

Scalable spells for the RMSS/RMFRP system

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Introduction

HARP introduced “scalable spells”: a game mechanic that allows the magic system to support numerous spell effects with relatively few spells¹. Participants in several topics in the ICE forums² have requested scalable spells for Rolemaster. This article suggests a possible implementation and provides some examples, in the form of converted spell lists, of how a Rolemaster Spell Law with scalable spells might appear.

Conversion guidelines

Removing spell lists altogether from the Rolemaster system would involve a lot of changes to the system. E.g., it would require rewriting how spells are learned.

A simpler change is to remove any spell slot that is obviously a scaled version of a lower level spell on the same list. These spells are instead converted into scaling options. For example, the Channeling list Light's Way contains variants of the Light spell: Light I, Light II, Light III, etc. All entries except for the basic Light spell are removed and converted into a scaling option. In this particular case, increasing the area of effect for a Light spell by 10'R typically costs around 2 PP. So a scaling option is added to Light's Way stating that for +2 PP the area of effect of a Light spell can be increased by 10'R.

This conversion often leads to a dramatic reduction in the number of spell slots on a spell list (e.g., Concussion's Ways will only contain six spells), plus a variety of scaling options. Moreover, spell-casters gain flexibility because they can now combine scaling options to generate new spell effects that were not possible using Spell Law.

Spell level

Scaling up a spell also affects the effective level of the spell. The effective level of a scaled spell is the level of the base spell plus the number of power points used for scaling the spell. For example,

¹ Admittedly, the number of spells has increased considerably with the publication of College of Magics and The Codex.

² See e.g., [here](#), [here](#) or [here](#).

consider a +5 PP scaling option for Regeneration (level 7 spell) that increases the healing rate by 1 hit/minute. Applying this option once makes this spell a level 12 spell, i.e., the spell requires 12 PPs and an SCSM is necessary if the caster is below 12th level.

Example conversions

The following spell lists provide examples of how such lists including scalable spells might appear in Rolemaster. Descriptions of these spells all appear in Spell Law.

Open Channeling lists

Barrier Law

Lvl	Spell	Area of Effect	Duration	Range
1	Light Wall	20' x 20' x 1"	C	50'
2	Airwall	10' x 10' x 3"	C	50'
4	Waterwall	10' x 10' x 1'	C	50'
5	Woodwall	10' x 20' x 2"	1 min/lvl	50'
7	Earthwall	10' x 10' x 3'	1 min/lvl	50'
8	Icewall	10' x 10' x 2'	P	50'
10	Barrier Pit	Varies	P	50'
12	Stonewall	10' x 10' x 1'	1 min/lvl	50'
25	Meld Walls	Varies	P	Touch
30	Curved Wall	Varies	Varies	50'
50	Wall of Force	10' x 20' x 1"	1 rnd/lvl	100'

Scaling Options:

- Increase duration from C to 1 min/lvl: +9 PP
- Increase duration from 1 min/lvl to P: +10 PP
- Double thickness of a wall: +10 PP

Concussion's Ways

Lvl	Spell	Area of Effect	Duration	Range
1	Healing	1 target	P	Touch
2	Frost / Burn Relief	1 target	P	Touch
3	Minor Irritation Relief	1 target	P	Touch
5	Stun Relief	1 target	P	Touch
7	Regeneration	1 target	P	Touch
10	Awakening	1 target	P	100'

Scaling Options:

- Improve Healing by 2d10 concussion hits: +3 PP
- Improve Frost / Burn Relief, per area of mild damage to be healed: +4 PP

- Improve Frost / Burn Relief, per severity (from mild to moderate to severe): +4PP
- Improve Regeneration by an additional hit/minute healed: +5 PP
- Increase Range from Touch to 100': +12 PP
- True Healing: Cure all concussion hits or all Frost / Burn damage or all Stun effects: +30 PP
- Mass Healing: Extends the effects of a healing spell to as many targets within 100' as the caster has levels: +20 PP

Detection Mastery

The only change is that the 17th level spell Perceive Power II is replaced by the following scaling options:

- Increase Area of Effect from 5'R to 50'R: +4 PP
- Increase Range from 50' to 500': +3 PP

Light's Ways

Lvl	Spell	Area of Effect	Duration	Range
1	Projected Light	50' beam	10 min/lvl	Self
2	Light	10' R	10 min/lvl	Touch
3	Aura	1 target	10 min/lvl	10'
5	Sudden Light	10' R	-	100'
7	Shock Bolt	1 target	-	100'
9	Utterlight	10' R	1 min/lvl	Touch
11	Flare	Varies	1 rnd/lvl	20'/lvl
25	Lightning Call	1 target	-	100'

Scaling Options:

- Increase Area of Effect of Light or Utterlight by 10'R or create a second 10'R area: +2 PP
- Improve DB effect of an Aura spell from +5 DB to +15 DB: +3 PP
- Improve DB effect of an Aura spell from +15 DB to +25 DB: +24 PP
- Waiting Light, delay Light by up to 24 hours, triggered by either time, movements, sound or touch: +9 PP
- Mass Light: Total radius for Light is 10'R/lvl: +17 PP
- Mass Aura: Total number of targets for Aura is caster's level: +17 PP
- Mass Utterlight: Total radius for Utterlight is 10'R/lvl: +41 PP

