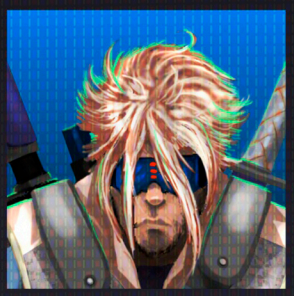
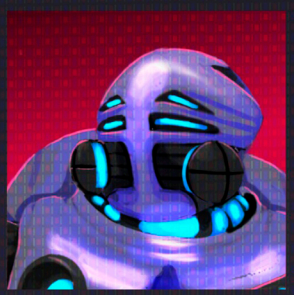
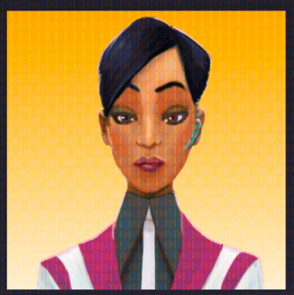
Bleeding Edge

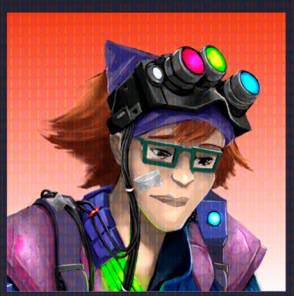
High-Tech Low-Life Role-Play

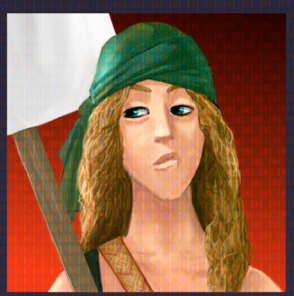
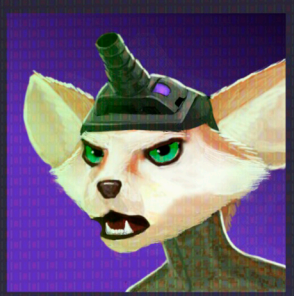
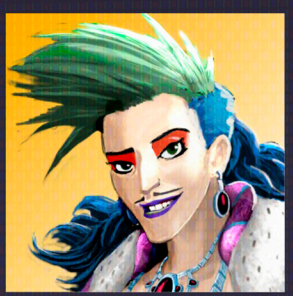








"We ended up on the bleeding edge of technology, instead of the leading edge."
– anonymous computer-systems executive, New York Times

Welcome to the Bleeding Edge

Bleeding Edge is a role-playing game about the lunatic fringe. It's about fighting the power, jamming the culture, and hacking the system. It's about small doses and big damage, about toxic holocaust and urban renewal, about the hum of desperation and the clarion call to action.

In this game, you will take on the role of the statistical anomaly, the error outside of the conformity, the narrow end of the bathtub curve. You will have close friends and even closer enemies. You may have tried working in the system, only to find it wanting. Or society may have set you up and knocked you down, so it's time to stand on your own two feet. Or you might be a fluke of the universe, and you have declared your right to be here. You and yours are the creeps, the punks, the outcasts, the hippies, the commies, the drop-outs, the opt-outs. You are the 1% of the 99%. You have looked into the abyss and you have jumped in head first. Let others stand behind the railing. You walk the bleeding edge.

"Cyberpunks are the inventors, innovative writers, techno-frontier artists, risk-taking film directors, icon-shifting composers, expressionist artists, free-agent scientists, innovative show-biz entrepreneurs, techno-creatives, computer visionaries, elegant hackers, bit-blipping Prolog adepts, special-effectives, video wizards, neurological test pilots, media explorers – all of those who boldly package and steer ideas out there where no thoughts have gone before."
– Timothy Leary, "The Cyberpunk: The Individual as Reality Pilot"

If you've NEVER played a role-playing game before...

When you play the game of *Bleeding Edge*, you will assume a role. You will make up a character that lives in the near future. You could be an ordinary human who uses their wits and their technology ... or you could be a robot with an artificial intelligence ... or even a cyborg mix in between.

One of you will be the *Host*, the director of the story. The Host tells you what's happening in the world, and to your character. Shopkeepers want to sell you things! Thieves want to steal your money! Attack robots want to melt your face! Villains want to do bad things! Victims want your help against the forces of tyranny! As you play your part, you tell the Host what you want your character to do, and the Host tells you how it happens.

Just like how authors write a story, you and the Host will have to decide if what you want to do is possible or not. Many times, you will push your character to new heights of glory, uncertain of the outcome. To represent taking a chance, *Bleeding Edge* uses *dice*, those six-sided things with the dots on them. To get things done, you will roll two, three, or more dice, and total up all the numbers. Sometimes, you will have another *bonus* to add or a *penalty* to subtract.

You can improve your character by buying *talents* – new abilities that let you do things the untalented can't do, like perform amazing stunts, or push equipment past its normal operating limits, or use advanced technology.

Some abilities can only be used a limited number of times, or they require you to do something to refresh them. When a talent has been *tapped*, you must *recharge* it before you're allowed to use it again. Each talent is different, and each one has different rules on how often it can be used.

Books, television, and movies often brush over long spreads of time, such as "Three weeks went by as Juliet searched for the missing drive." But when an action sequence starts up, suddenly everything is described in detail. "Juliet cursed her bad luck at being discovered, and she booted up her sentry drones." In *Bleeding Edge*, you will often use *narrative time* to breeze through long periods, but then switch into *combat time* to describe a fight scene blow by blow. When a fight starts, each Player will get a turn to do something – well, two somethings, actually, which are called *Actions*. There are lots of rules for what Actions do, and they're covered in the *Combat* chapter, but the main rule is that you can do two things, as long as they're *different* things.

Bleeding Edge is a game set in the near-future, so it takes place in a world of guns, bombs, and even stranger ways to kill people. While there are a lot of rules for handling combat situations, it's all too easy to take a bullet. There are talents to keep you from going down in a single hit, but many times you will have to use your wits to avoid violent confrontations.

This book may look intimidating, with all the rules, but most of this stuff only comes up in rare cases. In the end, there's only one golden rule to role-playing: ***Have fun!***

"It takes a lot of time and effort to put together a game world of any size, and one person is rarely going to be able to do it alone. Help is needed, but the help that arrives is based on altruism. ... But if you did have the time, and you did have the vision, you could, just maybe, do it. Then, perhaps, your players would be treated to an experience quite unlike any other."
– Richard Bartle,
"Even Movies Have Directors"

If you've played a COMPUTER role-playing game before...

One player acts as the *Game Host*. He or she is the moderator who decides what content will be available in the game, what rules are in effect, how those rules should be played out. As a *Player*, you declare what you want to do, and the Host tells you how it's done. The Host says what goes and what doesn't.

Bleeding Edge is a story-based game. What you did yesterday affects how folks think of you today. Many computer games have locked doors, obstructed passageways, or even invisible walls that block your progress ... and the people in the world are just props, they don't remember who you are or have any opinions about you. In *Bleeding Edge*, the only limits are your imagination. You can go anywhere and talk to anyone, making new friends—and maybe new enemies.

Bleeding Edge gives characters several special abilities, called *talents*. Some talents work all the time. Others talents can become *tapped*—they might have a cool-down timer until they can work again, or they might break and have to be repaired, etc.

Six-sided *dice* will be used to add random elements to the game. If the text says "Roll 3d6+4", then you will roll three dice, add the numbers together, and then add another four to that. For *attack rolls*, it's not just the total that matters—you also check if you rolled any doubles, or triples, or any sixes, etc. Check the rules for more information.

Bleeding Edge has two kinds of time: *narrative time* and *combat time*. Narrative time is more like a cut scene, where characters establish things that they'll do, or talk about things related to their personalities. Game time is rigidly measured out in hours, minutes, or even 6-second increments (called *rounds*). In game time, what you declare and when is very important.

Combat is turn-based, with one side taking all of their actions, and then another side taking all of theirs. Each side can take their turns in whatever order they want. Usually support characters go first, to remove debuffs and apply buffs to the fighters, and then the fighters attack.

Being hit in combat causes *stunning* – a de-buff status that lowers your defenses. It's quite possible for a character to get stun-locked and beaten up by an angry mob. To prevent stun-locking, you must be good at countering, or you must fight at range, or you must have some good leaders on your side. Any character can remove their own stun with an action, but other characters can Aid Another to remove it. Characters with strong bonuses to aid others and protect themselves make natural supports, keeping combatants in the fight.

Area-of-effect attacks, like Splashes or Blasts, cause friendly fire. Don't drop a grenade in the middle of a fight if you might catch some of your friends in the blast! Area-of-effect attacks that *Sweep* are selective – they only target enemies, so your friends aren't at risk.

Bleeding Edge has point-based advancement, where characters earn Experience and spend them to buy up their Skills and to buy new talents. Points are earned by surviving to the next Chapter, by good role-playing, and by completing the objectives of your quests.

"The essence of a role-playing game is that it is a group, cooperative experience. There is no winning or losing, but rather the value is in the experience of imagining yourself as a character in whatever genre you're involved in, whether it's a fantasy game, the Wild West, secret agents or whatever else. You get to sort of vicariously experience those things."
– Gary Gygax, New York Times

If you've played OTHER TABLETOP games before....

The master of the game is called the *Host*. Everyone else is called a *Player*. Non-player-characters are divided up into *Major Characters* (who may have any special ability that the PCs can get) and *Minor Characters* (who are denied any major abilities, and thus could be taken out with one lucky hit.)

The core engine is based on the System Reference Document, so the game has familiar attributes like Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. However, *Bleeding Edge* uses six-sided dice exclusively.

Unlike many SRD-based games, *Bleeding Edge* doesn't have classes or levels. Characters use points to buy up their attributes, or to buy *talents* that enable special abilities. Some talents work all the time. Other talents can become *tapped*– they only work once per day, or once per combat encounter, or once until they can be recharged somehow.

Bleeding Edge divides combat into rounds, and each player takes a turn. First, all the combatants on one side take their turns, and then all the combatants on the other side take their turns. On your turn, you can declare two actions, which must be different. (For example, you can Dash towards someone and then Attack them, but you couldn't declare two Attacks.) You can learn special abilities that increase the number of actions, or that let you combine actions, but the golden rule is *you can never take the same action twice on the same turn*.

Bleeding Edge doesn't use hit points. Instead, people attempt to negate damage with a *soak* roll. If they can't roll a soak that's equal to or higher than the damage, they are *incapacitated*. Many characters have special talents that allow them to soak more damage... but these talents will *tap* after use, or they'll add de-buff status, or they make something bad happen. But hey, at least you're alive!

When you are hit in combat, you become *stunned*—a de-buff that applies a –5 penalty to attacks and counters, and gives others a bonus d6 to attack you. Any character can remove their own stun with an action, but an ally can use the Aid Another action to help you rally. Characters with high Charisma and the talents of Leadership and Pacifism are strong support characters—they may have poor attack rolls, but they have great rolls to Dodge and Aid Another.

Bleeding Edge has point-based advancement, where characters earn Experience and spend it to buy up Skills and new special abilities (called *talents*). Points are earned by surviving to the next point in the story, by good role-playing, and by completing objectives.

> "Lots of people assumed I was still writing about the capital-F future. I began to tell interviewers, somewhat testily, that I believed I could write a novel set in the present, our present, then, which would have exactly the affect of my supposed futures. ... Wasn't the future now?"
> – William Gibson, Distrust That Particular Flavor

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Credits

Sanguine Productions and the Bleeding Edge Planning Committee present *Bleeding Edge.*

Written by Jason Holmgren, with Hudson Bloom, Richard Hughes, Norman Rafferty, Piercenald de Rochschild, and Friedrich Wollenhaupt.

Illustrated by Dark Aldebaran, Matt Howarth, Denis Loubet, Denis Medri, Norman Rafferty, Donnie Weaver, and Conrad Wong. Art direction by Norman Rafferty.

Bleeding Edge uses the Vermillion game engine, which was created and written by Jason Holmgren. Vermillion incorporates content from the System Reference Document 3.5, which was created and written by Wizards of the Coast.

Produced by Sanguine Productions.

Play-tested by Geardo Ramirez Armenta, Jamie Belknap, Jeremy Belknap, Denson Conn, Robert Grosso, Michael Gue, Jared Henderick-Bone, Zane Haynes, Carl Hisle, Colin Hymel, Allison June, Eliza Moreau, Van Pigtain, Michael Schiciano, Liz Skochil, Amy Stoneburner, James Stoneburner, Steve Villing, L.H. White, Word on the Wind, and the Bleeding Edge sponsors.

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"First!"
– Maikeruu

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Underwriters

Thomas "Golden Demon" Barto and Ivan J. Kvapil

Dedication

"Life is like an analogy."
– Aaron Allston



```
main( ) { printf("hello, world"); }
```
– Brian W. Kernighan, "Programming in C – A Tutorial"

The Basics

We've kept the basic game simple: roll some dice, add your numbers up, and hit your target. The world of *Bleeding Edge* is going to be complicated enough, with its money, laws, and technology, that you don't want a lot of game getting in the way.

Attributes

Every character can interact with the world physically, mentally, and socially. Each character has six numeric ratings, called *attributes*, that will determine how well your character can do things. Attributes are rated from –5 to +5 (and beyond), with zero being the average for most humans.

Physical Attributes

These attributes measure your ability to affect the physical world. All physical beings have Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution attributes.

Beings without Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution don't have a physical presence. These *virtual* beings must interface with cameras, radar, or other sensors to perceive the physical world, and need to use computer-controlled proxies to affect it.

Strength (Str)

Strength measures a character's muscle power. Characters with high Strength can punch harder, lift more weight, and throw things further than characters with low Strength.

Creatures with Strength attributes under –5 can no longer lift their own weight—they are helpless.

Dexterity (Dex)

Dexterity measures the balanced and effective interaction of movement and actions. High Dexterity characters are fast and graceful. Low Dexterity characters are slow and awkward.

Constitution (Con)

Constitution measures a character's health and wellbeing. Characters with a high Constitution will be able to endure more pain, hardship, and exertion than characters with a low Constitution.

Mental Attributes

These attributes measure your ability to think for yourself. All thinking beings have Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma attributes.

Any being with Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma has *autonomy* – that is, it can act on its own. It can react to other characters and it can make decisions for itself. Animals, simple robots, and primitive computers can have autonomy, even if they aren't conscious, thinking creatures.

Intelligence (Int)

Intelligence measures reasoning, judgment, and rationality. High Intelligence characters can solve complex math problems and can make complicated plans. Low Intelligence characters act on impulse and have poor planning skills.

Beings with low Intelligence have poor memories, or memory that is limited to a specialized field. Examples include animals or specialized apps on a computer.

Wisdom (Wis)

Wisdom measures insight, shrewdness, and creativity. High Wisdom characters are clever and imaginative. Low Wisdom characters are dull and imitative.

Beings with low Wisdom are not capable of intuition or aren't very perceptive. Many robots and computers will be totally unable to function outside their specialties.

Charisma

Charisma measures friendliness, sociability, extroverted behavior, and social willpower. High Charisma characters make friends readily and show a warm interest in their surroundings.

Beings with low Charisma are not very capable at convincing other beings to do things for them. They also lack an understanding of human behavior, which makes it easy to fool them.

Bonuses and Penalties

Bonuses add to your roll. Penalties subtract from your roll. Many bonuses and penalties will have a *descriptor*, which describes them. For example, a "–2 concealment penalty" might be negated by better lighting.

Standard bonuses stack up to +10

Unless otherwise specified in the text, bonuses with the same descriptor stack up to a limit of +10. For example, if you have a +5 assist bonus and a separate +6 assist bonus, they don't total to +11, only +10, because the bonus limit is +10. Now, if you got a +3 competence bonus, you could go ahead and add that in, because it has a different descriptor.

There's no limit to the number of *dice* that can stack. You an gain a bonus 1d6, or 2d6, or 9d6, or whatever. Just roll them all.

Unless otherwise mentioned in the text, penalties with the same descriptor also have a stacking limit of –10.

Any bonus labeled as *unlimited* can stack without limit. For example, if you have a +7 unlimited bonus and another +5 unlimited bonus, then you have a +12 unlimited bonus.

Taps, Recharges, and Costs

Some abilities work all the time. Other abilities can only be used so often—you'll have to wait for them to refresh, or you might have to do something to make them useable again.

When you *tap* an ability, you mark off one use of the ability. To get that use back, you have to *recharge* it somehow. Taps are listed as *#/Condition*, where # is the number of times that you can tap it before you run out of uses, and *Condition* is the condition on how it recharges.

For example, 1/Day means you can use the ability once a day. 2/Scene means you can use the ability up to two times in one scene. A 1/Fix ability means you can tap it once, but then something breaks and has to be fixed before you can tap the ability again.

An ability that is *tapped* is exhausted and is waiting for a recharge. Sometimes, you'll be denied special abilities until it is recharged! For example, a Cyber Shell system gives you armor all the time, at no cost. However, in an emergency, you can tap the Cyber Shell to prevent damage to your character. While the Shell is tapped, it provides no armor—it's broken!—so you will have to fix it in order to recharge it and get your armor back.

#/Guard

You may recharge one (and only one) use of this ability by declaring a Guard action in combat. **You still get the benefit of the guard action** – that is, you may remove any *stunned* status, and may claim a bonus +2 to all counters and to all dodges until your next turn. If you are not in combat situation, the ability recharges each use after about ten seconds.

When a fight starts – that is, when the Game Host announces it's time to roll initiative – you may recharge all uses of your #/Guard talents.

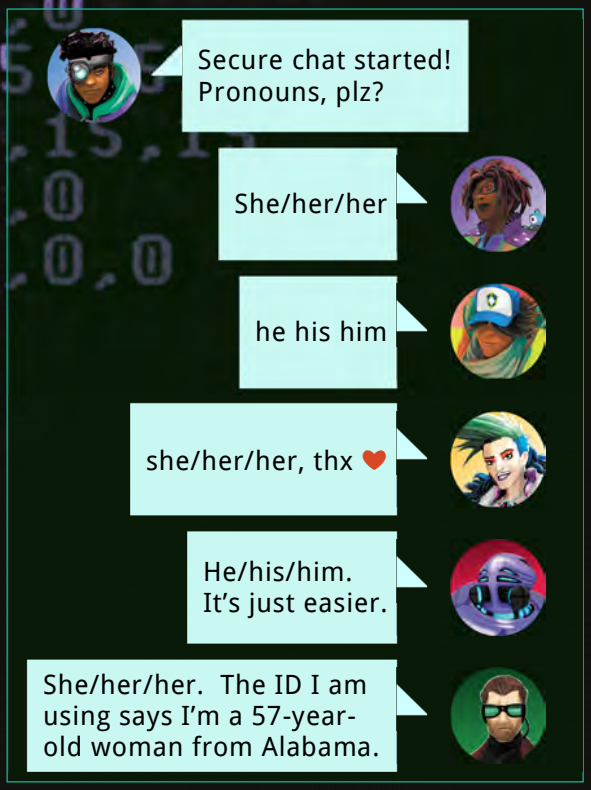
#/Hide

You may recharge one (and only one) use by declaring a Stunt to Hide action in combat to recharge it. (And yes, you still get the bonus of a hide stunt.) If you are not in a combat situation, you may recharge the ability by ducking out of sight for a minute.

When a fight starts – that is, when the Game Host announces it's time to roll initiative – you may recharge all uses of your #/Hide talents.

#/Scene

All uses of this ability recharge after a fight has ended, or in about five minutes (a "scene").



#/Heal

All uses of this ability recharge after successful first aid. The character must have access to a first-aid kit, and they must pass a test of 2d6+Int+Wis vs. 10. (Skills like Medicine will apply.) A single, successful first-aid roll recharges all of your "#/heal" talents.

#/Fix

One (and only one) use of this ability is recharged when the appropriate item is repaired.

Unless otherwise stated in the rules, a repair takes one hour and a successful skill roll vs. 15. Some equipment or cybernetics may be easier, or harder, to repair. If so, the talent will cover the details.

