

[The following is a few excerpts from the introduction to the website <https://technomancy101.com> by Joshua Madara. It contains some insights and useful tools for the practice of – in the author's own words – “advanced cybermagic for beginners”]

*I etch a pattern of geometric shapes onto a stone. To the uninitiated, the shapes look mysterious and complex, but I know that when arranged correctly they will give the stone a special power, enabling it to respond to incantations in a language no human being has ever spoken. I will ask the stone questions in this language, and it will answer by showing me a vision: a world created by my spell, a world imagined within the pattern on the stone.*

—W. Daniel Hillis, *The Pattern on the Stone: The Simple Ideas That Make Computers Work*

The word technomancy is a neologism constructed from techno- (Greek τέχνη, tékhnē, “skill, art, craft”), meaning “relating to technology,” and -mancy (Greek μαντεία, manteía, “divination”), denoting “a form of divination”. Like necromancy, however, technomancy connotes more than divining with technology. It could mean technology so advanced it is indistinguishable from magic (à la Clarke's Third Law), e.g., the Technomages of Babylon 5 and the Technomancers of Mage: The Ascension. Or it could mean a magic-like ability to control technology, as with the technomancers of Shadowrun. Or it could mean a weird combination of magic and technology, such as in GURPS: Technomancer, and the Cybermages of Nightbane.

For the purposes of Technomancy 101, technomancy means performing acts of magic with modern technology, and people who practice technomancy are called technomancers. Although there are many modern technologies whose use in the magical arts may qualify as technomancy, Technomancy 101 focuses on computers and computational media because they are often implied in popular usage of the the word technomancy and related words such as technoshamanism, techgnosis, and technoetic; and because the computer is such a wonderfully versatile medium with which to explore the coniunctio of magic and machine. My intention here is to communicate a basic idea of magic that is complementary to technology in a way that renders technomancy plausible, and to that end the definition I find most appropriate comes from Jesper Sørensen's *A Cognitive Theory of Magic*: “Magic is about changing the state or essence of persons, objects, acts and events through certain special and non-trivial kinds of actions with opaque causal mediation.

High Tech, Low Magic: “Some folks may disdainfully call this approach “low magick.” However, if you compare magick to computer technology, it's the low-level coding that is the closest to the source. The higher you get, the more you are moving away from the source, altering the language to suit other purposes.” - Laura Tempest Zakroff, *Sigil Witchery: A Witch's Guide to Crafting Magick Symbols*

If numina are where magic and religion overlap, then sorcery is where magic and technology overlap. As an introduction to doing magic with computers, Technomancy 101 focuses on sorcery, and the projects are organized by the following categories (not intended as the definitive taxonomy of magic, but simply a convenient way to organize the projects), symbolized by the five classical elements and their corresponding instruments: 1. Enchantment (Fire, Wand) – eliciting intentional change in the world via occult means; 2. Divination (Water, Cup) – acquiring knowledge or making decisions via occult means; 3. Evocation (Air, Sword) – calling forth entities for divination or enchantment; 4. Invocation (Earth, Pentacle) – calling in entities for divination or enchantment; 5. Illumination (Æther, Lamp) – eliciting changes to the magician herself.

In many ways, Technomancy 101 is about space. It is especially about the intersection of cyberspace and magic space.

Cyberspace is partially a literalization of spatial metaphors about computer networks: the *world wide web*, which we navigate with a *browser* when we *go* to a *web address* or *site*. Such metaphors arise out of our embodied experiences as actors in physical spaces interacting with other bodies occupying those spaces, but they become their own things conceptually and, to some extent, somatically. (...) We play a kind of pretend when we interact with, and within, a chat room; a sort of consensual hallucination: con-sensual meaning “to sense together,” and hallucination meaning “apparent perception of an external object when no such object is actually present”. The chat room is kin to all kinds of virtual reality: it is hallucination made real. We sort of make believe also when we cast a magic circle wherein to perform an act of ritual magic. A circle may be cast by physically drawing it with some instrument, or simply visualizing it in the mind's

eye, and performing some activity to activate it.

Heretofore the discourse about doing magic with computers has been dominated by a conflation of cyberspace and the astral plane, which foregrounds an active mental or subtle body that is both metaphysically and ontologically distinct from a dormant physical or gross body, and which privileges ideal forms (including in-form-ation itself). But cyberspace—computer space – is much more than virtual reality or online spaces such as the Internet or “the cloud.” It is also: the space between a computer and its user (or rather, its inter-actor); the space wherein a computer acts on, reacts to, or interacts with the physical world; the space in which the potential of a computer, computer program, or computational media is realized; and the space wherein a computational mechanism is conjoined with its correlated discourse.

Technomancy 101 takes a different tack by focusing on interaction and interactivity, and emphasizing the performativity and materiality of artifacts whether physical or digital, over the virtuality of digital artifacts. It rejects (or at least refuses to privilege) Gnostic and Cartesian dualism and Platonic idealism, and is instead more aligned with an enactivistic philosophy of mind (the mental is always already physical).

Technomancy 101 is about acting with technology, and the programming language we use is explicitly modeled on theatre: it involves a stage on which one or more sprites act according to one or more scripts that have been prepared for them.