



*NOTE: "Thieves World" was a line of short story anthologies set in the superbly detailed fictional city of Sanctuary, written by multiple authors and curated/edited by Robert Asprin. The popular book series eventually led to the creation of a system-agnostic game supplement published by Chaosium, allowing players to venture inside the world so beautifully presented in the books, and to interact in-game with the characters they'd come to know in print.*

## **PROJECT UBI IN A (GENETICALLY-MODIFIED) NUTSHELL**

The goal of *Project Ubi* is to assemble a team of writers and worldbuilders to create a detailed and internally-consistent near-future city along curated and collaborative lines, not unlike the design of Chaosium's "Thieves World" supplement. Unlike the designers at Chaosium, however, we will develop both the game supplement and the prose works side by side, using the same sources and many of the same creatives in both mediums.

The city will be presented and published in two ways: (1) as an anthology of short stories about characters and events in a future city where ubiquitous computing is the source of much innovation, renovation and social disruption, and (2) as a GameMaster's supplement for any science fiction roleplaying game featuring future cities and ubiquitous computing. Significant content – such as important characters, places, technologies and corporate entities – will make crossover appearances in both works. Both works will be developed simultaneously, and each will give substance to the other.

In order to create the best possible product for these two related but separate purposes, the work needs to be multi-valent and multi-minded. That's why I'm forming an exclusive group of writers and RPG gamers.

Our task is (1) to imagine in detail a "Smart City" of the first world 100 years in the future, where ubiquitous computing has become commonplace, (2) to conceptualize "iconic" characters and dramatic situations for them to interact with, and (3) to write short stories about them. In preparation for the game supplement, I have performed much research already, defining the available technology, building a wire-frame sketch of the city and denoting various regions within it. Starting with these documents, members of the project team will share information, allowing them to further detail those aspects of the city that appeal to them as the work progresses. The working title is "UbiquiCity".

## **WELCOME TO UBIQUICITY**

A medium-sized metropolis of the early 22nd century, the sprawling development known colloquially as "UbiquiCity" is the latest corporate charter city to have completed the "civic upgrade" – read: modernization via pervasive computing systems and AI controllers – of public services within its central business district, along with a selected number of urban and suburban districts. The city, like the whole of the western digital culture that gave rise to it, is undergoing a renaissance – though the bounties and blessings of this new modern age aren't equally distributed.

Each year, provided the upgrades are showing positive results in regional metrics, additional funds are released for more neighborhoods and incorporated areas to be modernized. Upgrade recipient areas are selected by the mayor's office and city council, leading to a lot of zealous and occasionally ferocious competition, lobbying and politicking, all aided by the latest AI and online systems. Politics hasn't gotten any simpler; only faster.

## DISTRICTS OF UBIQUICITY

**CBD** – The central business district and political hub of the city, possessing the greatest amount of pervasive computing infrastructure. Also known as the “Downtown” district.

**ENCLAVES** – Gated suburban developments housing citizens from the middle-to-upper-class socio-economic strata. Mostly residential with some light commerce and transportation.

**CORPORATE PROJECTS** – Gated multi-family residential zones owned and managed by corporations, inhabited by low-to-mid-level workers for that particular corporation. Light commerce and transportation.

**SPRAWLS** – Low-rent zones with a mix of commercial installations, multi-family dwellings and squatters, Sprawls are built during real-estate booms, and often connect older suburbs and transportation zones with more built-up areas.

**SQUATTER TOWNS** – Unincorporated or derelict zones inhabited mostly by migrants, refugees, day laborers and unregistered persons. Sometimes culturally segregated due to language barriers or political tensions.

**THE TUBES** – Public transportation tubes connect various zones, and take traffic in and out of the city.

**THE STREETS** – The nature and availability of ubi services on the streets depends on which zone you’re in. In the CBD and Enclaves, many commuters get around in network-guided driverless AI vehicles running on sensor-equipped roads. In poorer areas, GPS systems and onboard navigators assist manual drivers.

## LOCATIONS OUTSIDE UBIQUICITY

**ARCOLOGIES** – Massive domed structures housing a full complement of city services within them, the self-sustaining Arcologies are touted by many as representing the future of civilized living, as the quality of the climate, air and general environment continues to decline. A long-established Arcology called “Namaste 7” is located a hundred kilometers from UbiqiCity.

**AQUALOGIES** – Literally Arcologies at sea, Aqualogies are generally built at connecting nodes between power-generation systems and 3d seafarms. A huge percentage of city-dwellers get a large portion of their nutrients from sealife and cunningly prepared ocean vegetation – whether they know it or not.

**THE MARS COLONY** – Having been under construction for several decades, the Mars Colony is now ready to receive its first cohorts of permanent colonists. This has created a wave of excitement amongst the younger generation of lower-class urbanites, many of whom volunteer in hope of finding a new and better life on Mars.

## UBIQUITIZING YOUR CITY

A “smart city” pairs the power of big data with system automation to help simplify city management and make it more effective. This requires SENSORS (cameras, mics, radar, laser, etc) to be embedded around the city to collect data, and ACTUATORS to use the information from those sensors to automatically manage city systems. It also requires a ubiquitous wired and wireless communications system or NETWORK, able to route data from the sensors to where it can be utilized. The sourcebook will include rules for ubiquitizing any city (real or fictional) according to its growth pattern, allowing the GM to project their hometown 100 years into the future, or create their own UbiqiCity from scratch.