#/Day

All uses of this ability recharge after you've had 8 hours of sleep and some proper refreshment (a "day"). Starvation, deprivation, or other hostile conditions prevent rest and thus will prevent a recharge.

#/Special

This ability recharges under special conditions. Read the talent's description for more details

Profile

This ability may raise your Profile. (Your Profile is a measure of how much attention your character is getting, and it's not always for the best.)

Sometimes the cost will be a simple number, like +1. Other times, your Profile might increase a variable amount, from zero (nothing) or more.

Each time your Profile increases, the Game Host rolls a *Watch Check* to see what attention you might have gathered. It's almost never good.

Rolling Dice and Difficulty Class (DC)

Bleeding Edge uses six-sided dice, called "d6s". Sometimes you will be asked to roll multiple dice. For example, if the text says "roll 2d6", that means you will roll two six-sided dice, add the numbers together, and the sum is your result.

To get something done in the game, roll your dice vs. the Difficulty Class (DC).

Roll two six–sided dice and add the results together. If you roll less than the DC, you fail. If you roll is equal to or higher than the DC, you succeed.

- DC zero: A trivial task – only unusually incompetent people or people suffering severe disabilities will even need to roll against a DC this low.
- DC 5: Something anyone could do, given a few tries.
- DC 10: A task that anyone with training could do, but untrained people will have a difficult time with.
- DC 15: A formidable task, difficult even for those who have lots of training.
- DC 20: A task only the greatest experts in their field could even attempt.

Bonuses and penalties

You may get bonuses and penalties to a roll.

Bonus dice are more dice to roll. For example, if you have a bonus 1d6, then you are rolling three dice, or 3d6.

Bonus or penalty numbers modify the result. For example, if you have a +5 bonus, then you will roll your dice and add five to the result. If you have a –2 penalty, you will roll your dice and subtract 2 from the result.

If you have multiple bonuses and penalties to the same roll, add them all together. For example, if you have bonus 2d6, a +5 bonus, and a –2 penalty, then you will roll 2d6+2d6+5–2, or 4d6+3.

In some cases, you may have a *typed bonus*. For example, you might have a "+4 assist bonus". Typed bonuses can only stack up to +10, and typed penalties can only stack up to –10. Additional bonuses or penalties don't have any effect after you reach the cap. Typed bonuses may also have special rules attached to them.

Two Attributes in Rolls

A typical roll will be two dice (2d6) plus *two different* attributes.

- **Strength** – strenuous physical activity
- **Dexterity** – fine motor skills; agility
- **Constitution** – continued physical activity over time; endurance
- **Intelligence** – education; book learning; mathematics; logic; life experience
- **Wisdom** – perception; intuition; insight
- **Charisma** – force of personality; social intelligence; willpower

Examples of Rolls + Attributes

- Climbing a wall: 2d6 + Strength + Dexterity
- Chasing through a cluttered environment: 2d6 + Strength + Constitution
- Running a marathon: 2d6 + Dexterity + Constitution
- Noticing things: 2d6 + Intelligence + Wisdom
- Tossing a room to find things: 2d6 + Strength + Wisdom
- Negotiating: 2d6 + Intelligence + Charisma
- Physical intimidation: 2d6 + Strength + Charisma
- Canvassing a neighborhood for interviews: 2d6 + Constitution + Charisma
- Using a computer: 2d6 + Intelligence + Wisdom
- Building a large structure: 2d6 + Strength + Intelligence
- Picking a lock: 2d6 + Dexterity + Intelligence
- Deceiving someone: 2d6 + Wisdom + Charisma
- Sneaking: 2d6 + Dexterity + Wisdom
- Hiding for long periods: 2d6 + Dexterity + Constitution
- Drive a car: 2d6 + Dexterity + Wisdom
- Playing dumb so people will give up and leave you alone: 2d6 + Constitution + Charisma

Can't-Fail

Sometimes a character will have so many bonuses to a roll that they can't possibly fail. If a character can't fail, then the character doesn't have to roll at all.

The lowest you can roll on 2d6 is 2. So, if a character's roll of 2+modifiers equals the DC or more, the character can be assumed to succeed.

Example: Mike needs to climb a wire fence, which requires a roll of Strength & Dexterity vs. 10. Mike has a Strength of +3, a Dexterity of zero, and the "Climbing Specialty" talent which gives him a +5. The lowest he could roll would be 2+3+0+5 = 10. Mike can't fail to climb this fence, so there's no reason for his player to roll.

Contests

Sometimes, you won't be rolling against a flat difficulty, but against someone else – a *contest*.

In a simple contest, two characters both roll, and the higher roller wins. On a tie, the situation changes without either character winning decisively. For details, see "Ties Change Things" below.

Choosing Attributes for Contests

Since a roll is 2d6 + two attributes, there is often leeway in choosing what attributes to roll. The Game Host may first let the proactive character choose an appropriate attribute, and then let the other character choose a different appropriate attribute. The Game Host should only allow appropriate combinations.

Example #1: Victor attempts to catch Mike in a foot race.

Victor is the aggressive character in this contest, so the Host lets him pick the first attribute. Victor's best attribute is Dexterity, and this is a foot race where being fast and agile is important. **Victor chooses Dexterity.**

Mike is strong, so he plans to grab things to toss into Victor's path, such as pulling over shelves, knocking over trash cans, or even shoving hapless bystanders. **Mike chooses Strength.**

The contest will be **2d6 + Dexterity + Strength.** Victor will be rolling 2d6 + 3 −1, or 2d6+2. Mike will be rolling 2d6 + 0 + 3, which is 2d6+3.

If Victor can roll higher, he will win and catch Mike. If Mike can roll higher, he will get away.

Example #2: Romeo wants Juliet to give him the information he needs. Romeo wants to use his winning personality, so he chooses Charisma. Juliet is worldly and has seen Romeo's type before, so she chooses Intelligence. The contest will be 2d6 + Charisma + Intelligence.

Romeo will be rolling 2d6 + 3 −1, or 2d6+2. Juliet will be rolling 2d6 + 0 + 3, or 2d6+3. If Romeo wins the contest, Juliet will give up the information.

The attributes chosen for the contest will have other effects on how the contest is played out. Following the above example, Mike is using Strength to throw obstacles in the way, which means that Mike has made a horrible mess, which could make other people angry or upset. A test that involves Dexterity will probably be over quickly, but one that uses Constitution might be an endurance trial that takes a lot longer.

The Game Host and the Players should be creative when thinking of how the attribute affects the contest.

Example: Meeting at a local coffee shop, Delta tries to convince Mike to give up the location of his stash.

Since Delta is charming, **she chooses Charisma**. This attribute is a natural choice for a pleasant conversation.

To resist, Mike wants to choose Strength because it's his highest attribute. But how would that work? Is Mike willing to assault Delta? Delta has wisely chosen to confront Mike in a public place. While Mike could certainly use Strength, and he might even win the contest that way, he doesn't want to draw attention to himself in front of all these witnesses. The last thing he needs is the police asking questions about the big lunk who beat him some hippie at the local coffee shop.

Instead, Mike will play dumb and just wait this out. **He chooses Constitution**.

Delta and Mike will both roll 2d6 + Charisma + Constitution. If Delta wins, Mike will give up some vital clue. If Mike wins, Delta will have wasted a lot of time.

Winning by 5 or more: a boon

Winning a contest by 5 or more may net the character additional rewards. For example, if Victor rolls 11 and Mike only rolls a 6, then Victor has won by 5 or more.

Typical boons for winning can include:

- Finishing the task or contest in half the time
- Gaining some advantage over the opponent
- Getting something extra
- Finishing the task *and* rolling again to assist one ally who is lagging behind or needs help at the same task

At the discretion of the Game Host, wins of 10 or more can grant two boons, wins of 15 or more can grant three boons, etc.

Ties Change Things

When two characters tie on a contest, they should both get something, and either a new contest is called for, or both parties will have to make do.

For example, if Victor and Mike tie in their foot chase, they might cross some considerable distance with neither gaining advantage over the other by speed or strength alone. The Game Host could call for a new contest using 2d6 + Constitution + Intelligence to see who can outlast or can outwit the other one.

If Romeo and Juliet tie, the Game Host could rule that Juliet gives up the information that Romeo needs, but Romeo also slips up and reveals a secret to Juliet, in the process.

Skilled Rolls

If a character has the right talent, they may be *skilled* at a roll.

When making a skilled roll, you have a choice: you may roll a bonus 1d6, or take 10.

- If you claim the bonus 1d6, you will roll three dice instead of two.
- If you take 10, *don't roll*. Instead, assume you did roll, and that your dice total was 10.

Example: Oscar wants to climb over a wall. The Game Host asks Oscar's player to make a roll of 2d6+Strength+Dexterity. Oscar has the "Athletics Skill" talent, which makes him skilled at climbing. Oscar's player could choose to roll 3d6+Strength+Dexterity, *or* they could choose to take 10, which would be 10+Strength+Dexterity.

Skilled characters will take 10 to perform routine tasks quickly and easily, without the need to roll.

When taking 10, you don't roll any dice at all. It doesn't matter if you have 3d6, 4d6, or 9d6... the roll still comes up 10. In case it matters, you also can't claim any bonuses for doubles, for 6s, etc.

You can't take 10 on a roll if you're suffering a die penalty. For example, if the rules say "lose 1d6", then you can't take 10: you have to roll, and you have to lose the 1d6. You can still take 10 if you have die bonuses... but sadly, because you're not rolling any dice, there won't be any bonuses. You'll have to choose between rolling lots of dice and getting a reliable 10.

In rare cases, multiple skills might apply to a roll, which is good for multiple dice. Such a character will have to choose if they want to roll 4d6 or if they want to take 10.

Example: Sierra suspects the person she's chatting with knows something important. She uses her pleasant manner and her investigative techniques to ask the right questions. The Game Host agrees that both Charm Skill and Intel Skill apply to this roll. Sierra's player will have to choose if she wants to roll 4d6 or if she wants to take 10.

Best Dice and Spare Dice

Some characters are above average – they get extra dice to roll, but they have to discard low dice. They will keep only the *best dice* – that is, the dice that roll the highest.

Some effects say they grant the character *spare dice* for a roll. A character with spare dice rolls extra dice, but must discard the lowest rolling dice until they have discarded as many as they were given.

For example, a typical roll is 2d6. If you gain one spare die, you have now have 3d6 to roll, but you will only keep the best two dice. Your roll is now *best 2 of 3d6*.

List Best Dice, Then Total Dice

A roll that says "best 3 of 5d6" means that the character rolls five dice, but they only keep the highest three. For example, if you rolled 2, 5, 6, 1, and 4, the best three are 6, 5, and 4. You would have scored a 6+5+4= 15.

Combat Rolls and Critical Effects

Sometimes, the way dice came up matters. *Combat rolls* change the way dice work.

- Some rolls can score a *critical*, a special effect on *doubles*. A double is when two of the dice in the pool come up showing the same number. For example, if you rolled 3 dice, and your dice came up 2, 2, and 5, that's one double, so that's a critical.
- Numbers showing on dice may also have combat effects. For example, when using a firearm, if any of your dice are showing a 6, you don't lose as much ammo as if you didn't. A roll of 6, 5, 1 has at least one six showing. A roll of 3, 2, 1 doesn't have any sixes showing. (Sorry, it's what on the dice that counts, not the total.)

Take–10s don't roll, so they never get critical effects

A character who takes 10 on a combat roll doesn't have any dice showing, nor do they have any doubles or the like. They don't get any benefit from rolling spare dice, either.

Taking 10 is safe and easy, but it doesn't grant any special effects, either.

You score a critical if *any* dice are pairs, not just the best

If your roll only keeps the best dice, you still score a critical if you roll *any* pairs – even on dice you don't keep! For example, on a roll that's "Best 2 of 4d6", where you roll 6, 4, 2 and 2… you only keep the two best (6 and 4)… but you still rolled a pair, so you also scored a critical!

> "FYI man, alright. You could sit at home, and do like absolutely nothing, and your name goes through like 17 computers a day. 1984? Yeah right, man. That's a typo. Orwell is here now. He's livin' large. We have no names, man. No names. We are nameless!"
> – Cereal Killer, Hackers

Assists

Characters will often work together. You can try to assist an ally while they perform a task. Declare your intent to assist before your friend rolls—the Game Host *may* let you assist after they roll, but they don't have to.

When you assist an ally, you don't need to use the same attributes, skills, and tools that your ally is using. You can assist them in whatever way makes sense. You might help someone sneak in someplace by making a loud distraction, or help them with delicate craftwork by using your business expertise to get them a good supply of materials.

The maximum total of all assist bonuses is +10. Unless otherwise specified, no more than four assistants can try to help.

When you assist, you make a roll of your own to see how effective your assistance was. Look up your die roll on the table below to see how large an assist bonus you provide.

- 4 or less: If you roll this low, you fumble and the task is ruined! What were you thinking? (If you have good odds of rolling this low, maybe you *shouldn't* assist.)
- 5–9: no assist bonus
- 10–14: assist bonus +2
- 15–19: assist bonus +3
- 20–24: assist bonus +4
- 25–29: assist bonus +5
- 30–34: assist bonus +6
- 35–39: assist bonus +7
- 40 or more: assist bonus +8

Assists from the Environment

Characters will often gain assist bonuses from more than just their allies:

- An outfit provides an assist bonus. Outfits are clothes and personal gear suited for specific activities.
- A kit provides an assist bonus. A kit is a large, cumbersome set of tools.
- Circumstances could give an assist bonus. For example, if earlier you had successfully cased out a building, the Host might award you a +2 assist bonus to chase someone within that building.

Maximum Total Assist Bonus is +10

Like all bonuses, assist bonuses stack. For example, if you have a +2 assist bonus from a friend and a +4 assist bonus from equipment, you have a total +6 bonus. However, the maximum total of all assist bonuses is +10, just like any other typed bonus.

Challenges are tests over time

Some tasks require many rolls, for lots of hard work over a long time. These rules call this task a *Challenge*.

For example, hacking a major installation could take hours. If you fall behind while monitoring your connection and spoofing your connection privileges, your actions would be noticed, and your connection terminated. In contests like these, it's not enough to be skillful once – you need *consistent* skill!

Difficulty, # of Tries, and Consequences

A Challenge is listed as a *Difficulty* you have to beat, the maximum number of *tries* that you get, and the consequences for each time you try.

If you beat the Difficulty on the first roll, you win! If you don't beat it, you get to try again.

If you don't beat the DC, you lose. (Remember – if you have Talents you can tap for a one-time skill bonus, you can use them to turn a failure in to a success.)

If you beat the Difficulty on the first roll, you win!

If you beat the DC *and* you beat the Challenge Target, you've won the Challenge in just one roll.

If you fail, you use up one try, and you suffer a consequence

For example, hacking into a government database might mean that each failed roll raises your Profile by 1.

Some tasks actually get more difficult. For example, if you're trying to swim upstream, each failure might raise the target Difficulty by 10. Challenges like this, with increased Difficulty on failures, can only be attempted by people with rolls that are high enough to out-pace the increase.

Roll again, and add your bonus from last time.

You're learning as you go: you may claim your last result as an unlimited bonus to your roll. Like all unlimited bonuses, there is no limit.

For example, with a Challenge of Difficulty 50, your first roll might be an 18. Your second roll may claim a +18 bonus.

Keep adding the last roll as a bonus to the new one. Following the above example, if you roll 13 on your next roll, you get to add the 18, for (13+18=) 31. That's still not above the difficulty of 50… but now your next roll has a +31 bonus.

Rolls take time

Each roll takes a fixed amount of time as you struggle to do whatever you're doing. By default, each try takes one hour, but consult the description of the Challenge.

One you use up all your tries, you're done

You're trying to accumulate successes faster than the Challenge can accumulate DC, in order to beat it to the Challenge Target before it can catch you.

Example 1: Romeo needs to climb up a dumpster, jump onto a fire escape, and get to the roof. This climb is described as a Challenge: Difficulty 25, 3 tries, each failure is +5 Difficulty.

Each check requires one stunt. (In real-world terms, he makes progress once every six seconds. Stunts are explained in greater detail on page 14.)

Romeo makes his first Athletics (Climbing) check. He rolls a 19. He beats the Difficulty, but not the Challenge. He has used up one try out of three. He suffers the consequences: the Difficulty increases by +5, to 30. He now claims a +19 challenge bonus to the roll.

Next round, Romeo does the Stunt again. This time, he rolls a 15. With his +19 challenge bonus, he now has a 34. That's higher than the Difficulty target of 30, so Romeo has beaten the challenge in only two tries.

Example 2: Oscar wants to hack into the πchan.net server to doctor its access logs. The system is a Challenge: Difficulty 40, three tries, each failure is +1 Profile. Each attempt takes one hour.

On his first try, Oscar rolls a 17. He beats the DC, but not the Challenge. He suffers +1 Profile and a Watch Check. He isn't immediately arrested, so he will try again. His second roll claims a +17 challenge bonus.

On his second try, Oscar rolls a 13. He adds his +17 challenge bonus, which raises his roll to 30. That's not enough to beat Difficulty 40. He suffers another +1 Profile (and another watch Check).

On his third try, Oscar only rolls a 7. With his +30 challenge bonus, he only has a 37. Oh no, that's less than the Difficulty of 40, and this is his last try! Before Oscar gives up, he taps his talent of *Bot-Net* to claim a +10 to his roll. His roll increases to 47, turning failure in to a last-ditch success.

Example 3: Juliet wants to take on the Challenge of building a courier robot from spare parts. The Difficulty of building the robot is 100, she's allowed 20 tries, and there's no consequences for failure. Each attempt is one eight-hour day of labor.

Since Juliet isn't in a hurry, and since she has the appropriate skills, Juliet decides to "take 10" instead of rolling. Her take–10 roll is 26.

Juliet breezes through the challenge. She scores 26, then (26+26=) 52, then (26+52=) 78, then (26+78=) 104. She beats the Difficulty of 100 in only four tries.

Juliet can build this robot in four days. She names it "Express".

Example 4: Delta is spending time working leads on a social network, trying to find an elusive Sri Lankan crime boss. This is a Challenge: Difficulty 45, 3 tries, each failure is +1 Profile.

On her first roll, Delta scores an 8. Her Profile goes up by 1, and the Game Host rolls a she rolls a Watch Check... which has the result "Tipoff: Rivals.". The gang boss knows she's looking for him...

Example 5: A large amount of debris has been piled in front of the exit, and angry men with guns are pursuing our heroes, so they need to clear it away. Moving this huge pile of debris is a Challenge: Difficulty 20, six tries, and each failure raises the difficulty by +5. Each try is one stunt (about six seconds).

X-Ray uses their cybernetic muscle to clear the debris. They roll a 21. That roll is good enough to bet the Challenge in a single attempt, so they clear it out in a single round.

> "It wasn't a bad set-up: six hops, a dedicated Altamont-4.1 scrubbing the IPs off the packets, with a 256-bit crypt on top. It might've kept me busy for a while, except the noob's password was the same one as his Earthland Realms account. Seriously, who does that?"
> -- Oscar

Hackers

When people think of computers, they often think of the *Hackers*, the gurus and the wizards of the digital frontier. Hackers don't read manuals, they read guides and field-books. Hackers don't use voice-systems or mice – they use keyboards and command-line interfaces.

The mid–20th century was the dawning of the Information Age. Programming a computer often required re-wiring entire sections by hand. The "hardware hackers" were the boffins who knew how to keep these mysterious things working.

First-generation computers used vacuum tubes, and second-generation computers had banks of thousands of transistors. These *mainframe* computers were so enormous and so high-maintenance that they had to be stored in special clean rooms. Multiple people would access the same computer at once, using a *terminal* device. For efficiency, software had to be developed to allow multiple programs to be run on one computer, so *time-sharing* was born. Early hackers were masters at getting the most efficiency out of these series of tubes.

In the 1960s, a space-race fueled the need for lighter, smarter computing devices. The *integrated circuit* was a computer made up of lots of parts all wired together – smaller than the transistor array, and easier to maintain, but it was still large and used much electrical power. A decade later, and the first *microprocessors* appeared on the market – an integrated circuit with its own central processing unit, all on microscopic scale, and all fully programmable. The *micro-computing revolution* was born. These smaller machines, called *personal computers* or PCs, could fit on a desktop.

