

GURPS: Supers, Loyd Blankenship (Steve Jackson, editor), 1989, pp. 6-7

### ***Special Effects and Side Effects***

The definition of a super-ability give its important game effects: dice damage, area affected, range, and occasionally other effects.

For each super-ability, various unique side effects can (and should) be defined. All physical abilities are assumed to have an obvious (usually visible) effect, unless No Obvious Effect is bought as an enhancement. Therefore, most force beams, missiles, etc., will be visible (or audible, or both). It's up to the player to determine whether his laser is a steady green glow, a purple flash that makes a humming noise, or whatever. Psi powers (see p. 15) have an effect that is obvious to psi users (but nobody else) ...unless the enhancement No Obvious Effect is taken.

These effects make each super unique. Two characters might have the identical Fire ability to create a jet of flame, but be entirely different. Glare uses a heat ray that shoots from his eyes, while Krakatoa can create throw [sic] goutts of molten lava. The skills, while the same in some respects, have entirely different social and environmental ramifications ... and they *look* and *feel* different.

If a side effect is a significant change to the utility of the power, it should be bought as an enhancement or limitation to that particular power. For example, if Krakatoa's lava pooled into a small puddle that could burn anyone stepping into it, there wouldn't be an additional point cost. If the lava clung to anyone hit, continuing to do damage, then it would be considered an enhancement: Continuing Damage (p. 30).

A side effect which has no particular utility is a special effect. Colors, sound effects, and the like are special effects. Similarly, the origin of a ray or blast might be eyes, hand, ring, mouth, belt-buckle, navel

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Players should have a well-thought-out description of every ability their characters possess. It will be up to the GM to determine the results of side effects; use common sense. For instance, Glare can bounce his heat-ray off a mirror, while Krakatoa's lava would just melt the mirror. But the lava would solidify into small stones or slabs of rock, which could be used in creative ways.