Magician Base lists

Fire Law

Lvl	Spell	Area of Effect	Duration	Range
1	Boil Liquid	1 cu'/lvl	C	10'
2	Warm Solid	1 cu'/lvl	24 hr	10'
3	Woodfires	1'R	-	Self

4	Wall of Fire	10' x 10' x 6'	1 rnd/lvl	100'
5	Heat Solid	1 cu'/lvl	1 min/lvl (C)	10'
6	Fire Bolt	1 target	-	100'
7	Call Flame	10' x 10' x 10'	1 rnd/lvl	10'
8	Fire Ball	10'R	-	100'
9	Ignite	5'R/lvl	P	5'/lvl
10	Circle Aflame	10'R/lvl	1 rnd/lvl	Self
15	Metal Fires	1 lb/lvl	1 rnd/lvl	100'
30	Stone Fires	300 sq'	1 rnd/lvl	100'
50	Fire Mastery	Varies	1 rnd/lvl	varies

Scaling Options:

- Increase Bolt Range: +5 PP / 200' up to 500'
- Increase cube size and range of Call Flame, per +10' range and +10' x 10' x 10' size: +3 PP
- Waiting Flame, delay Call Flame by up to 24 hours, triggered by either time, movements, sound, touch, violent actions: +6 PP
- Increase critical severity of Call Flame to B criticals: +7 PP
- Additional Bolt targets, per additional target (Directed Spells OB can only applied to one target): +5 PP
- Corner Bolt, may turn once up to 90° (OB halved in this case): +9 PP
- Following Bolt, may turn as often as necessary (OB halved if turning): +14 PP

Light Law

Lvl	Spell	Area of Effect	Duration	Range
1	Projected Light	50' beam	10 min/lvl	Self
2	Shock Bolt	1 target	-	100'
3	Light	10'R	10 min/lvl	Touch
4	Shade	100'R	10 min/lvl	Touch
5	Sudden Light	10'R	-	100'
6	Dark	10'R	10 min/lvl	Touch
10	Lightning Bolt	1 target	-	100'
13	Beacon	5 miles	1 min/lvl	Self
17	Utterlight	100'R	1 min/lvl	Touch
18	Utterdark	100'R	1 min/lvl	Touch
50	Light Mastery	Varies	1 rnd/lvl	varies

Scaling Options:

- Increase Area of Effect of Light or Dark by 10'R: +1 PP
- Increase Bolt Range: +5 PP / 200' up to 500'

- Waiting Light / Dark, delay Light or Dark by up to 24 hours, triggered by either time, movements, sound, touch, violent actions: +7 PP
- Extend Beacon by 5 miles: +6 PP
- Additional Bolt targets, per additional target (Directed Spells OB can only applied to one target): +5 PP
- Corner Bolt, may turn once up to 90° (OB halved in this case): +15 PP
- Following Bolt, may turn as often as necessary (OB halved if turning): +20 PP

More options

The examples above try to convert the existing Rolemaster spells such that the PP costs for spells in most cases do not differ significantly. But, if a new Spell Law with options for scalable spells were created, some things additional possibilities come in mind:

- Could a general formula for increasing the area of effect, range and/or duration be devised, so that it would not be necessary to create scaling options for changes to these spell parameters for every spell list? At least it should be possible to align the options and costs for some spells, e.g., why can't a Shock Bolt have additional targets like a Fire Bolt can, or why can't it go around a corner like Lightning Bolt (on the same list) can?
- New options can be added. For some spell lists it might be nice to introduce new scaling options. E.g., the range of Perceive Power on the Detection Mastery list could be scaled by 100'. On the classic Rolemaster spell lists there were not enough slots for multiple spell versions, but with scaling options this would be possible.
- Some scaling options could be adjusted. E.g., scaling an Aura spell, so that it gives +10 DB more than the base version, might cost +3 PP, but scaling it so that it grants another +10 DB might cost +24 PP (i.e., eight times as much). A scaling of perhaps +5 PP for the first +10 DB and +10 PP for the next +10 DB might make more sense.
- In HARP the elemental bolt / ball spells start with a small-effect version and can be scaled to a version where the damage is much higher. Carried over to Rolemaster this might mean that Firebolt would be on the Fire Law list at 2nd level but would do damage comparable to a Shock Bolt (of course with Heat criticals). The spell could scale from Small damage to Medium Damage (comparable to a Water Bolt) for +2 PP and from Medium Damage to Large Damage (the normal Fire Bolt table) for another +2 PP. Finally it could scale to Huge damage for another +4 PP. This could be done for every element of the Magician's Base Lists and, in a similar fashion, for the bolts / balls of other lists.

Abbreviations

HARP High Adventure Roleplaying

PP Power Point

RM Rolemaster

RMSS Rolemaster – The standard system