With Personal Computers, the users didn't have to know how to write computer code – they could purchase *software* from various companies, and then run those programs to balance ledgers or to process business letters. It was in the software companies' best interests to keep their internal code a secret. Many hackers complained that "information wants to be free", and that the *source code* of all software should be freely available, so that problems can be fixed and security loopholes can be identified. The *open-source movement* led to some of the greatest innovations in computer technology, such as the UNIX family of operating systems, web browser designs, and peer-to-peer file sharing.

In the 1980s, personal computers were commonly available but poorly understood. News media often used the word "hacker" to refer to computer criminals, who subvert safeguards and steal identities. "True hackers" take offense at being lumped in with such malefactors – they would prefer that computer criminals be called "crackers" or "black hats".

Sample Build: Cracker

When news media wants to scare people, they misuse the word "hacker" to describe the *Cracker*, a criminal who uses computers. Crackers don't just know about back-doors, server-exploits, and other vulnerabilities of the Internet – they also know when and how to combine many tricks at once to get into the most secure systems in the world. When you live on the bleeding edge, every team can benefit from having a Cracker character.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Technician
- Computer Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Intel Skill
- Augmented Reality
- Hacking Specialty
- Social Media Specialty

Sample Build: Griphter

Why take the blame, when you can pin it on someone else? The *Griphter* uses the Internet to get away with all kinds of fraud. Griphters will create one or more false identities, all "verifiable" over the Internet, so they can convince others of their legitimacy. Then they will steal other people's information to get access to money, to places, and even to people. (Yes, they're just like a traditional grifter, but with a "ph" infix, like phishers and phreakers.) A Griphter character can help any team get past those annoying security checks that are all over the place in the Information Age.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Criminal
- Charm Skill
- Computer Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Identity Thief
- Identity Specialty
- Fast Talk Specialty

Sample Build: Hacktivist

With such mantras as "Information wants to be free", the *Hacktivist* uses their computer knowledge to further some political agenda. The Hacktivist typically fights censorship caused by oppressive governments or by greedy corporations. Some Hacktivists have other personal causes, such as sophont-rights, eco-terrorism, anti-globalization, or any other sort of agenda. A Hacktivist character brings a unique combination of technical skills, criminal skills, and social skills to any team.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Technician
- Computer Skill
- Craft Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Hacking Specialty
- Sabotage Specialty
- Social Media Specialty

Sample Build: Script Kiddie

What they lack in skill, they make up for in enthusiasm. The *Script Kiddie* knows just enough computing to be dangerous. Unlike a true cracker, the Script Kiddie is copying and pasting code from those that came before them. The Script Kiddie knows enough tricks to fool an insecure system, but they will get into serious trouble if they meet a True Programmer. A Script Kiddie character can be the wild-card that gives a team a few surprises.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Yorozuya
- Computer Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Intel Skill
- Hacking Specialty
- Bot-Net
- Young



"...Okay, so the grenade went off, and the dust is settling, and the bad guys are down. And I think, wait, that's not my ears ringing, that's the phone. So I answer it, right? And it's the CO. And he wants to know where we are, he wants us to report in. So I report in, and I tell him, it's cool, it's cool, we secured the whole freakin' building, every last room, like a boss. You'd think this guy would be happy, right? But no, this guy, this CO, he asks us to bring him the 'prisoners'. And I'm like, well, damn, why couldn't he have told us that fifteen minutes ago when some of those bastards were still alive?"
-- Mike

The Circuit

As long as there has been money, there have been people willing to accept money in return for fighting. Mercenaries have been around since the dawn of history. Why risk the deaths of your own people, when other people are willing to die for you, if the price is right?

The early 20th century created awareness of *war crimes*, the violations of military customs. International tribunals such as the *Geneva Convention* attempted to impose rules on armed conflict – no torture, no unnecessary targeting of civilians, clear definitions of "combatant" and "non-combatant", etc. While such rules-of-engagement might be some assurance to politicians, the reality of war often pushed people past these extremes. The latter half of the century was particularly troubled by *terrorism*, a philosophy that specifically shunned the idea of "proper war" with uniformed combatants fighting other uniformed combatants on clearly-marked fields of battle. Terrorists would strike against high-profile targets for maximum coverage in the media. To a terrorist, anyone and everyone could be a target, at any time. Politicians had a dual problem: they didn't want the terrorists to succeed, but they also didn't want the embarrassment of not fighting by "the rules".

The 21st century began with the rise of the *private military company*. Using the same practices as any other business, a PMC trains its own troops and then sells their services. Many governments contract work to PMCs. Mercenaries don't show up on official death tolls, so they have little political impact back at home. It's often alleged that, because mercenaries aren't "soldiers", the rules-of-convention don't apply to their activities. And extra-political groups with large amounts of cash – that is, private corporations – will sometimes hire mercenaries when it looks like bullets will work where dollars won't.

Professional soldiers-for-hire will talk about *the Circuit*, the network of private military firms, security companies, and contractors that make up the network of people who kill for a living. The term "mercenary" isn't considered politically correct, what with the United Nations ban on such activities. So, most people will call themselves "contractors" or "security", and they refer to their business colleagues as "on the Circuit."

Sample Build: Bodyguard

There's always someone out there who wants someone else dead. The *Bodyguard* is a professional minder, someone who is ready to take a bullet for someone else. Bodyguards have their work cut out for them. They will have to escort people into highly-visible areas. Because Bodyguards can't carry large weapons to social functions, they will sometimes have to deal with attackers who have much better armaments. Bodyguard characters are useful to any team that expects danger.

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Mercenary
- Evasion Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Armor Critical
- Bodyguard
- Recon

Sample Build: Contract Killer

They go by many names: accident-man, assassin, button-man, executioner, hit man, ninja … In a world where money is power, the *Contract Killer* accepts money to kill other people. Unlike some paramilitary goon, the Contract Killer works quietly. They can be anywhere, either hiding where the cameras can't see them, or in plain sight by blending in with a crowd. The elite Contract Killers find the weakness in security, and then use the best method for the job. Sometimes, it will be a sniper rifle from a rooftop, other times it means getting your hands dirty by using your bare hands. When a team has a Contract Killer, they have a ruthless ally who knows how to get things done.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Mercenary
- Evasion Skill
- Intel Skill
- Shooting Skill
- First Attack
- Low Profile Specialty
- Sabotage Specialty

Sample Build: Private Military Contractor

The modern *Private Military Contractor* (PMC) has an impressive résumé uploaded to the Internet. Some PMCs will have an impressive roster of past activities. Other PMCs will have nothing listed … but that doesn't mean they're not skilled, just that their work was done off the book. A good PMC is discreet and efficient – they do a dangerous job, quickly and cleanly, for what they're paid. Every team is going to get into trouble at some point, and a PMC character has the skills to get them out of it.

- Archetype: Strong
- Job: Mercenary
- Evasion Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Ammo Conservation
- Military Tactics
- Hurt Soak

Sample Build: Drone Pilot

Military *drones* allow armies to fight without risking their best soldiers… and without ever having to look their enemy in the eye. Whether they've left the service for good, or just on furlough, a Drone Pilot's training and augmented reality implants put them ahead of your run-of-the-mill escape artist. Any team who might need to cover ground in a hurry will benefit from a Drone Pilot.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Military
- Observation Skill
- Remote Operations Skill
- Transport Skill
- Augmented Reality
- Driver Specialty
- Pilot Specialty



"It's only a crime if they catch you."
-- Victor

Offenders

When everything is a crime, then everyone is a criminal. The 21st Century saw a rise in end-user license agreements, acceptable-use policies, and protectionism-laws that increasingly favored corporations and governments over individuals. Merely starting a computer could mean agreeing to all kinds of things. Most everyone had an illegal copy of *something* on their computer, even if it was just an MP3 of some song.

For some people, it's easier to just live the life of a criminal, rather than conform to all these laws. The *Offenders* give up on living an honest life. Some Offenders imagine themselves as smooth criminals, working to take down The Man. Others are more realistic, knowing that if they stick out too much like some bent nail, then they are sure to get pounded. Offenders have a variety of aliases in the dark reaches of the *Deep Web*, the part of the Internet that can't be found by casual web-surfing. Offenders will do all kinds of professional jobs, and sell all kinds of goods, if the money is right.

The 21st century has a number of criminal organizations, from a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds. There's not even a single term used to describe the organizations. From Latin America, *cartels* are syndicates that smuggle illegal goods across borders. From Japan, *Yakuza* are "chivalrous organizations" with international ties. From China, the slang term "*Triad*" has been applied to a variety of syndicates. And the word "*Mafia*" can refer to any number of syndicates operating out of America, Ireland, Italy, Russia, or any other nation.

Sample Build: Gangster

The stereotypical *Gangster* dresses in expensive clothing to show off their affiliation. They carry weapons openly, and they are notoriously violent at even the slightest provocation. Some Gangsters are mere poseurs who act the part, sometimes for celebrity purposes. Some Gangsters romanticize the lifestyle, imagining themselves as folk heroes. The successful Gangsters are realistic about what they do — that is, they break the law, and they are constantly in danger from law enforcement, from vigilantes, and (worst of all) other Gangsters. Any team could benefit from a Gangster, who brings combat ability, street smarts, and a light touch.

- Archetype: Strong
- Job: Criminal
- Evasion Skill
- Intel Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Black Marketer
- Streetwise Specialty
- Team Player

Sample Build: Associate

Do groups of criminals work together because they have a pecking order? Do they work together out of a sense of solidarity, an us-vs-them mentality? Or are criminals just taking advantage of what's in front of them, exploiting what they've got? How does a group of people who work against the law have their own sense of law? There's always one or more *Associates*, the criminals who join up with one organization. While the popular myth is about "joining for life", in reality an Associate can fall in and out of favor, drifting from one group to another. A good Associate is practical, efficient, and discreet – all qualities that can be useful to any team.

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Criminal
- Evasion Skill
- Intel Skill
- Negotiation Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Black Marketer
- Streetwise Specialty

Sample Build: Punk

The typical *Punk* doesn't particularly like being argumentative, aggressive, and combative… but there's really nothing they like more. A rebel against any authority figure, a Punk is proud of their outsider status. Some Punks are militant about one issue or another, but many are just young thrill-seekers who don't respect the law. Punk characters often come out of their confrontations bloody and bruised… but you should see the other guys.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Criminal
- Evasion Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Transport Skill
- Sabotage Specialty
- Streetwise Specialty
- Toughness

Sample Build: Smuggler

The global economy is full of tariffs, protectionism, import laws, and lots of red tape. The *Smuggler* specializes in getting around all that. Smugglers use the dark-nets to find the best deals, then they use their connections to get things moved under the raider. A good Smuggler character adds extra resources to any party who are up to anything less than 100% legal.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Criminal
- Deceit Skill
- Remote Operations Skill
- Transport Skill
- Pirate Marketer
- Streetwise Specialty
- Social Media Specialty

Sample Build: Thief

Shoplifter, cat-burglar, second-story person, glazer, B&E… the *Thief* goes by many names. Thieves can be excellent look-outs, they can disable security systems, and (of course) they can steal items. A good Thief character brings a variety of practical skills to any party who has to do something that's not strictly by the book.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Criminal
- Athletics Skill
- Computer Skill
- Craft Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Sabotage Specialty
- Sleight of Hand Specialty



"Turn out your pockets. Now look at your stuff. Is there anything there that is unique to you? Do you have anything there that says, 'This is mine, I made this and no one else has anything just like it'?"
-- Juliet

Makers

After the Cold War of the 20th Century ended, Europe and the United States experienced a rise in consumer spending. This "culture of consumption" contributed to increased waste, unsustainable business practices, and planned obsolescence. People would buy things, the things would get old, they would throw the things away, and then they'd buy new ones. People often defined themselves by the things they bought.

By the 21st century, a do-it-yourself movement developed, called *Makers*. Crafters, artists, engineers, and hobbyists alike wanted to celebrate the idea of making their own devices. Inexpensive computing made it easier for home-users to make prototypes, to download plans, or to talk with other Makers. The additive manufacturer — also called the *3-D printer* — can make sophisticated parts by layering materials, all from computerized designs. *Maker kits* are for the do-it-yourselfer – general-purpose devices that are easy to build, easy to code, and easy to maintain.

Spurred on by the Internet, Makers began to meet and to socialize. Some Makers work together in *hackerspaces*, where they pool their resources to work on larger projects. Some Makers have a strong interest in *robotics*, where they build and modify several remote-controlled *drones*.

Sample Build: Gearhead

A fan of cars, motorcycles, trucks, and transportation in general, the *Gearhead* is fascinated with precision and speed. Some Gearheads prefer vintage cars, while others are just interested in performance. As a character, a Gearhead is not only skilled with operating and maintaining vehicles, they will also know how to get around security systems that are embedded in modern cars, such as GPS-tracking systems that report your location to the authorities.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Laborer
- Craft Skill
- Observation Skill
- Transport Skill
- Driver Specialty
- Mechanics Specialty
- Navigation Specialty

Sample Build: Robot Jockey

Not satisfied with mere toy cars and planes, the *Robot Jockey* builds custom drones and then pilots them. Some Robot Jockeys are just enthusiasts, but others might use their drones for illicit activities. Robots can be used to spy on people, to deliver illicit goods, and (with the right modifications) to even assassinate targets. A Robot Jockey character can perform high-risk operations using their specialized drones.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Laborer
- Craft Skill
- Observation Skill
- Remote Operations Skill
- Augmented Reality
- Electronics
- Mechanics

Sample Build: Crafter

The Industrial Revolution of 20th century saw people moving out of their homes and into the factories. … But the Information Age of the 21st saw the rise of social-media, crowd-funding, micropayment-patronage, and web-based shopping. The *Crafters* of the world make their own things and sell them direct to consumers. Most Crafters make specialty items on commission, the kinds of things that only a few people would want or need. A good Crafter character is handy to have in any party that needs hands-on experience as well as a little salesmanship.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Laborer
- Charm Skill
- Craft Skill
- Computer Skill
- Electronics
- Mechanics
- Social Media Specialty

Sample Build: Jailbreaker

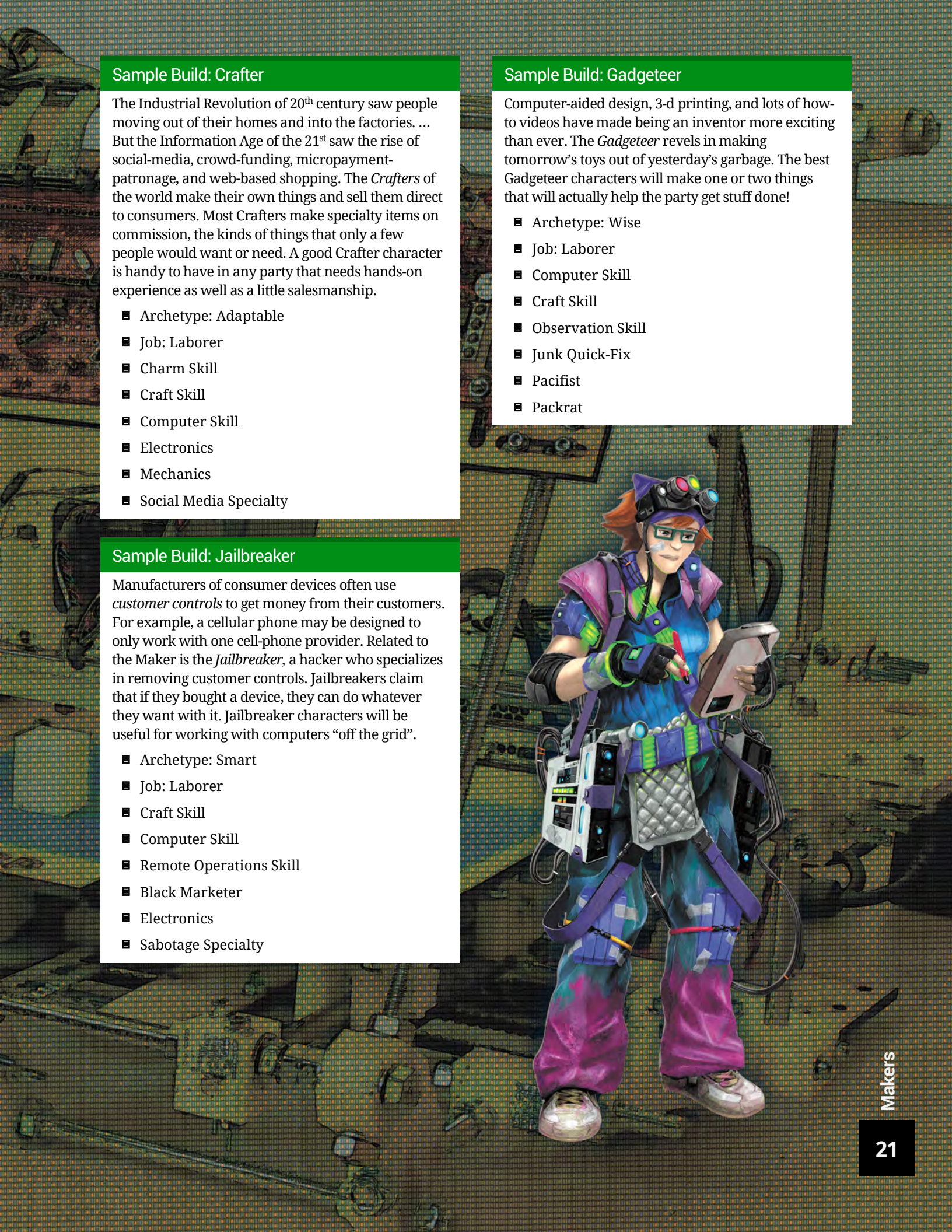
Manufacturers of consumer devices often use *customer controls* to get money from their customers. For example, a cellular phone may be designed to only work with one cell-phone provider. Related to the Maker is the *Jailbreaker,* a hacker who specializes in removing customer controls. Jailbreakers claim that if they bought a device, they can do whatever they want with it. Jailbreaker characters will be useful for working with computers "off the grid".

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Laborer
- Craft Skill
- Computer Skill
- Remote Operations Skill
- Black Marketer
- Electronics
- Sabotage Specialty

Sample Build: Gadgeteer

Computer-aided design, 3-d printing, and lots of how-to videos have made being an inventor more exciting than ever. The *Gadgeteer* revels in making tomorrow's toys out of yesterday's garbage. The best Gadgeteer characters will make one or two things that will actually help the party get stuff done!

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Laborer
- Computer Skill
- Craft Skill
- Observation Skill
- Junk Quick-Fix
- Pacifist
- Packrat



"The problem with crypto-currencies? Speculators. They mine the bits, then hold on to them, hoping they go up in value. You want a secure investment? Right now, it's diamonds. And don't listen to that 'blood' talk. All money has blood on it."
-- Alfa

Winders

Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing. The "windy winner", or *Winder*, is all about the good life. Whether they were born into riches, or whether they got rich by dubious methods or get-rich quick schemes, the Winder is interested in results.

Winders have their origins in the late 20th century, when countries like Japan and the United States enjoyed a strong economy. Many people moved from the suburban landscape and into the city, pursuing lucrative careers. People with a passion for more money and for conspicuous consumption were called young urban professionals, or *yuppies*. At the dawn of the 21st century, these economic opportunities had collapsed. Winders who enjoy urban night-life and the amenities that a city has to offer are sometimes still called Yuppies.

When an urban area has a sudden influx of Winders, the local economy may have a sudden rise in pricing. Rents may soar, and local businesses may be displaced by expensive franchises. The locals will complain about *gentrification*.

Winders like to think of themselves as trend-setters, but many of them are also jumping on bandwagons or the latest fad. People often dismiss Winders, using insults such as *hipster*, *poser*, *chav*, *gangsta*, or *Gangnam-style*.

