of Enormity** was not only useful in making quick escapes but was an excellent way to traverse great distances in **Garweeze World** quickly with the aid of a **Bag Zone Map** charted by the grand-sage Maltardigun the Younger. (When a great 'shuffling' occurred in the year 875 Jonid's map was rendered useless.)

For many years Jonid raided hundreds of bag zones leaving more than one bag owner scratching his head as to where the precious contents of his bag had gone. I'm sure *

* Although the "Jackson Document" is rumored to be a 12 page document the copy we received was entirely marked out with a black magic marker after page 3. Although it's proven to be a very difficult task, we are working with certain unnamed sources to bring you the complete (and uncensored) Jackson Document.