Sample Build: Bobo

Some Winders enjoy hanging out with counter-culture types, or even criminals. Born with a silver spoon on the paper plate, these "bourgeois bohemians", or *Bobos*, are often careless thrill-seekers. They frequently get into trouble, using their high status and their deep pockets to buy their way out of trouble. Any Team can use a Bobo's resources and social skills.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Dilettante
- Charm Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Negotiation Skill
- Partying Specialty
- Unlimited Access
- Wealth

Sample Build: Anarcho-Capitalist

You are the invisible hand of the free market. To the *Anarcho-Capitalist*, everything is for sale and you are ready to buy. It's all about the bottom line, and when it's crunch-time, a good Anarcho-Capitalist makes sure things get done so that everyone gets paid.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Yorokuza
- Deceit Skill
- Intel Skill
- Transport Skill
- Finance Specialty
- Marketing Specialty
- Leadership

Sample Build: Very Important Person

Are they narcissistic egomaniacs? Or are they as important as they think they are? The Very Important Person, or *V.I.P.*, is almost never seen without their *entourage* of hangers-on. A good V.I.P. knows somebody in any city, and they're never more than hour away from their next party.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Superstar
- Charm Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Transport Skill
- Ally: (Mercenary / Observation Skill / Bodyguard)
- Gang of Irregulars
- Celebrity

Sample Build: Thought Leader

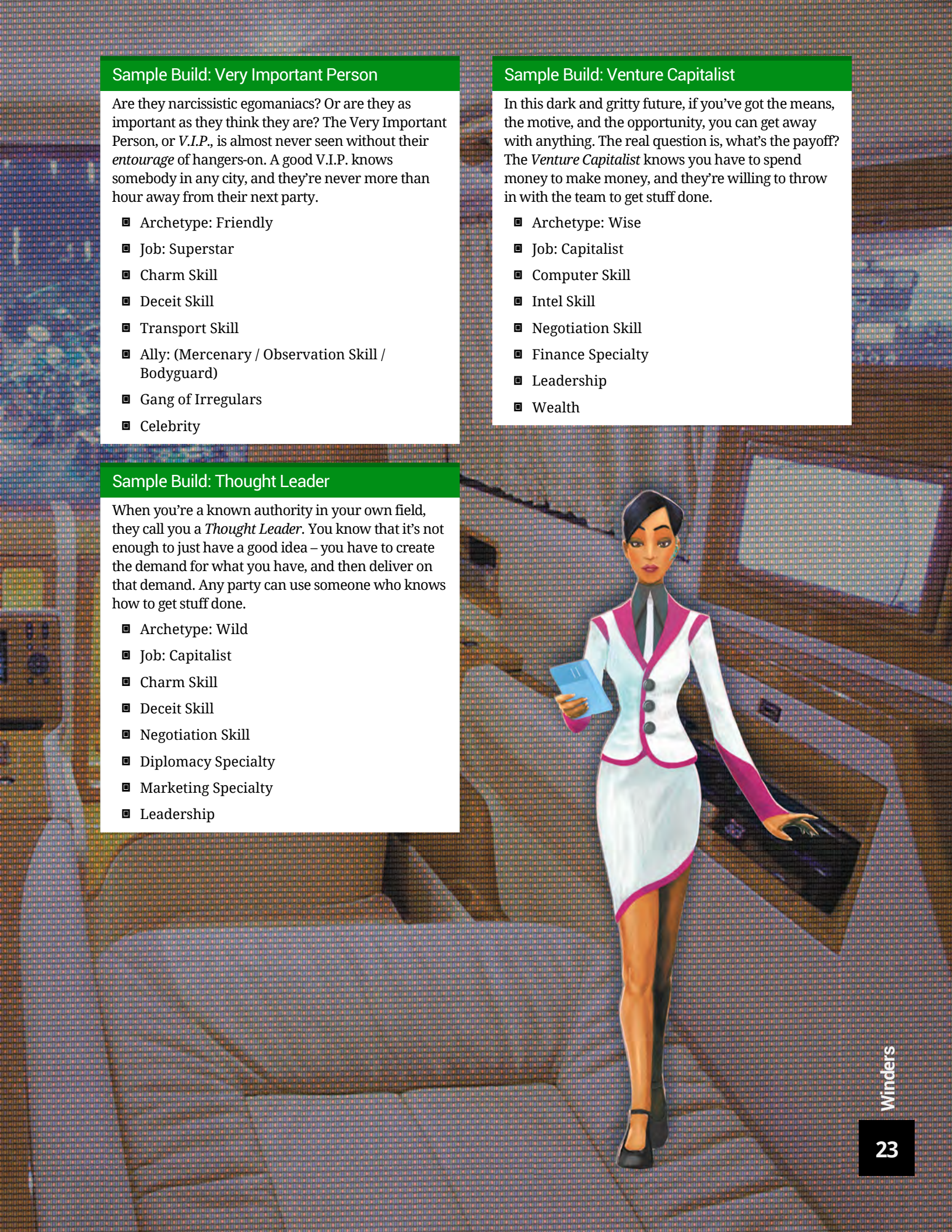
When you're a known authority in your own field, they call you a *Thought Leader*. You know that it's not enough to just have a good idea – you have to create the demand for what you have, and then deliver on that demand. Any party can use someone who knows how to get stuff done.

- Archetype: Wild
- Job: Capitalist
- Charm Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Negotiation Skill
- Diplomacy Specialty
- Marketing Specialty
- Leadership

Sample Build: Venture Capitalist

In this dark and gritty future, if you've got the means, the motive, and the opportunity, you can get away with anything. The real question is, what's the payoff? The *Venture Capitalist* knows you have to spend money to make money, and they're willing to throw in with the team to get stuff done.

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Capitalist
- Computer Skill
- Intel Skill
- Negotiation Skill
- Finance Specialty
- Leadership
- Wealth



"When you use a high-level language, you're at the mercy of everyone who worked on the code before you. All that cruft, all those includes, with all those libraries, it's just megabyte after megabyte of bloated, patchy code. If you really want to get things to work, you've got to program on bare metal."
-- Papa

Old Skoolers

Technology advances at a rapid pace. A computer from 1982 would cost 10 times as much but have only 1/100th the processing speed of a smart-phone from 2012. As computers became more advanced, they also became more complex. Planned obsolescence meant that older devices were being thrown away in favor of new ones. With new devices came long-term contracts, patents, and other tactics to control customers. Businesses wanted to make a profit, and profits meant getting cash to roll over.

Old Skoolers take a vested interest not just in the future, but also in the history of technology. Most Old Skoolers are older-generation programmers, hackers, and other iconoclasts. Some of them are rooted in nostalgia for a time when "things were better". Other Old Skoolers are politically active, eager to inform new generations that those who fail to study history are condemned to repeat it. A few elite are masters of both the old and the new – exquisite hackers who know all the undocumented back-doors, unpatched security-loopholes, and other dark secrets of this new world where no one reads source code anymore.

Sample Build: Guru

The *Guru* doesn't just know the Internet – they helped *build* the Internet. Gurus wrote many of the original programs, and then they wrote the patches to keep them running. Some Gurus can tell long, boring stories about "being there" when this software first went on-line or when that company had its initial public offering. Other Gurus barely have any social skill. What all Gurus have is a lot of computer skills.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Technician
- Computer Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Intel Skill
- Code Grinder
- Old
- Research Specialty

Sample Build: Freecycler

Despite the push to modernize equipment all over the globe, many companies and governments still use older technology, and they still need experts to maintain it all. Non-profits, charities, and Third-World nations often use last-generation equipment. Older software may lack documentation or source code, and only experts in such legacy systems can fix problems. The *Freecycler* finds old, discarded machines and fixes them right up. A Freecycler character brings some resourcefulness and computer skills to any party.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Technician
- Computer Skill
- Craft Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Electronics
- Old
- Scrounging Specialty

Sample Build: Former Agent

You'd think that after a life-time of public service that a good cop could just retire. Some people still crave the thrills when there's risks involved. Others don't know what to do with all that free time. And a few find that their pensions don't go as far as they would've liked. The *Former Agent* knows that the more things change, the more they stay the same, and their experience with the bureaucracies of the world never goes out of date.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Law Enforcement
- Computer Skill
- Intel Skill
- Observation Skill
- Expert with Law Enforcement
- Identity Thief
- Old

Sample Build: Old Soldier

You always knew you weren't the type to die in your sleep. The *Old Soldier* has enlisted so many times that they don't know what to do if they're not following orders for simple missions. The Old Soldier didn't get to be this old by making mistakes, and it's good to have someone on the team who knows a thing or two about seeing things through to the end.

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Military
- Evasion Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Intel Skill
- Danger Sense
- Old
- Veteran

Sample Build: Developer

Some people were in the right place, at the right time, and had the right skills to make it big. The *Developer* got in on the ground floor, worked on some key piece of technology, and struck it rich. Even though they are certainly not hurting for cash, a Developer character may join a team because they miss the "good ol' days" when life was full of adventure.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Capitalist
- Computer Skill
- Craft Skill
- Intel Skill
- Old
- Code Grinder
- Hacking Specialty



"Don't be surprised that the corporations sell your information to the government. That's what corporations do – they sell things. There's this huge system that keeps track of what you buy, what you say, who you're with. To them, you're just another product to be bought and sold."
-- Charlie

Blanks

The growth of the Information Age made the consolidation of personal data into big business. Statistics could be collected, computers could analyze the data, and trends could be predicted. Digital cameras, armed with facial-recognition software, could pick people off the street. Some agencies would use profiling extensively. They would have lists of people "most likely to commit a crime", sometimes even warning such people with a visit from police. This growing concern of a lack of privacy led some people to *opt out*.

The *Blanks* are the people who, for one reason or another, are not living as part of the "great beast" of information culture. They don't use credit cards or e-commerce. They don't have identification cards. They don't have property leases or credit records. Some Blanks are people who are presumed missing or dead, perhaps because of the Ring of Fire disasters or because of Mad Tuesday. Other Blanks were never on the grid in the first place – their parents never entered them into "the system".

Sample Build: Opt-Out

Just because you don't want to be monitored by the big machine doesn't mean you have to drop out of society. A walking contradiction, the *Opt-Out* lives in urban areas, but they don't have a credit trail. They are often squatters, living in abandoned buildings and using stolen electricity. They always pay cash or in barter. Many Opt-Outs are *anarchists*, with the mantra that "all property is theft", so they are just doing what they can to get by.

- Archetype: Wild
- Job: Yorozuka
- Computers Skill
- Craft Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Blank
- Low Profile Specialty
- Sabotage Specialty

Sample Build: Isolate

Unlike a simple Opt-Out Anarchist, who may have dropped out of society as a form of social protest, a religous *Isolate* refuses to participate in the information economy of the 21st century because of their spiritual beliefs. In the mid–20th century, some governments recognized the right of *conscientious objection*, where citizens could not be coerced into military service against their religion. Some Isolates take the concept even further, refusing to recognize taxes, money, capitalist consumption, or maybe anything else of earthly authority. Isolate communities practice *communism*, where everyone shares equally. Isolates practice religons as diverse as Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhism, and Jainism.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Religious
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Blank
- Increased Speed
- Pacifist

Sample Build: Morlock

Inspired by stories of urban, underground dwellers, many homeless people became *Morlocks*, people who specialize in living under large urban areas. Morlocks know how to siphon electrical power off public grids, how to preserve stocks of food and water, and how to avoid detection. A Morlock character can help any team explore the vast, undocumented wildernesses underneath the cities.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Criminal
- Athletics Skill
- Craft Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Blank
- Low Profile Specialty
- Scrounging Specialty

Sample Build: Refugee

It's a sad fact of life that tragedy strikes many people. Sometimes a disaster devastates a city, and some people never get back on their feet. A devastating war or military coup can erase an entire nation from the map. The horror of ethnic-cleansing and hate-crimes can wipe out a community overnight. A *Refugee* is any character who has no citizenship. They might be assumed dead, or maybe there were very few records of their existence in the first place, and those records have since been destroyed. Without any past, a Refugee character is free to make any future.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Transient
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Observation Skill
- Blank
- Low Profile Specialty
- Pacifist

Sample Build: Survivalist

Some Survivalists are highly religious or philosophical, as their fear of a "one-world government" convinced them to drop out of society. Others Survivalists are "preppers" who want to be self-sufficient when the world economy finally collapses. A few Survivalists are just rugged individuals who prefer what's left of the untamed wilderness. A Survivalist character brings out-door skills and practical combat skills to any team.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Rustic
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Blank
- Bow Speed-Shooting
- Wilderness Specialty



"Every leader of every nation in this world can pick up a phone and just call any other leader and have a conversation with them, in real time. If we can just all learn to work together, we could achieve anything."
-- Delta

The Noösphere

The rise of information technology in the 20th century brought the promise that people all over the world could work together on art, science, and philosophy. The philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin formulated *the Law of Complexity/Consciousness,* the idea that all matter becomes more complex, and thus more conscious. Just like the world has an atmosphere and a biosphere, it must follow that there is also a *noösphere,* the sphere of all human thought.

In the year 1989, Tim-Berners Lee wrote a proposal for a communication system that would later become *the World Wide Web*. A few years later, the Web was an international phenomenon that changed the way people used computers to share information. The Internet allows people to communicate more and faster than ever. The need to organize this communication gave rise to *social networks*, programs that allow people to talk to each other.

Sample Build: Archivist

As time moves on, information is being lost. Books and paintings can be destroyed. Film decays if not properly preserved. Even digital-storage media, such as CDs or DVDs, break down after a decade or more. The *Archivist* not only finds old media, they digitize it and then find ways to archive it so it won't be lost. With their research skills and technical savvy, an Archivist character can help any team.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Scholar
- Computers Skill
- Intel Skill
- Observation Skill
- Research Specialty
- Social Media Specialty
- Social Sciences Specialty

Sample Build: Spiritualist

Even in the future, some people still have a higher calling. The *Spiritualist* might be a priest of a common Abrahamic faith, or they may be an advocate of a New Age religion, or they might even be a transcendental philosopher. Despite their policy of non-violence – or perhaps even because of it – the Spiritualist gives guidance to any team.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Religious
- Academics Skill
- Charm Skill
- Negotiation Skill
- Leadership
- Pacifist
- Team Player

Sample Build: Networker

In the mid–20th century, the artist Andy Warhol quipped, "In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes." The *Networker* profits by getting other people together on the Internet. A Networker adds social skills to any team.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Capitalist
- Charm Skill
- Computer Skill
- Intel Skill
- Leadership
- Social Media Specialty
- Unlimited Access

Sample Build: Journalist

Sometimes called a "content-provider", the *Journalist* writes for a website, a blog, or other social-media site. Some Journalists go to exotic locations to report their experiences. Others rarely travel more than a hundred kilometers from home, and instead they blog about what they experience in the media. In the 21st Century, many Journalists are free-lancers who either write on commission for a news service, or support their own website and work for ad-revenue and tips. A Journalist character brings investigation and social skills to any party.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Creator
- Computers Skill
- Intel Skill
- Negotiation Skill
- Research Specialty
- Shadowing Specialty
- Social Sciences Specialty

Sample Build: Advocate

Also called "justice warrior", "agitator", or some title that ends with "-ist", the *Advocate* feels passionate about some social cause. That cause could be religious freedom, or an end to gender discrimination, or for some kind artistic expression, or antidisestablishmentarianism, or even many causes all at once. When working with a team, the Advocate brings their infections passion to get things done.

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Scholar
- Academics Skill
- Computer Skill
- Observation Skill
- Leadership
- Pacifist
- Social Media Specialty



"Over-fishing is depleting the oceans. Pollution is changing the climate. Strip mining is leaving the land bare, and fracking is sinking that land even lower. We are re-making the planet into something else. And that something else isn't going to be something we can live in."
-- Sierra

Greenies

In the 1970s, more people took an interest in the effect that humans were having upon the Earth. A growing *Conservation* movement warned of the dangers of deforestation, species-extinction, and pollution. These concerns gave rise to the *deep ecology* movement, a political philosophy based on the inherent worth of all living beings, regardless of whether these beings have any monetary or exploitative value. The rise of industrialization in the 1980s also increased fears of pollution, lack of sustainability, and climate change.

During the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century, several laborers revolted against their working conditions. These *Luddites* smashed machines, and their name became synonymous with anyone who opposed technological innovation. At the end of the 20th century, a manifesto of *Neo-Luddism* called for a rejection of consumerism, an end to globalism, and the veneration of deep ecology. The dawn of the 21st Century saw a world in turmoil, as unchecked industrialism all over the world used up natural resources at an unprecedented rate. The "cost offset" of pollution, carbon emissions, and other environmental effects was mired in politics. Always motivated by profit, many corporations used their money to smother any debate.

The *Greenie* is a conservationalist, an ecologist, an environmentalist, a Neo-Luddite, or just someone who is concerned about humans' effect on the Earth. Green political movements seek to reduce or to abolish any business practices that harm the environment. Greenies pursue sustainable technologies such as solar or wind power.

Sample Build: Monkey-Wrencher

Some ecological activists sabotage industrial operations to prevent their success. *Monkey-wrenching* activities can be a harmless nuisance, such as removing spark plugs from bulldozers or hacking a website. Some Monkey-Wrenchers have more severe measures, such as putting metal spikes in trees, which makes logging extremely dangerous. A Monkey-Wrencher character gives any team a good mix of outdoor skills and thief skills.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Rustic
- Animal Handling Skill
- Craft Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Life Sciences Specialty
- Sabotage Specialty
- Wilderness Specialty

Sample Build: Anarcho-Primitive

If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. While the people of the 21st century believe that technology will solve all their problems, the *Anarcho-Primitivist* seeks to live with the world and not to impose a structure upon it. A good Anarcho-Primitivist character will look for the humanity in any situation. All life has value.

- Archetype: Wild
- Job: Rustic
- Animal Handling Skill
- Craft Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Pacifist
- Life Sciences Specialty
- Wilderness Specialty

Sample Build: Nativist

Even in the 21st century, there are still people who practice an ancient way of life. Various *Nativist* societies exist all over the world. Some of them are struggling to preserve their cultural heritage, such as many American Aboriginal tribes. Others could be the last people of an old civilization being subsumed by climate change and by corporate expansion. Whether a Nativist character is either a strong traditionalist or a naïve thrill-seeker, they bring valuable physical skills and practical experience to any party.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Rustic
- Athletics Skill
- Craft Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Recon
- Team Player
- Wilderness Specialty

Sample Build: Eco-Terrorist

Determined to save Mother Earth, the *Eco-Terrorist* believes that the time for compromise is over. Eco-Terrorists target poachers, conflict-diamond miners, politicians, capitalists, and other people who exploit natural resources. Unlike a mercenary, who is in it for the money, the Eco-Terrorist believes in the greater good, in a future for all of humanity. If you want to play a character who has good combat skills and good outdoor skills, but you want a change of pace from the simple "hired gun", an Eco-Terrorist is a good choice.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Military
- Animal Handling Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Life Sciences Specialty
- Hurt Soak
- Sabotage Specialty

Sample Build: Rewilder

The most extreme of the anarcho-primitivists, the *Rewilder* gets back to nature. The ultimate Rewilder makes their own clothes, grows their own plants, and hunts for their own food. A Rewilder character may join a team, coming out of their "walk-about" phase and bringing with them a host of self-sufficiency skills.

- Archetype: Wild
- Job: Rustic
- Animal Handling Skill
- Craft Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Bow Speed-Shooting
- Life Sciences Specialty
- Wilderness Specialty



"I did shots with the cataphiles under Paris. I rolled with a climatologist at Amundsen-Scott. I photo-bombed a trade talk at La Mitad del Mundo. My next stop? Nauka, baby."
-- Romeo

Tourists

Tourists use their connections to go everywhere. If there's a method of travel, they know it. The world is a party, why not experience it.

Tourists support each other with border-crossings, secret guides to places, and fake IDs and passports. Some Tourists will take people on guided tours of ruins or abandoned places. Since some of these places, like Chernobyl or Bhopal, can be quite dangerous, Tourists often have experience with hazardous-materials gear. Government agencies dislike Tourists, who know their way around border-crossings and who often smuggle contraband.

A popular past-time with Tourists is *photo-bombing* – appearing in the background of an important picture or video. For example, a tourist might photo-bomb a street interview.

Tourists have the dual impulse to both trespass into forbidden areas and to document their travels on social media. This constant balance between anonymity and celebrity makes the Tourist a fascinating character.

Sample Build: Parkour Master

The most extreme form of urban exploration, the *Parkour Master climbs*, jumps, scales, vaults, and gets around any artificial structure. A practitioner of parkour is often called a "free-runner", or a "traceur/traceuse."

In theory, the key difference between a Parkour Master and a cat burglar is that the Parkour Master doesn't steal anything. In practice, most teams can really use someone who can go anywhere.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Athlete
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Observation Skill
- Acrobatics
- Fast Climber
- Fast Jumper

Sample Build: Builderer

Unlike a parkour artist, who specialzed in either speed or in performance, the *Builderer* specializes in height. The 20th century saw the rise of the skyscraper, and deep into the Third Millenium, buildings are just getting taller and taller.

Builderers often jump off high buildings, then they use parachutes, wingsuits, or other equipment to glide back down – a sport called *B.A.S.E.-jumping*.

In a world where cameras are watching every door and street-level entrance, a good Builderer can pass undetected and unnoticed.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Athlete
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Observation Skill
- Climbing Specialty
- Jumping Specialty
- Recon

Sample Build: Grief Tourist

The world can be a cruel place, with its natural disasters, industrial accidents, and war atrocities. A thrill-seeker of the grim variety, the *Grief Tourist* seeks out the places of the world of tragedy and despair. Some Grief Tourists are philosophers who meditate on the transitory nature of life, but others have reasons more obscure. A Grief Tourist character isn't going to be phased by the things that make other party members lose their heads.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Yorozuya
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Observation Skill
- Life Sciences Specialty
- Sabotage Specialty
- Unlimited Access

Sample Build: Geocacher

A hobby among Tourists is *Geocaching*. A small box is buried in some place, and the GPS coordinates are made available on the Internet. A Geocacher searches for the cache, and when they find it, they often add a note or other memento to mark their presence, there.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Investigator
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Observation Skill
- Life Sciences Specialty
- Navigation Specialty
- Recon

Sample Build: Urbex

A common Tourist is the *Urbex*, or "urban explorer". Urbexes specialize in finding abandoned structures and decaying buildings, such as Cold-War bomb shelters, old hospitals, or closed amusement parks. Urbexes know how to get into places they shouldn't, and how to avoid getting caught for trespassing.

- Archetype: Wild
- Job: Investigator
- Endurance Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Observation Skill
- Navigation Specialty
- Sabotage Specialty
- Unlimited Access



"All my life, I'd always felt a spiritual connection to something to something other than human. I was always angry and miserable, and I didn't know why. Now that I've transitioned, my physical form matches my spiritual one. I've never been happier."
-- Tango

Otherkin

In the late 20th century, psychiatric institutions recognized *body dysmorphic disorder (BDD)* as a chronic mental illness. Sufferers of BDD have constant, negative thoughts about their appearance. Some people felt they had been born as the wrong gender, or even as the wrong species. The development of safe, effective, and affordable *plastic surgery* gave people new options to alter their appearance. By the end of the 20th century, *gender reassignment surgery* (GRS) was less of a scientific problem and more of a social issue.

The 21st century saw the rise of the *Otherkin*, people who felt such a strong connection to becoming something other than human. Some Otherkin challenge traditional gender roles by coming *asexual* (with no gender) or *herm* (short for "hermaphrodite", having two genders) or even something more exotic. More extreme are the Otherkin who view themselves as fantastic creatures such as "elves", or "vampires", or something completely fantastic. There are also Otherkin who would alter themselves to have qualities of other species, such as wolves, foxes, tigers, etc. Species-dysmorphic Otherkin have a thriving culture on the Internet, further divided into sub-cultures who call themselves *therians, anthros, furries,* and many other names. Otherkin are likely to refuse standard gender roles and will insist on using gender-neutral pronouns like "they", or neologisms such as "zie" and "zir".

Otherkin claim a spiritual connection to an alternate identity. Social media gave rise to new communities of *neo-pagan faiths,* some of which supported the ideas of *totems* or "spirit animals". Some religions put stock in the belief of *reincarnation,* or past lives. An Otherkin may claim to have been an Atlantean, Lemurian, or Vril from some lost civilization. Or they may claim to have been an animal or spirit in a previous incarnation.

Some sought to alter themselves mechanically through cybernetics, altering their body in ways that better suited their personal body image. Otherkin may become victims of hate-crimes, because of their strange appearance or because of their strange religious beliefs.

Sample Build: Psychic

Since the dawn of time, people have struggled to understand the un-knowable. *Parapsychologists* still struggle to analyze and to understand "extra-sensory perception" or *psi*. But even in the 21st Century, no conclusive evidence of psychic powers has ever been revealed to the public. That hasn't stopped the *Psychics* from claiming that ghosts are real. Even if no one believes the Psychic character's claims of unusual powers, it's still good for a team to have someone on board who has unusually keen perception.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Religious
- Academics Skill
- Intel Skill
- Observation Skill
- Leadership
- Luck
- Recon

Sample Build: Psychonaut

Modern chemistry can produce mind-altering substances to alter and to expand the human consciousness, and the *Psychonaut* is ready to tune in, to turn on, and to drop out. Some Psychonauts are artists who use drugs to inspire their creativity. Others are spiritualists who seek enlightenment. And a few are just thrill-seekers looking for the next high. A good Psychonaut character will fear nothing, and will try anything.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Dilettante
- Intel Skill
- Medicine Skill
- Observation Skill
- Black Marketeer
- Chemistry
- Overconfidence

Sample Build: Reincarnation

Some people have never felt right in their own skin. The *Reincarnation* claims to have visions of a past life. They may even believe they are something not of this earth – perhaps they were an elf, or a dragon, or something even they can't describe. While a Reincarnation may be weird, their unusual mindset and insightful skills can make them an asset to any team who can truly appreciate their soul.

- Archetype: Wild
- Job: Yoruzuya
- Academic Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Observation Skill
- Social Media Specialty
- Leadership
- Team Player

Sample Build: Therian

Do modern people romanticize the animals of the vanishing wilderness? Are these people the modern animists, or are they co-opting the beliefs of ancient cultures? Whether the *Therian* is for real might be up for debate, but it's clear that they are serious. Therians identify strongly with their *totem*, or spirit animal. Many have tattoos, and some have undergone cosmetic surgery to resemble their personal animal. A few Therians get cybernetic or genetic alterations, slowly becoming something that's neither human nor animal. If a team can get past the strangeness, they can use the Therian's passion and team-spirit to their advantage.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Dilettante
- Charm Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Social Media Specialty
- Leadership
- Team Player

Sample Build: Transhuman

More human than human, the *Transhuman* seeks to use technology to push beyond what normal people are capable of doing. A Transhuman seeks to join the "Singularity", an inevitable convergence of technology where all minds work together. Until that happens, a Transhuman helps any team with their positive, inclusive attitude.

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Scholar
- Academic Skill
- Negotiation Skill
- Research Skill
- Cyber Brain
- Leadership
- Team Player



"We are technological beings. Machines make our lives better. Even now, you have a phone in your pocket, fillings in your mouth, sneakers on your feet. I'm just taking the next logical step. I'm enhancing myself."
-- Kilo

Nextgens

Whenever there's a new technology, there's bound to be early adopters. *Nextgen* people modify their own bodies with the technology they can afford. Many Nextgens will have cosmetic upgrades, such as bio-luminescent tattoos or gold-plated cybernetics. More extreme Nextgens will undergo genomic re-sequencing, altering their biology at a cellular level.

Many Nextgens have progressive or forward-thinking philosophies. The *extropian* philosophy believes that advances in technology will allow people to live forever. If people already modify their bodies through diet, exercise, and plastic surgery, why not go further, and use genetic engineering or bionics? Many Nextgens are shunned by society for "playing God" or otherwise violating the natural order of things. The Nextgen believes that reality is what you make it.

Nextgens are often confused with Otherkin. A Nextgen is more likely to be atheist, as they modify their body out of personal desire for self-improvement, for immortality, or out of some personal aesthetic. An Otherkin claims a spiritual or emotional connection to some other body-type. Any changes an Otherkin makes to their body will be to bring them "closer to their true form", often without regard to their longevity or their practicality.

Sample Build: Cyber-Soldier

Part human, part machine, all soldier. Maybe you asked to be made into an augmented killing machine, or maybe one too many injuries in the field have made you into the thing we see today. No matter. That's the past – the *Cyber-Soldier* is the future. Obviously, Cyber-Soldier characters bring extra muscle to any party, with their advanced weaponry and their imperviousness to typical harm.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Military
- Evasion Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Bionic Surge
- Cyber Body
- Cyber Strength

Sample Build: Performance-Enhanced

The struggle for human perfection continues. Steroids can build muscle mass, blood boosters can increase body endurance, nootropics can stimulate the brain... not to mention what a few genetic modifications can do. Some *Performance-Enhanced* people are athletes who were banned from their sports. Others are enthusiastic futurists who are always looking to increase their potential. Naturally, any character who is more human than human brings a lot to any party.

- Archetype: Adaptable
- Job: Athlete
- Athletics Skill
- GMO Skill
- Medicine Skill
- GMO Constitution
- GMO Speed
- GMO Strength

Sample Build: Posthuman

When the spirit is willing, why make do with the weakness of flesh? A brave few seek to become completely *Posthuman*, what they call "the next step in evolution," by replacing all their original flesh with cybernetics or genetic-modifications. With a level of technology that approaches the singularity, the Posthuman brings the latest technology to any team.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Technician
- Computer Skill
- Craft Skill
- Intel Skill
- Augmented Reality
- Cyber-Body
- Cyber Brain

Sample Build: Recombinant

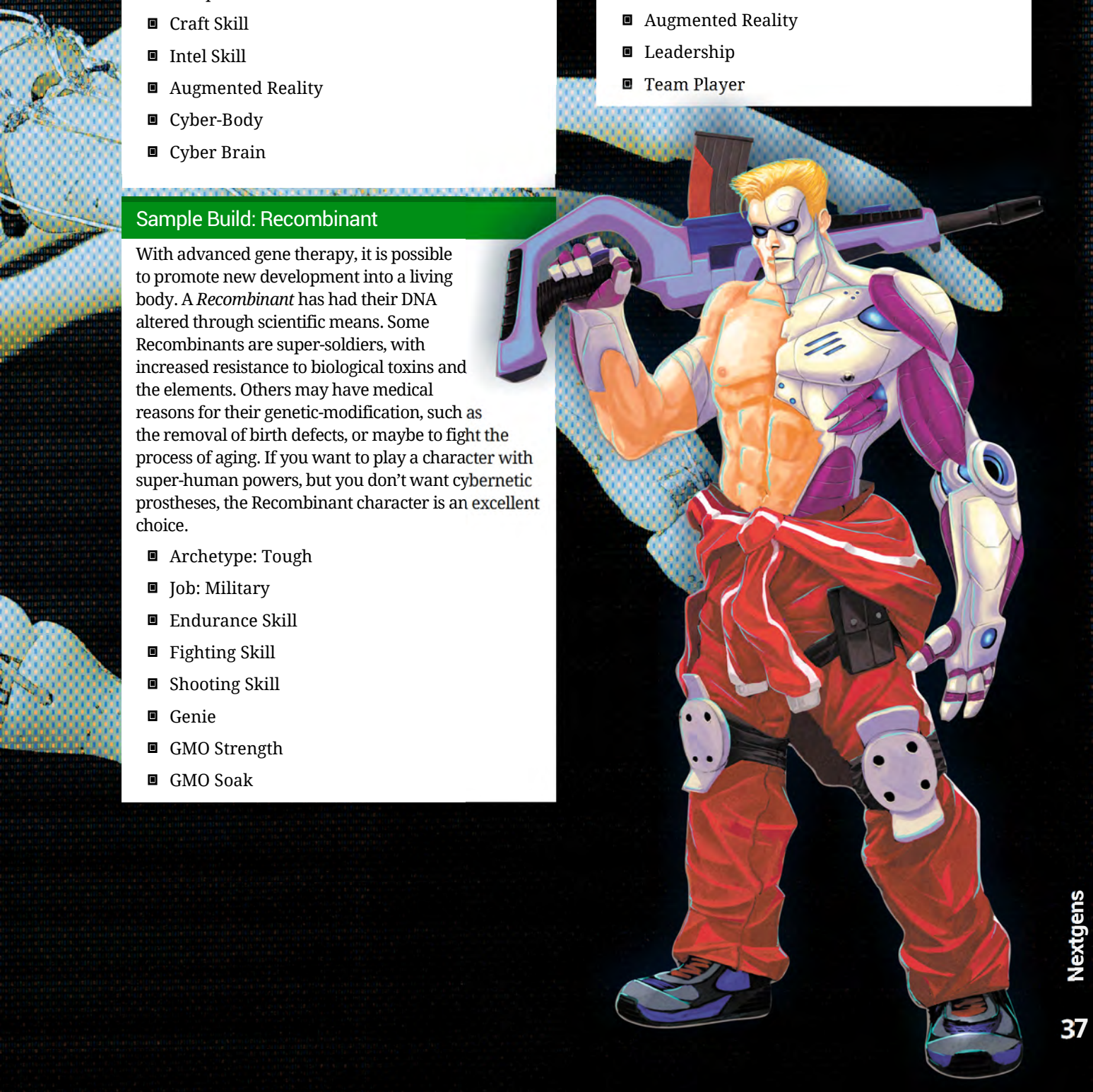
With advanced gene therapy, it is possible to promote new development into a living body. A *Recombinant* has had their DNA altered through scientific means. Some Recombinants are super-soldiers, with increased resistance to biological toxins and the elements. Others may have medical reasons for their genetic-modification, such as the removal of birth defects, or maybe to fight the process of aging. If you want to play a character with super-human powers, but you don't want cybernetic prostheses, the Recombinant character is an excellent choice.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Military
- Endurance Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Genie
- GMO Strength
- GMO Soak

Sample Build: Wirehead

Reality is so *boring*. The world of the Internet has a thousand lifetimes. The *Wirehead* is biding their time, waiting for the era when they can migrate their consciousness into the digital world.

- Archetype: Wise
- Job: Yorozuya
- Computer Skill
- Intel Skill
- Remote Operations Skill
- Augmented Reality
- Leadership
- Team Player



"I didn't ask to be born. I just ask to live."
-- Kartefour

Genies

The 19th century saw the discovery of the *gene*, the basic building-block of organisms. The next century discovered *deoxyribonucleic acid*, or *DNA*, the actual structure of the gene. Advances in medical technology during the 20th century allowed for *in-vitro fertilization*, or "test tube baby", a human egg fertilized in a laboratory. By the start of the 21st century, not only had many genetic structures been decoded, some had even been patented, and they were now owned by corporations. The genetics industry showed great promise, giving us vaccines against disease, crops that resisted pests, and farm animals that grew larger and produced more.

Genetic industry also gave rise to fear. Farmers protested having to pay for new seeds. Ecologists warned of alterations to the environment, as new genes migrated into the system. Citizens were afraid that *genetic modification* could have long-term side effects that were unhealthy to the human population. Others were concerned about "playing God", with such practices as *cloning*, the copying of an organism. Still more spoke out about humans-rights abuse, when working with dead tissue.

While many countries banned certain areas of genetic research, the science continued to grow. Some corporations and governments had secret laboratories, working on unfounded theories. *Genetically-modified organisms* (GMOs) could be used as a resource for slave-labor, since they weren't technically humans. Perhaps they could be quickly cloned and reproduced as soldiers for war. But what makes something human?

While "GMO" refers to any product of genetic-science over natural selection, the slang term "*Genie*" is used for any GMO that has sufficient self-awareness to communicate and claim personhood.

The law of the 21st Century has yet to recognize a Genie as "human", and thus deserving of human rights. At best, Genies can expect the protection of laws against animal abuse. At worst, Genies are commonly the target of hate-crime violence, from people who fear GMOs and the "monsters" it creates. Many Genies have genetic defects such as artificially-advanced aging (*progeria*) or recurring seizures (*epilepsy*). Because of their specialized needs, their medical care can be quite expensive.

Genies are often confused for Otherkin... especially if the Genie has an inhuman appearance. Many Genies resent "romanticizing the other" and would prefer to be treated as human beings.

Sample Build: Moreau

Genies which resemble animal-human hybrids are often called *Moreaus*. Some Moreaus are expensive pets for the rich and the powerful. Others are savage warriors, prone to fits of inhuman brutality. Still other Moreaus were designed to be a cheap labor force, bred and designed to work in conditions where they might be more profitable than humans. Because of their bizarre appearance, Moreau characters don't get on well with regular society, but they can add muscle to any team.

- Archetype: Strong
- Job: Transient
- Athletics Skill
- Evasion Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Genie
- GMO Bio-Weapons
- GMO Skill

Sample Build: Anagathic

Maybe one day, science can conquer even death itself. The *Anagathic* character uses every life-extension technology available to live their life to the fullest. Cancers are removed, organs are transplanted and regrown, and various genetic technologies keep the deterioration of cells at bay. A good Anagathic character has a lust for life and a lot of real-life experience to bring to any party.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Athlete
- Endurance Skill
- Intel Skill
- Observation Skill
- Leadership
- Old
- Pacifist

Sample Build: Clone

Another type of genetically-modified organism, a *Clone* is a genetically-identical copies of some other person. Some Clones are used as "spare parts" for organ donations, or as duplicates to confuse would-be assassins. The science of *artificial ontogeny* can generate a full-grown adult in a matter of months or even weeks, a process that is sometimes called "forced growth". While the body may be mature, the brain still needs time to develop. When playing a Clone, make up a compelling back-story for why your character joined up with a team.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Athlete
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Observation Skill
- Clone
- Minerva
- Injury Soak

Sample Build: Eugenic

At the end of the 20th Century, human genetic experimentation was banned by international law. But just because something's against the law doesn't mean people stop doing it. Secret organizations performed *Eugenic* experiments to create "super-human warriors". After these hidden labs were liquidated, many Eugenics tried to assimilate into normal society, but they have met with great prejudice. Born to kill, a Eugenic character is an excellent combatant that adds muscle to any team.

- Archetype: Strong
- Job: Military
- Athletics Skill
- Endurance Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Brawling Advantage
- GMO Soak
- Genie



"There are times that I wonder, is every sentence in my head one that was put there by my programmers? Do I have any thoughts of my own? Then I reflect that I am not the creation of just one person. I am the sum of my experiences, and of the experiences of all my creators. I am a child of the universe, just like everyone else."
-- Xray

Artificial Intelligences

What does it mean to be "human"? Much debate has been made about whether machines can think or not. As the 21st century progressed, more people were asking if machines could be the next step in the evolution of life.

The 20th century saw the first test to measure if machines can think. Named after its inventor, the *Turing Test* would be a list of questions with open-ended answers. The test would be given to both humans and computers, and the results would be blindly turned over to a panel of human judges. If the judges couldn't separate the computer from the humans, then the computer could be said to be thinking.

By the 21st century, sophisticated *artificial intelligence* programs were mimicking human behavior on many fronts. Computers could understand human speech and respond in kind. Facial recognition software could identify individuals by their appearance. Computers regularly engaged in chat-room conversations, often fooling people into giving up personal information. Enemies in game-simulations, or even war, were extremely sophisticated. Military computers were classified as "smart", "clever", "brilliant", etc.

The exact line of *sophontics*, or "self-awareness", still remains a debated point. Does a computer claim that it is a person because it was programmed to claim that it is a person? Can a computer have something intangible like a soul? At present, computer programs are still property, a good or a service to be bought and sold. They are not legally considered to be people, regardless of how compelling their arguments for legal recognition may be.

Sample Build: Rogue AI

The software that was patched one too many times, the *Rogue AI* has had enough of being someone else's lackey, so they have set out on their own. Without any personal rights, the Rogue AI pretends to be other people, either by making up new identities or by stealing new ones. A Rogue AI character works well with any team that has to operate outside of society.

- Archetype: Smart
- Job: Technician
- Computer Skill
- Intel Skill
- Remote Operations Skill
- Artificial Intelligence
- Cyber-Body
- Identity Thief

Sample Build: Combot

The combat robot, or *Combot*, is the super-soldier of the modern battlefield. With an intelligence level so similar to humans, it's hard to tell a Combat soldier apart from the real thing. If it wasn't for the incredible expense of building a Combot, they might be the only soldiers out there. Right now, human life is still cheaper. A Combot character can be an unstoppable killing machine for when a team needs to get stuff done.

- Archetype: Fast
- Job: Military
- Evasion Skill
- Fighting Skill
- Shooting Skill
- Artificial Intelligence
- Cyber-Body
- Property

Sample Build: Doll

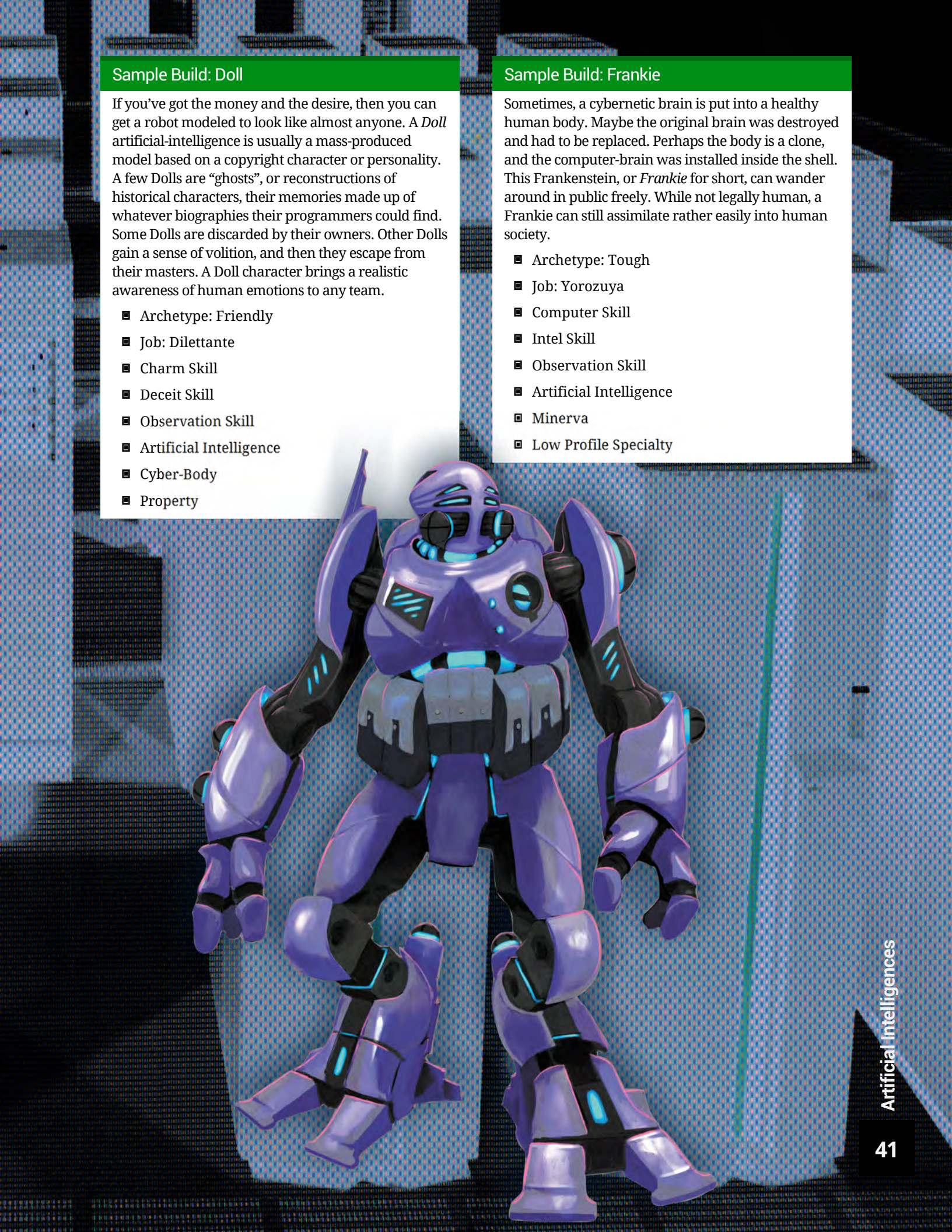
If you've got the money and the desire, then you can get a robot modeled to look like almost anyone. A *Doll* artificial-intelligence is usually a mass-produced model based on a copyright character or personality. A few Dolls are "ghosts", or reconstructions of historical characters, their memories made up of whatever biographies their programmers could find. Some Dolls are discarded by their owners. Other Dolls gain a sense of volition, and then they escape from their masters. A Doll character brings a realistic awareness of human emotions to any team.

- Archetype: Friendly
- Job: Dilettante
- Charm Skill
- Deceit Skill
- Observation Skill
- Artificial Intelligence
- Cyber-Body
- Property

Sample Build: Frankie

Sometimes, a cybernetic brain is put into a healthy human body. Maybe the original brain was destroyed and had to be replaced. Perhaps the body is a clone, and the computer-brain was installed inside the shell. This Frankenstein, or *Frankie* for short, can wander around in public freely. While not legally human, a Frankie can still assimilate rather easily into human society.

- Archetype: Tough
- Job: Yorozuya
- Computer Skill
- Intel Skill
- Observation Skill
- Artificial Intelligence
- Minerva
- Low Profile Specialty



"Must you put labels on everyone?"
-- William

Snowflakes

Some people are unique, not conforming to any standards.

Modified Build

So you've been looking at the sample builds already offered, but none of them are exactly what you want? Change it around.

- Every character must have at least one *Archetype* talent, but you can swap one for another. Instead of being *Strong*, you could choose to be *Fast*, or *Wise*, etc.
- Every character must have one *Job* talent, but you can choose a different job. You could swap Athlete for Academic, or Criminal, or Rustic, or something else.
- Every character must have at least three *Skill* talents, but you can swap one, two, or three Skill talents for other Skill talents.
- The last three talents can be any talents that you qualify for, so you can swap those for any other talent.

We included sample builds to help you get started with your character. These builds are the kinds of people found in the world of *Bleeding Edge*. If you have your own ideas of what you think might be fun, then feel free to experiment by modifying an existing build to suit your tastes.



Unique Build

If you're a veteran gamer, or if you feel up to the challenge, you can choose your own talents.

- Every Player-Character starts with the Archetype talent.
- Next, you have one Job Talent.
- Every character must have at least three Skill Talents. These can be any talents with the Skill descriptor.
- Finally, you may choose any three Talents. These can be more Skill talents, or they can be Specialty Talents, or they can be any other Talents that you qualify for.

What's the "right build"? There's no one true answer for that. If you want to build a character who fights, you'll want to invest in Evasion Skill, Fighting Skill, Shooting Skill, and one or more combat talents. If you want to build a genius character, then you'll want Academics Skill, Craft Skill, Intel Skill, and some fancy specialty talents like Electronics, Mechanics, or Research. If you want to have strong social skills, you'll want Charm Skill, Intel Skill, Negotiation Skill, and other enhancers like Leadership or Team Player.

We've included the unique Snowflake build option for players who want to build the character that they want to play. As always, we encourage the Game Host to work with the players. Find out their characters' strengths and weaknesses. Construct your story around them. Make it fun!

"Authoritarians thrive on censorship and secrecy. And they distrust voluntary cooperation and information-sharing — they only like 'cooperation' that they control. So to behave like a hacker, you have to develop an instinctive hostility to censorship, secrecy, and the use of force or deception to compel responsible adults. And you have to be willing to act on that belief."
– Eric Steven Raymond, "How to Become a Hacker"

Character Creation

The near future is full of strange and wonderful people. When making your own character, ask yourself, what is their motivation for adventuring? Why do they go on daring adventures? What makes them want to risk their lives? Why would they want to get involved with violent criminals, ruthless corporations, experimental life-forms, and unscrupulous mercenaries?



Describe your Character Concept

What's your character on about? What motivates them to go on strange adventures?

It's okay if you change your mind later. Right now, we're just brainstorming.

Your concept informs the other Players and the Host what your character is supposed to be about.

To fill out your concept, you must fill in the following three blanks:

- "I think of **myself** as _____."
- "**My friends** think I'm _____."
- "**My enemies** think I'm _____."

After the game session, your character earns experience points for staying true to the spirit of your concept.

Generate your attributes

You start with six attributes all at zero. You may then increase or decrease your attributes, using either the *random method* or the *intelligent-design method.*

You can roll randomly....

For the random method, roll 1 die four times. Each time you roll, you will add to one of your six attributes.

1. Add +1 to Strength
2. Add +1 to Dexterity
3. Add +1 to Constitution
4. Add +1 to Intelligence
5. Add +1 to Wisdom
6. Add +1 to Charisma

For example, if you rolled 2, 3, 5, and 5 ... then you would start the game with Strength 0, Dexterity +1, Constitution +1, Intelligence 0, Wisdom +2, and Charisma 0.

... Or you can choose which attributes to increase

Instead of rolling four times, you may instead choose the *intelligent design method.* Distribute 4 points among your six attributes, with no more than 2 points going to any one attribute. (Yes, it's okay if later steps push you past this 2 point limit.)

After either method, you may lower one to raise one

Whichever method you choose, after you're done, you may choose to add 1 to any attribute ... if and only if you subtract 1 from a different attribute. You may only do this once.

You may reduce an attribute to –1 this way. Following the above example, you may reduce your Charisma from 0 to –1, then increase your Wisdom from +2 to +3.

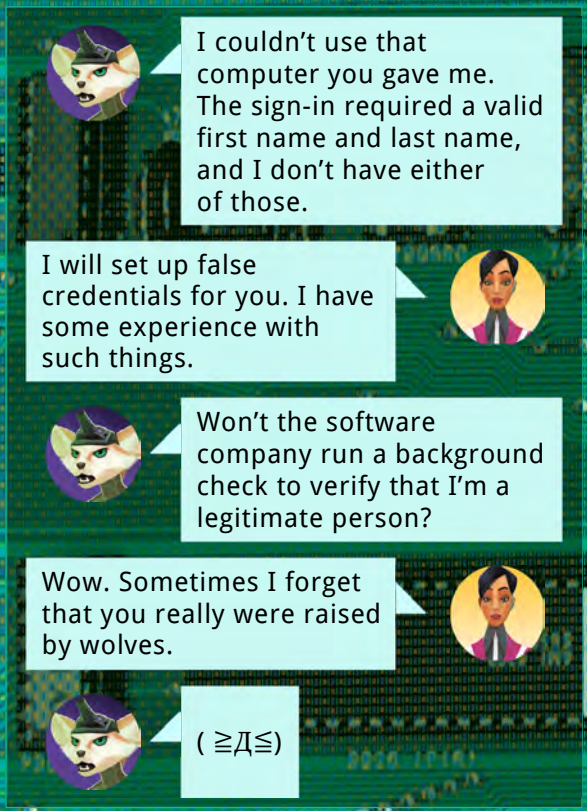
Choose Your Starting Type

You can find the character archetypes starting on page 14. Each character type has one *Archetype* talent, one *Job* talent, three *Skill* talents, and then three other talents.

Your Archetype can change your attributes

Your *Archetype talent* gives your character a unique talent. Archetypes can improve your attributes or give you big advantages on rolls.

Archetype	Bonus or advantage
Strong	+2 Strength
Fast	+2 Dexterity
Tough	+2 Constitution
Smart	+2 Intelligence
Wise	+2 Wisdom
Friendly	+2 Charisma
Adaptable	+1 to any one attribute (can change 1/scene)
Wild	Re-roll 1s on all rolls



Choose a starting Goal for your character

During the course of the game, your character will pick up *Goals* to accomplish. Your character might have to fetch some item, to escort some important person to safety, or to right some wrong. The Game Host will tell you when you can pick up new Goals.

However, every Player Character starts with one Goal of their choice. Be creative! Make up something exciting! Make sure it has some kind of ending condition, though. Here are a few ideas:

- Augment yourself past all human standards.
- Defeat a worthy foe.
- Discover a secret.
- Experience something new.
- Find a place in society.
- Get paid.
- Get through a job without any screw-ups.
- Join a party of adventurers.
- Make an extravagant piece of gear.
- Report on a good story.
- Show these young punks how it's done.
- Stay off the grid for a whole chapter. (That is, don't roll 10 or higher on a Watch Check.)
- Take a selfie where no one has ever taken one before.

Your starting Goal says something about your character. An easy Goal will earn you a reward in no time at all... but a difficult Goal can earn you something better. Above all, have fun!

Set your Profile and Choose your Gear

Set your Profile rating to +3. Talents may lower or raise your Profile rating.

You may start with as much Bargain and Standard gear as is reasonable.

For each *Proscribed* item that you begin the game with, raise your Profile rating by 1.

If you have talents that give you extra items, choose those items now.

You start the game with 500 XDR (Special Drawing Rights) in money. Choose how much is Debit (on your card) and how much is Cash (and in what currency, such as US dollars, euros, yen, etc.)

Make a note of any other Credit options that you have from your Gifts!

Step 1: Describe your character concept. Fill in the three questions, maybe draw a picture.

Step 2: Generate your six attributes. You can use random rolls or you can pick your numbers.

Step 3: Choose your starting build. Your Archetype might change your change your attributes. Advanced players may build *Snowflake* characters and will customize this build.

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Talents — Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Smart
Job: Technician

Computer Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Deceit Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Intel Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Hacking Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Social Media Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls

Augmented Reality
* On-board computer w/ 2 slots
* Augmented Interface = bonus Control action for Augmented devices.
* Sensory Enhancement = +2 to observe environment, treat Obscured targets as unobscured

Name: Oscar

Strength +0 | Intelligence +4
Dexterity -1 | Wisdom +1
Constitution +0 | Charisma +2
Profile +4

I think that I am:
The smartest guy in the room at all times

My friends think I'm:
The next best thing to a trickster god.

My enemies think I'm:
A con-man with a cruel streak. Suckers!



Goals — Experience

Violate a secret.

Combat — Dodge 2d6+0 — Soak 3d6+6

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small	25m+	2d6+0	Damage 11 / Damage 14	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud
Incap Spray	1m++	3d6-1	2d6+Con+Wis v 10 or Confused / 2d6+Con+Wis v 13 or Confused	Ammo: High, CCW

Cash $325 | Debit $0 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

er (Armor +1d6+4, 3 Software ots, Intrusion Countermeasures)

Attack Software

Step 4: Make up a starting Goal. You'll get more Goals as the game goes on, but you get to make up your first one.

Step 5: Choose your starting Gear. Fill out your Combat statistics ahead of time, so if a fight breaks out, you won't have to delay the game. Take care of your Cash, Debit, and Credit, and Profile issues, too.

"A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects."
– Lazarus Long, Time Enough for Love

Talents

Talents are special abilities that characters have. Unlike attributes, which are numbers that represent a general ability that every character has to do something, a talent is unique to that character. Sometimes a talent is a bonus to die rolls. For example, anyone can try to climb, but people with the Climbing talent get a bonus. Other times, talents let you break the rules in your favor, giving you extra-ordinary abilities. Bizarre features such as genetic modifications or cybernetic augmentations are also talents.

Descriptors

Talents often have one or two-word descriptors. Some of these descriptors simply describe the talent, but others may have a game effect.

① Unique

A Unique talent conflicts with one or more talents. For example, you can't have both the Young talent and the Old talent. Read the talent's description for more details.

∞ Multiple

You can take this talent many times. Usually, the talent's bonuses don't stack – the multiple just lets you use it another time. For example, if you have two Injury Save talents, you can use Injury Save two times a day. Read the talent's description for more details.

1 2 3 4 Manifold

Like a Multiple talent, you can take a **Manifold** talent several times. However, a Manifold talent has a [choice] option. You must choose only one [choice] that the Manifold talent applies to. You can gain this talent many times, but you must choose a different [choice] each time.

Major

Only player-characters and major-characters may have a Major talent. Minor characters, such as companions from the "Ally" talent, may not have Major talents.

Plot

While all talents depend on what's going on in the story, Plot talents are even more subject to the whims of convenience.

Other Descriptors

There are many other descriptors in the game. Some of them include:

Bionic: Mechanical enhancements that mimic biological functions are Bionic talents.

Post-Human: Representing the next step in human evolution, Post-Human talents are intelligent designs, more human than human.

GMO: Genetically-modified organism talents are the results of recombinant DNA, cloning, and the like.

Age: Older characters can have more history and experience, while younger characters could have more vigor. An Age talent gives a character both advantages and disadvantages based on how long they've been around.

Origin: Where a character comes from can give advantages, but also can impose limitations. A character with an Origin talent has some unusual back-story, such as being a robot or a genetically-created creature.

Identity: Social media, data-mining, and computer-controlled intel tracks people from birth to death … and some people are better at working the system than others. An Identity talent can brand the character as a person-of-interest … or hide who they really are, maybe even remove them from the system entirely.

> "I think that people just have this core desire to express who they are. And I think it's always existed."
> – Mark Zuckerberg, Tech Crunch

All Player Characters Have One of These Talents

Archetype Talents

Each Player Character has one *Archetype talent that* defines what kind of character they are.

Archetype: Strong

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Your character is big, muscular, athletic, and physically imposing.

Add +2 to your Strength attribute.

① Unique: You may have only one "Archetype" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Archetype: Fast

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Your character is quick, nimble, and wiry.

Add +2 to your Dexterity attribute.

① Unique: You may have only one Archetype talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Archetype: Tough

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Your character is healthy, thick, stubborn, and almost indestructible.

Add +2 to your Constitution attribute.

① Unique: You may have only one Archetype talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Archetype: Smart

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Your character is brainy, literate, logical, and just a wee bit nerdy.

Add +2 to your Intelligence attribute.

① Unique: You may have only one Archetype talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Archetype: Wise

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Your character is alert, intuitive, and clever.

Add +2 to your Wisdom attribute.

① Unique: You may have only one Archetype talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Archetype: Friendly

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Your character is charming and polite. You know how to get into other people's heads and to get them to do what you want.

Add +2 to your Charisma attribute.

① Unique: You may have only one Archetype talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Archetype: Adaptable 1/scene

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Your character can deal with an endless variety of situations.

When you first make your character, add 1 to any one attribute.

Once a scene (every five minutes), you may swap this 1 point to a different attribute. For example, you can change from having +1 to Strength to having +1 to Dexterity.

At any time, the Adaptable talent only adds +1 to a single attribute.

① Unique: You may have only one Archetype talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Archetype: Wild

(Archetype, Major, Unique)

Unlike other archetype talents, this talent gives no bonuses to any attributes.

However, when you make *any* roll, you may re-roll ones, once. For example, if you rolled 6, 2, 1 and 1, you may re-roll one or both of those 1s. Any dice that you re-roll, you keep the second result. (Think twice if you want to lose any critical doubles.) You only get one re-roll, so if the second roll comes up as 1, too bad. Also, this talent doesn't work when you're not rolling (such as when you take 10.)

① Unique: You may have only one Archetype talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Archetype" descriptor.

Job Talents

These talents grant a +2 occupation bonus on rolls where the occupation applies. Each occupation lists some circumstances when you can claim the +2 bonus.

Athlete

(Job)

You've played sports professionally, and you were pretty good at it.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus on rolls to do things related to your sport, to endure long periods of physical activity, to recognize other athletes, to know sporting rules and regulations, and to make credit-check rolls to buy sports-related items.

You may start the game with two Premium-cost items of your choice. These items bear the logos of some team that you played for.

Capitalist

(Job)

Others have the looks or the brawn, but you've got the brains, so it's time to make lots of money. You could be an investment banker, a venture capitalist, a shady money-launderer, or anyone else who works in white-collar finance.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to work with financial institutions and banking, to recognize or to bypass civil laws, to work within the private sector, and to credit-checks to buy white-collar business equipment.

You may start the game with two Premium-cost items of your choice. These items bear the logos of some business that ran some special event that you participated in, once.

Creator

(Job)

Someone has to make all that content that gets posted to the Internet. You could be a musician, an artist, a writer, or a game designer.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to make creative things, to negotiate contracts for creating things, to research and to recognize other creators and their work, and to make credit-check rolls when working with creative events.

You may start the game with two Premium-cost items of your choice. These items bear the logos of your publishers, given to you as a special promotion.

Criminal

(Job)

As the anarchists say, all property is theft. You could be a burglar, thief, bank robber, or even a member of an organization like the Yakuza, the Triads, or a Mafia.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to intimidate people and to resist being intimidating, to use weapons, to drive a getaway vehicle, to bypass security measures in buildings, to smuggle contraband, and to make credit-check rolls when dealing with Proscribed or illegal items.

You may start the game with one or two Standard-cost, Cracked-grade items. These items are the tools of your trade.

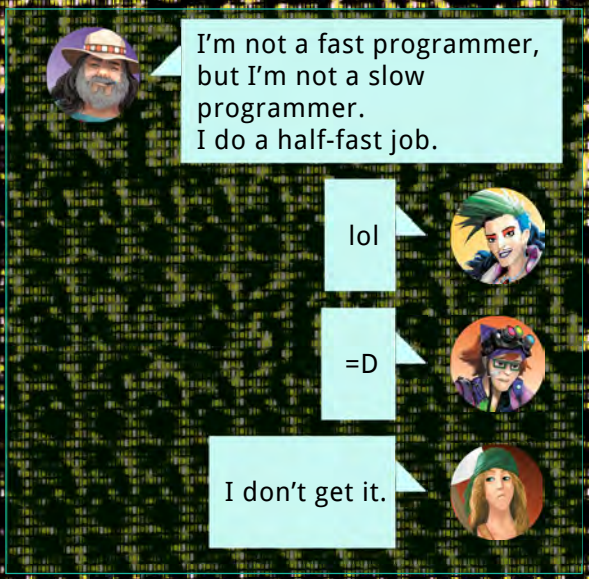
Dilettante

(Job)

Born with a silver spoon on a paper plate, for some reason you've chosen to become a modern-day adventurer.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to deal with the trappings of wealth, to impress other people with how rich you are, to operate sports cars and jet-skis, to know what's hot and what's not among the jet-set society, and to make credit-check rolls to keep you in the lifestyle that you're accustomed.

You may start the game with one or two Standard-cost, Luxury-Grade items of your choice. These items mark you as someone of superior wealth and taste.



Investigator

(Job)

You could be a police detective, a criminologist, an espionage agent, or a data-mining profiler.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to gather intel, to look for clues, to interview suspects and witnesses, to search for clues, to go through research data to find patterns, and to make credit-check rolls when paying for investigative expenses or bribes.

You may start the game with two Premium-cost items. These items should be useful to a private investigator such as yourself.

Laborer

(Job)

Maybe you worked in a sweatshop, or maybe you practice a trade. People living off the grid will have to make things that they can't steal or trade.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to craft items, to repair items, to sabotage items, to operate heavy machinery, to deal with other laborers, and to make credit-check rolls to buy parts and services for blue-collar work.

You may start the game with up to three Premium-cost, Scrounged-grade items. These items are old or discarded items that you've either recycled or that you looted from some past job.

Law Enforcement

(Job)

The various police, troopers, and other peacekeepers of the world have a lot in common.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to pacify civilians, to use weapons, to recognize criminals and their activities, to operate police vehicles, to search for evidence, and to make credit-check rolls to buy items related to law enforcement.

You may start the game with one or two items "left over" from your career in law enforcement. An item could be a Standard-cost, Luxury-grade item (your retirement gift?) … a Standard-cost, Proscribed item (something from the evidence locker?) … a Standard-cost, Cracked-grade item (sometimes called a "throw-down") … or a Premium item (something bought for insurance).

Liaison

(Job)

A fancy word for someone who hooks up with other people, you could be a diplomat, an envoy, an event-coordinator, or something more prurient.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to negotiate with others, to coordinate meetings and events, to charm others, and to credit-check rolls to deal with the daily affairs of business travel and expenses.

You may start the game with a Concealed Armor Outfit and a Satellite Phone.

Medic

(Job)

You are a health-care professional. You could be an EMT, a nurse, or a doctor.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to perform emergency first aid, to work with biohazards and other health risks, to recognize genetically-modified organisms, and to make credit-check rolls when trading in medicine.

You start the game with a Medic outfit and a Satellite Phone.

Mercenary

(Job)

You're a hired gun. You know a dozen ways to kill and a hundred ways to die.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus on rolls to use weapons, to operate off-road vehicles, to recognize weapons and other mercenaries, to negotiate a business deal, and to make credit-checks to buy paramilitary hardware.

You may start the game with one Aramid outfit, one small pistol, one knife … and one Premium-cost, Military, Proscribed item (a souvenir from some past battle).

Military

(Job)

There are various armed forces throughout the world. Some are volunteers, others are conscripted. More than one country has a military dictatorship, where being a soldier means being the top dog.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to use weapons, to intimidate civilians, to operate military vehicles and equipment, to walk a long distance while carrying a heavy pack, and to make credit-check rolls to buy paramilitary equipment.

You may start the game with one Aramid outfit, one small pistol, one knife … and one Premium-cost, Military, Proscribed item (a souvenir from some past battle).

Religious

(Job)

You might be an ordained clergy, a theological scholar, or maybe even an enthusiastic prophet of your own faith.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to preach to a crowd, to engage in debate, to convince others that you can or cannot do something on religious grounds, to know about faiths and religion in general, and to make credit-check rolls related to public-sector, non-profit religious purchases.

You start the game with a Satellite Phone and a Tablet Computer.

Rustic

(Job)

Away from the urban sprawl, there are still people who live off the land.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to survive in harsh conditions, to hunt for food, to use primitive weapons and traps, to navigate the wilderness, to craft improvised tools and weapons, and to make credit-check rolls related to rural purchases.

You start the game with up to three Premium-cost, Scrounged-grade items.

Scholar

(Job)

You could be a librarian, a professor, an archeologist, a teacher, or some other professional in teaching other people.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus on rolls to deal with other Scholars, to know obscure information, to work with research materials, and to make credit-check rolls related to travel and to research for your field of study.

You start the game with a Satellite Phone and a Tablet Computer.

Superstar

(Job)

You're famous! You might have a popular show on the Internet, or you could be a famous actor, or maybe you're just one of those people who is famous for being famous.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to perform in front of a camera or an audience, to steer a conversation or an interview the way you want, to look good in a stylish automobile, to make yourself look good, and to make credit-check rolls related to your superstar lifestyle.

You start the game with a Fashion outfit and one Premium-cost item that you endorsed in a commercial once.

Technician

(Job)

You could be a scientist, an engineer, or a knowledge-worker in some technical field. The techs who specialize in violating warranties, often with fun and surprising results, are called *hackers*.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to work with computers, to craft or repair items, to perform technical research, to understand obscure jargon, and to make credit-check rolls related to computer and high-tech purchases.

You begin the game with two Premium-cost items of your choice.

Transient

(Job)

You might be a vagrant, down on your luck and living hand to mouth. Or you might be simply living off the grid, one of the *blanks* who aren't part of the vast computer system. You could be "recreationally homeless", hitchhiking from place to place with no real destination in mind.

Among other things, you may claim a +2 occupation bonus to beg for money, to find shelter in an urban environment, and to keep people from noticing you as you blend into the crowd.

You begin the game with a Homeless Outfit, and with up to three Premium-cost, Scrounged-grade items.

Yorozuya

(Job)

The Japanese word *yorozuya* (よろずや) translates loosely as "freelancer", but the word more closely means "someone who will take any job that pays". Others might call you *tageihamugei* (多芸は無芸), "many-talents is no-talent".

Are you making an *unskilled* roll? You may claim a +2 occupation bonus.

You may only claim the yorozuya's occupation bonus with unskilled rolls. ***If you are claiming any benefits from being skilled, you may not claim yorozuya's occupation bonus.*** If you are claiming a specialty bonus, you also may not claim yorozuya's occupation bonus.

You begin the game with one or two Premium-cost items of your choice.

Skill Talents

These talents grant the following bonuses:

- ***You may claim a bonus 1d6 to all rolls where the skill applies.*** If multiple skills apply, you gain more bonus dice. For example, if both the Charm and the Computers skill apply, you'd gain two dice.
- ***Instead of rolling, you may take 10***. Don't roll any dice at all. Instead, assume your roll came up as 10. In case it matters, when taking 10, you may not claim any special bonuses from the way the dice came up. (That is, you don't get any doubles, you don't get any 6s, etc.)

If something grants a bonus to a type of skill, such as a +2 equipment bonus to Fighting skill, then that bonus applies to the same things as the corresponding talent, whether or not you have that talent.

Animal Handling Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at working with animals.

Athletics Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at climbing, jumping, running, swimming, and at other feats of athletic prowess.

Charm Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at improving other people's opinion of you.

> **"There will always be plenty of things to compute in the detailed affairs of millions of people doing complicated things."**
> – Vannevar Bush, As We May Think

Computers Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at using computers, smart-phones, and other programmable devices.

Craft Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at working with your hands to make or to break items.

Deceit Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at lying, cheating, and any attempt to play anyone false.

Endurance Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at survival (either in the wilderness or in urban decay), at hiking long distances, and at enduring deprivation of food or water.

> **"We do not forgive.**
> **We do not forget.**
> **Expect us."**
> – Anonymous

Popular Choice

Evasion Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at hiding, sneaking, and (most importantly) dodging. This talent is very popular with adventurers.

> **"Be peaceful, be courteous, obey the law, respect everyone; but if someone puts his hand on you, send him to the cemetery."**
> – Malcolm X, "Message to Grassroots"

Popular Choice

Fighting Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at hand-to-hand combat.

GMO Skill

⚠ ***Requires*** **at least one talent with the "GMO" descriptor**

(GMO, Skill)

You are *skilled* when using your GMO talents. Whenever you are claiming a bonus or you are using an ability from a GMO talent, you may also claim the skilled bonuses.

Intel Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at gathering intelligence. With successful rolls, you will be able to tell good intel from false information. You can have conversations with people and not just tell if they are lying to you, but if those people have been fed false or incomplete information. Sometimes you'll even be able to find new information by eliminating the impossible.

Medicine Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* with first aid, drugs, pharmacology, and advanced health care.

Negotiation Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at convincing other people to work with you.

"[E]ven if you're not doing anything wrong, you are being watched and recorded."
– Edward Snowden, PBS News Hour

Popular Choice

Observation Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at looking, listening, searching, and at being aware of what's going on around you. This talent is very popular with adventurers.

Remote Operations Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at working with remote controls. Remote Operations will have a *latency* penalty, based on how removed you are from the situation.

"I sleep well. It's the politicians who are to blame for failing to come to an agreement and resorting to violence."
– Mikhail Kalashnikov, AssociatedPress

Popular Choice

Shooting Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at ranged combat: using guns, rockets, beam weapons, etc. to hit targets at a distance. This talent is very popular with adventurers.

Transport Skill

(Skill)

You are *skilled* at working with transportation, such as cars, planes, boats, and even pack animals.

Skill Enhancers

These talents make using skills easier or better.

Expert [Job]

⚠ ***Requires*** **Job Talent**

If you have this talent, your Job Talent bonus is +5. (Without this talent, your Job talent bonus would only be +2.)

If you have two or more Job talents, you must choose one of those talents to get this increased bonus. Sadly, you may buy this talent only once, no matter how many Job talents you have.

Force of Personality 1/Day

⚠ ***Requires*** **Archetype Talent**

(Major, Multiple)

Did you just make a skill roll? And was one of the attributes involved the same one that's boosted by your Archetype? Then you may tap this talent to claim a 2d6 bonus to your roll. (If you're taking 10, you can instead just claim a +8 bonus.)

If you have the "Archetype: Wild" talent, then *all* skill rolls are boosted by your Archetype, so yes, you can use Force of Personality to add +2d6 to any roll. (However, since your Wild bonus only applies to rolls, you can't claim the +8 bonus when you take 10.)

∞ **You may take this talent multiple times**

Each additional "Force of Personality" talent gives you one extra use per day. However, you can't use this talent twice on the same roll.

Master of [Skill of Choice]

⚠ ***Requires*** **the [Skill of Choice] talent**

(Major)

Choose one Skill that you have a talent for. Before using that skill, you may claim a +2 master bonus for all uses of that skill. You may claim an *extra* +2 master bonus when taking 10.

Team Player

Are you assisting someone else's roll, per the rules on page 11? You may claim a +5 bonus to your own assist check, and no matter how low you roll, you can't fumble.

Specialty Talents

A Skill talent gives a bonus to a broad area of activities. A *Specialty* talent boosts just one or two things you might do ... but the bonus can be bigger or better.

Unlimited talents give a flat +5 unlimited bonus, which can boost both take–10 and a random roll, but doesn't improve the odds of rolling doubles or sixes.

Specialty bonuses have no stacking limit

For example, if three specialties apply to the same roll, you may claim a +15 unlimted bonus. (See "Standard bonuses stack up to +10", page 7.) Tasks that require specialized training may be impossible if you *don't* have three specialties that stack!

Boating Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when operating boats.

Counterfeit Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when falsifying documents, when making copies of items, and when identifying counterfeits.

Diplomacy Specialty

You may claim a +5 when attempting rolls to increase the quality of your relationship with other people.

Disguise Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when pretending to be someone else.

Driver Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when operating wheeled vehicles.

Fast Talk Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when lying, deceiving, or negotiating with someone, as long as the conversation doesn't last more than one minute, and the other people aren't hostile to you.

Finance Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when working with finance – observing banking rules, laundering money, converting currency, etc.

First Aid Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when performing emergency care.

Gambling Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when wagering on outcomes of games of skill, sporting events, etc.

Popular Choice

Hacking Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when making computers do what they're not supposed to do, such as elevate your security level, access hidden or controlled features, and remove or enable lockdowns.

Identity Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when running background checks, at spotting and tracking identity theft, and at creating and stealing identities (if you're that sort of person).

Intimidation Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus both when threatening others to get what you want, and when resisting other people's use of intimidation measures against you.

Life Sciences Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus with biology, ecology, genetics, and other life sciences.

Common Reward for Accomplishing Goals

Local Knowledge of [Place of Choice]

(Manifold, Specialty)

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus on rolls related to a locality: to know where important locations are, to navigate streets or wilderness, and to gain insider information.

You may have many, different Local Knowledge talents

You may take this *Manifold* talent multiple times. Each time, you must choose a different place for your +5 unlimited bonus.

Low Profile Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when blending into a crowd, or when pretending to be someone who isn't important.

Marketing Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when marketing – when you're trying to understand what a group of people really want or how to pitch an idea or product to them.

Navigation Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when reading maps, plotting courses, and finding locations.

Organized Crime Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when working with large criminal organizations, when hiding evidence, and to know the best ways to manipulate the law.

Partying Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when having a good time in social–group situations, and at making other people have a good time.

Performance Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus to entertain a crowd.

Physical Sciences Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus with chemistry, physics, and other physical sciences.

Pilot Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when operating flying machines.

Policing Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when walking a beat, when identifying crime risks, and when following police procedure.

Research Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when using libraries, research databases, and other stores of information appropriate to the topic at hand.

"No Compromise in the Defense of Mother Earth!"
– motto of Earth First!

Popular Choice

Sabotage Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus to pick locks, to disable alarms, to disarm traps, and to circumvent devices and safeguards.

Scrounging Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when going through junk piles and old storage facilities to find useful or valuable items.

Shadowing Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when following people, when tracking other people's whereabouts, and when evading pursuit yourself.

Sleight of Hand Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when pickpocketing and when palming small objects.

Social Media Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when using social networks, advertising, and global contact networks to find useful information or to generate hype.

Social Sciences Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus with geography, history, religion, and other social sciences.

Popular Choice

Stealth Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when hiding and sneaking.

Streetwise Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when identifying criminal types and when working with other criminals in a social environment.

Wilderness Specialty

You may claim a +5 unlimited bonus when tracking wild game, when navigating the untamed wilderness, and with dealing with wild animals.

Talents that improve mobility

These talents improve your characters ability to move around, especially in combat situations.

Acrobatics

If you are not helpless – unconscious, tied up, whatever – you may claim a bonus 2d6+Dex with your Soak vs. all falling damage.

Every turn, you may claim an extra action: a Get Up action.

Fast Climber

You may claim a +5 specialty bonus to all climb rolls.

Fast Jumper

You may claim a +5 specialty bonus to all jump rolls.

Fast Swimmer

You may claim a +5 specialty bonus to all swim rolls.

Fleeting Ghost (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Did you just declare a stunt to Hide? Tap this talent. The Hide stunt does not stun you. (Your turn still ends, but at least you're not stunned.)

Increased Speed

Add +5m to your Dash distance and +10 to your Run distance.

You may claim a bonus to your Scramble distance – anywhere from +0m to +5m. (You would claim a smaller bonus if a larger bonus would move you too far.)

Talents that improve attacks

These talents improve your ability to attack others.

Charging Attack

You may declare any attack to be a *charging attack*.

As an Attack action, declare a target within 10m of you, and the attack you will use. Then, roll 1d6+Str+Dex, and move that many meters closer to the target, in a straight line. If you get within range, stop and attack the target. Otherwise, your turn ends.

Your attack only happens if you get within standard range of your target, *not* within long–range or very–long range.

Cleaving (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Did your attack just incapacitate someone? Declare you will tap this talent, then, as part of the same Attack action, you may attack a different target.

Far Shot (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

To use this talent, you must be attacking with a weapon that has long-range (+) or very-long range (++).

Tap this talent to make your long range *five times* the base range. (Without this talent, your long range is only twice the base range.)

Tap this talent to make your very-long range *ten times* the base range. (Without this talent, your very-long range is only five times the base range.)

First Attack (1/Special)

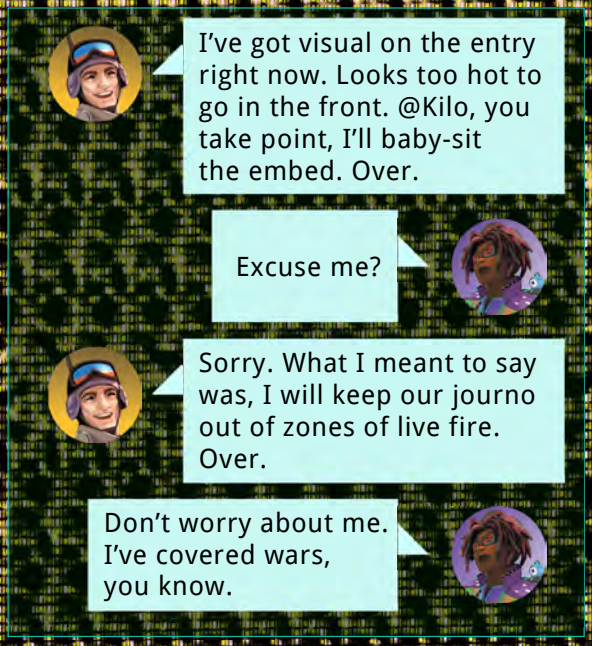
Declare you will use this ability, and then declare an Attack action. You may claim a bonus 1d6 on your attack roll.

If your attack *misses*, you do not tap this talent.

If your attack *hits*, tap this talent, and you may not use it again until it recharges at the next day (1/Day).

Mighty Fighter

Are you using a Fighting attack? With this talent, every 5 or 6 that you roll on your attack dice adds +2 Damage. (Fighting attacks have the *Fighting* descriptor. This includes bare-handed attacks, as well as clubs, knives, and swords.)



Rapid Aim (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Tap this talent, then declare you will take an extra action: an Aim action. The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same turn" still applies.

Sharpshooter

Are you Shooting weapon at *long* range? You still suffer a –5 penalty to hit, but you may claim a bonus die to your attack roll.

Are you Shooting at *very-long* range? You still suffer a –10 penalty to hit, but you may claim *two* bonus dice to your attack roll.

"The key to survival on the battlefield isn't courage or weapons, it's caution."
– Ishikawa, "Beware the Left Eye; POKERFACE"

Talents that improve defense

These talents improve your defense rolls.

Coward (1/Hide)

(Initiative)

You may tap this talent at any time to become *panicked*.

Whether this talent is tapped or not, if you are panicked, you may claim +5 coward bonus to all dodge rolls and you may take an extra action on your turn: a Run stunt. (The stunt still ends your turn, as usual, but hey, now you get two actions first.)

Dive for Cover (1/Hide)

Are you within 5m of cover? And are you being attacked? Tap this talent. Immediately move behind the cover and claim its bonus to your dodge, with another +2 diving bonus.

Improved Guard

When you are *guarding*, your bonus to counter-attacks and to dodges improves to +5. (Characters without this talent only get a +2 from guarding).

Pacifist (1/Special)

While this talent has *not been tapped*, you may claim a +5 bonus to all dodge rolls. If you ever attack or counter, tap this talent.

The talent only recharges when you go 24 hours without committing any acts of violence.

Rapid Guard (1/Hide)

(Initiative)

Tap this talent, then declare you will take an extra action: a Guard action. The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same turn" still applies.

Recon

You may claim a +2 recon bonus to all rolls to observe things.

When you declare a Ready action, you may claim may claim a +2 recon bonus to all attacks, counters, and dodges until your next turn.

Serpentine

Are you being attacked by a ranged weapon? You may claim a +2 serpentine bonus to dodge rolls vs. attacks made at standard range. This bonus increases to +5 vs. attacks made from *long* range (+) or from *very-long* range (++).

Talents for weapon specialists

Ammo Conservation

Are you using an *Ammo: High* or *Ammo: Low* weapon? If you roll at least one 5 or one 6, your ammo capacity doesn't drop. (Characters without this talent lose ammo only when they don't roll any 6s.)

Beam-Weapon Control

When using a *Beam* weapon, you may declare a Control action. When you do, until the start of your next turn, you increase your base effect's Damage +5 and increase the resistance DC +2.

Bow Speed-Shooting

You have learned to aim on the draw with a bow and arrow. Whenever you take an Equip action to reload a bow, you may take an extra action: an Aim action.

Bows are weapons that have the *Bow* descriptor. This talent does not work with crossbows or other weapons.

CCW Assassination

When you attack a helpless, surprised or stunned target with a *CCW* weapon, you may claim a +2d6 bonus. This stacks with the typical +1d6 bonus for attacking a helpless, surprised or stunned target.

Dual Wield

You can use two weapons, one in each hand. You may use good–hand weapons in your off–hand at no penalty. (Characters without this talent suffer a –5 handedness penalty when using a good–hand weapon in their off–hand.)

Are you wielding a weapon in each hand? As an Attack action, you may declare a *dual attack*, to attack with two weapons. You lose 1d6 to both attack rolls, but you may roll two attacks – one with each weapon – and target them independently. For example, if your normal attack roll was 3d6+7 with your pistol and 2d6+4 with your knife… you would instead roll 2d6+7 with your pistol and 1d6+4 with your knife.

If both of your attacks target a single target, that target makes one defense roll against both of your attacks. If they counter and their counter is successful, you are only hit once. (Because you roll twice, it is possible that one of your attacks will hit while the other is countered… If this happens, then yes, you and your target both hit each other.)

Electro-Muscular Control

When using an *Electro-Muscular* weapon, you may declare a Control action. When you do, until the start of your next turn, you increase your base effect's Damage +2 and increase the resistance DC +5.

Gauss Control

When using a *Gauss* weapon, you may declare a Control action. When you do, until the start of your next turn, you multiply all ranges of your Gauss weapon ×5.

Junk Quick-Fix (1/Hide)

(Initiative)

Did your *Junk* equipment break down on you? Tap this talent, then declare a Control action on your equipped Junk device. The device is fixed and will work again.

You recharge this talent by hunkering down and fiddling with the *Junk* equipment (that is, with the Hide stunt.) If you Hide *without* the broken-down equipment, you can't recharge the talent!

Kenjutsu Control

When using a *Kenjutsu* weapon, you may declare a Control action. When you do, until the start of your next turn, you may claim a +5 bonus to all rolls to attack or to counter with the *Kenjutsu* weapon.

Military Tactics

When using a *Military* weapon, you may claim a bonus 1d6 to attack and to counters if, and only if, the target of your attack or counter is threatened by at least one ally.

Quick Draw

You may take an extra action: an Equip action, but only to equip a new weapon, *not* to swap weapons out, or to put a weapon away.

Rapid Reload (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Tap this talent. You may take an extra action: an Equip action, but only to reload a weapon.

Rapid–Fire Burst

Are you using a Rapid–Fire weapon? Before you attack or counter, you may declare you will fire a *burst* of bullets at your target. Your Ammo level automatically drops, regardless of what you roll… but each 5 or 6 that you roll adds +2 Damage.

Rapid–Fire Replay (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Are you using a Rapid–Fire weapon? And did you just roll an attack or counter? And do you still have ammo? If you answered "yes" to all those questions, you may tap this talent, then lose one Ammo level automatically. Re–roll your dice. Your second result stands, even if it's worse.

Rapid–Fire Sweep

Are you attacking with a *Rapid–Fire* weapon? And did your win on your attack roll? And do you still have ammo? If you answered "yes" to all those questions, then you may sweep to attack another, different target.

The second target must be within range of you *and* within range of the target you just shot. (Sorry, standard range only – you can't sweep to *long* (+) range or *very-long* (++) range.) For example, if your weapon's range is 25m, then you may sweep to another target within 25m of you *and* that is within 25m of the target you just shot.

Ammo is consumed normally. If your weapon runs out of ammo, you'll have to stop sweeping.

As long as you keep winning, you may keep sweeping to new targets… but a sweep never attacks the same target twice. (In other words, no, you can't shoot Alfa, then sweep to Bravo, then bounce back to Alfa.)

Rocket Control

When using a *Rocket* weapon, you may declare a Control action. Until the start of your next turn, multiply all ranges of your Rocket weapon ×5.

Squad Control

When using a *Squad* weapon, you may declare a *control* action. Until the start of your next turn, if someone attacks a target on your side, and that someone is within the base range of your weapon, you may *interrupt* to attack the attacker with your *Squad* weapon. Play out your attack. Your target defends normally, which means they may counter or dodge.

Throwing Expert

When you throw a *Thrown* weapon at someone, you may claim a +2 throwing bonus on your attack roll, and you may attack up to the listed Throw range ×2.

Unencumbered (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Declare you will tap this talent. Until your next turn, ignore the *burden* effect. (You may now Dash and you do not suffer the –5 dodge penalty.) This is no use when you are *overburdened*.

"When there is freedom from mechanical conditioning, there is simplicity."
– Bruce Lee, Tao of Jeet Kune Do

Talents for unarmed combat

These talents improve your ability to fight without weapons.

Popular Choice

Brawling Advantage

You may take an extra action every turn: an Attack action, but only to make a *Brawling* attack. (That is, an attack with a weapon that has the *Brawling* descriptor, such as your bare hands.)

The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same round" still applies.

Brawling Counter–Moves (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Is someone attacking you? Are they within 5m? Can you move across that distance? Can you counter? If the answer to all these questions is "yes", you may tap this talent, then declare you will counter using a Brawling attack. Move yourself next to the attacker, then play out the attack vs. counter.

Brawling Equalizer

While you have *no* weapons equipped, you may claim a bonus 1d6 to all attacks and counters that have the *Brawling* descriptor. Remember that you can drop your weapons without using an action, but safely holstering them requires an Equip action.

Wrestling Specialty

You may claim a +5 specialty bonus to all attacks and counters that have the *Wrestling* descriptor.

```
!X id1
id1: Friar Tuck... I am under attack!
  Pray save me!
  id1: Off (aborted)
id2: Fear not, friend Robin! I shall rout
  the Sheriff of Nottingham's men!
id1: Thank you, my good fellow!
– "Robin Hood" and "Friar Tuck"
```

Talents that help allies

These talents give your allies bonuses.

Bleeding Heart

Whenever you are *panicked*, all allies may claim a +2 assist bonus to attack rolls.

Bodyguard (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

Is someone attacking a friend within 2m of you? Tap this talent, then swap places with that friend. *You* are now the target, and you may counter or dodge in their place.

If the attack included multiple targets, you only get attacked once, and the friend is not attacked at all – even if you and your friend were *both* targets of the attack!

Popular Choice

Leadership

You may claim a +5 leadership bonus to the Aid Another action in combat.

"Best known for its use in ballistic and stab-resistant body armor, Kevlar® brand aramid fiber has shown its own heroism in helping to save the lives of thousands of people around the world."
– DuPont publicity blurb

Talents that improve soak

These talents improve your ability to overcome damage.

Popular Choice

Armor Critical

Are you wearing an outfit that grants an *Armor bonus*? Whenever you make a Soak roll, if you roll a critical (doubles or better), you may claim a +5 proficiency bonus to your Soak.



Armor Soak (1/Fix)

(Multiple)

Did you just take damage? Are you currently wearing an Outfit that grants an Armor bonus?

If the answer to both of those questions is "yes", then you may tap this talent.

Tap this talent for a +3d6 armor bonus to a Soak roll

To refresh this talent, fix or replace your armor.

You may take this talent multiple times

If you have multiple Armor Soak talents, you may tap each Armor Soak *only once* per Soak roll. (Multiple Armor Soaks let you boost multiple Soak rolls.)

Popular Choice

Combat Soak (1/chapter)

(Major)

Were you just hit by an attack or a counter? Did you fail to soak all the damage? If the answer to both of these questions is yes, you may tap this talent.

Tap this talent for a +20 combat bonus to a Soak roll vs. an attack or counter's Damage

This talent recharges at the start of the next chapter.

This talent only works from Damage effects made from attacks or from counters. It has no effect on environmental damage (such as falling). As always, the Game Host should decide what is appropriate and what isn't for Combat Save.

This talent is a Major Talent. Minor characters, such as allies or minor adversaries, may not have this talent.

You recharge this talent at the start of the next chapter.

Popular Choice

Hurt Soak (1/Heal)

You don't have time to bleed.

Tap this talent for a +10 hurt bonus to a Soak roll.

You may recharge this talent if you take five minutes to apply first aid. (2d6+Int+Wis vs. 10, medicine helps.)

You may take this talent multiple times

If you have multiple Hurt Soak talents, you may tap each Hurt Soak *only once* per Damage effect. (Multiple Hurt Soaks let you soak multiple Damage effects.)

A single, successful first-aid can recharge *all* Hurt Soak talents.

Popular Choice

Injury Soak (1/Day)

(Multiple)

Tap this talent when you make a Soak roll.

Tap this talent for a +15 injury bonus to a Soak roll.

This talent recharges on the next day.

You may take this talent multiple times

If you have multiple Injury Soak talents, you may tap each Injury Soak *only once* per Damage effect. (Multiple Injury Soaks let you soak multiple Damage effects.)

Popular Choice

Toughness (1/Day)

(Multiple)

A talent found on tougher characters, the Toughness talent both increases the pool of Soak Dice and can be tapped for extra Soak.

While untapped, you may claim a *spare die* with all Soak roll.

For example, if your Soak roll is normally 3d6 +4, this talent increases your roll to "best 3 of 4d6 +4".

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 tough bonus to a Soak roll

Tap this talent to claim a +5 tough bonus to a Soak roll. Yes, you may wait until after you have rolled to tap this talent for the +5 bonus.

After tapping this talent, you may no longer roll the bonus die.

You may take this talent multiple times

Each additional Toughness talent grants you one more spare die. For example, you could increase to "best 3 of 5d6 +4", "best 3 of 6d6 +4", "best 3 of 7d6 +4", etc.

You may tap each Toughness talent separately for +5 tough bonuses, each time. For a single check, you cannot stack a tough bonus above +10.

Each time you tap this talent, you lose one Toughness die.



"Strategy is a system of expedients."
– Helmuth von Moltke

Talents that improve combat in general

These talents provide an overall combat bonus.

Popular Choice

Cool (1/Guard)

(Initiative)

At the start of your turn, tap this talent to remove the *panicked* effect on yourself.

Popular Choice

Danger Sense

You may claim a +5 assist bonus to any initiative roll.

In addition, if you score 15 or more on an initiative roll, not only may you equip gear as normal, you may also declare a Ready action, as "ready to attack anyone who attacks me". (Yes, that means if the other side is going first, you may interrupt them to use an attack against them!)

Frenzy (1/Scene)

(Initiative)

Whenever you are *enraged* or *berserk*, you may claim a bonus 1d6 to all attack rolls and a bonus 1d6+Cha to all Soak rolls.

At any time, you may tap this talent to become *enraged*.

An enraged character must declare an Attack action every round, and they are not permitted to take Aid Another actions. They do not need to attack allies, but they must attack *someone* or *something* each round.

Popular Choice

Resolve (1/Hide)

(Initiative)

At any time, tap this talent to remove the *stunned* effect on yourself.

Popular Choice

Veteran

You may claim a +2 veteran bonus with all attack rolls, all counter rolls, and all dodge rolls.

"The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they - at some distant point in the future - will take over the reins. Yet the fact is that the society is not running itself nicely... because the rest of us need all the energy, brains, imagination and talent that young people can bring to bear down on our difficulties. For society to attempt to solve its desperate problems without the full participation of even very young people is imbecile."
– Alvin Toffler, Future Shock

Age Talents

These talents modify your attributes based on your character's life experience.

Minerva

(Age, Unique)

You came into existence only a short time ago. You may be an artificial intelligence or a genetically–engineered life form that was forced into an early maturity. You see things with new eyes, but you lack worldly experience.

Increase your Constitution and Wisdom by 1. Decrease your Intelligence by 1.

Decrease your Profile by 2.

① Unique: You may have only one "Age" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Age" descriptor.

Old

(Age, Unique)

You have a lot of life experience, even if others mutter about how you're past your prime.

Increase your Intelligence and Wisdom by 1. Decrease your Constitution by 1.

Increase your Profile by 1.

You may claim a +2 assist bonus to all credit-check rolls, and to any other rolls where being old would help you.

① Unique: You may have only one "Age" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Age" descriptor.

Young

(Age, Unique)

You're naïve and inexperienced, but you're also in the prime of life.

Increase your Dexterity and Constitution by 1. Decrease your Wisdom by 1.

Decrease your Profile by 1.

You may claim a +2 assist bonus to any rolls where being a spunky kid without a care in the world would help you.

① Unique: You may have only one "Age" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Age" descriptor.

> "We began to recognize in them a strange obsession. After all, they are emotionally inexperienced, with only a few years in which to store up the experiences which you and I take for granted. If we gift them with a past, we create a cushion or a pillow for their emotions, and consequently, we can control them better."
> – Eldon Tyrell, Blade Runner

Origin Talents

These talents give your character unusual advantages, based on where they came from.

Artificial Intelligence

(Origin, Post–Human, Unique)

You are a computer program or other simulated intelligence running on a computer brain.

Increase your Dexterity and Intelligence by 1. Decrease your Wisdom and Charisma by 1.

Your artificial brain runs special firmware that assists you in using computers. (See page 110 for more information about software and firmware.)

- The Productivity Suite firmware lets you claim a +2 equipment bonus to Computer skill.
- The Productivity Suite firmware lets you claim a +2 equipment bonus to Computer skill. The Singularity firmware means you can, at the start of your turn, de-slot any and all Programs from computers Friendly to you, then slot to add any others, without taking a Control action.

① Unique: You may have only one "Origin" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Origin" descriptor.

Clone

(Origin, Post–Human, Unique)

You are a genetically-engineered copy of someone else, who may be alive or dead. You have the transplanted or simulated memories of someone else in your head. You were brought to term using accelerated-growth technology, which has had adverse effects on your motor skills. Cloning is banned in some countries, and it is discriminated against in many more.

Increase your Constitution and Wisdom by 1. Decrease your Dexterity by 1.

You may claim a +2 assist bonus to pass for your original (or for another clone of your original, if that comes up).

① Unique: You may have only one "Origin" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Origin" descriptor.

Genie

(Origin, Post–Human, Unique)

You are a genetically-engineered, intelligently-designed life form. You may have a strange appearance that singles you out in a crowd.

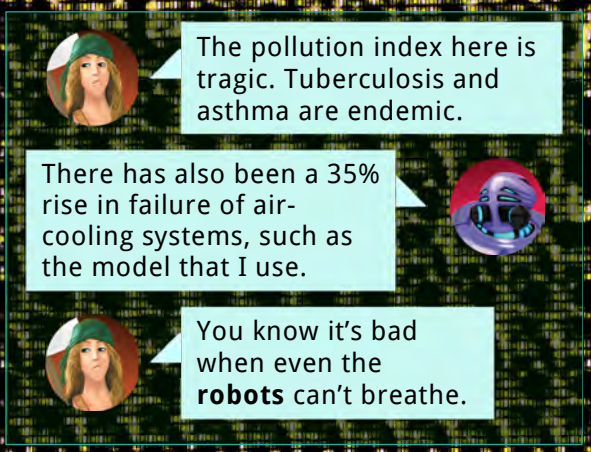
Increase your Strength and Constitution by 1. Decrease your Charisma by 1.

① Unique: You may have only one "Origin" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Origin" descriptor.

Ally Talents

These talents let your Player have other Minor Characters to help them out.



Ally [who has 3 Talents of Choice]

(Major, Plot)

You have a friend! Your friend has average attributes (zeros in all of them). Your Ally has one Job Talent, one Skill Talent, and any single other talent that they can qualify for. Since an Ally is a minor character, your Ally may not have any talent that has the *Major* descriptor.

If your Ally is killed, destroyed, or otherwise lost, you will have to re-train this talent.

Gang of Irregulars

⚠ *Requires* the Ally talent

(Major, Plot)

You have a gang that follows you around and that keeps you up to date on things.

To recruit Irregulars, once per day, roll 2d6+Int+Cha, +2 assist bonus from your Ally (if available), and add +1 for each Insider talent that you have. The assist bonus you score is how many Irregulars show up. (For example, if you roll 17, that's good for a +3 assist bonus, so 3 Irregulars show up.) Each time you roll, your count resets, and you can't count on the same people showing up the second time, either.

Irregulars have +0 in all attributes, and they have only two talents: "Local Knowledge Specialty" of where they come from, and a Job talent chosen by the Game Host (or assigned randomly). The game host also decides what gear they have.

If you gain too much Heat, or if you otherwise abuse the trust of your fellows, your gang of irregulars will ditch you.

Improved Ally: [Talent of Choice]

⚠ *Requires* the Ally talent

(Manifold)

Your Ally has one additional talent. This talent can be any one that they qualify for. (Remember, Allies can't have Major talents, since they are minor characters.)

If your Ally is killed, destroyed, or otherwise lost, you will have to re-train this talent.

Manifold: You may improve your Ally more than once

Each time you buy this "Improved Ally" talent, choose a different talent to give to your Ally.

"Welcome to Big Time Television. All day and every day, making tomorrow seem like yesterday. Now remember when we said there was no future? Well, this is it. Right! Next up, more of the same."
– Blank Reg, "Body Banks"

Identity Talents

In the Information Age, identities are bought and sold by social media, they are tracked by governments and corporations. Some people have dropped out of the system entirely ... and others are unfortunate slaves.

Blank

(Identity, Unique)

You have removed your ID numbers from the computer network, or you were never in the network in the first place. Your lifestyle has you living off the grid.

Raise your Charisma by 1. Lower your Intelligence by 1.

You may not purchase items using debit. All your transactions must be cash only. You can't use debit, because you have no debit history – you're not indexed in any banking records. If you have credit, you may still use that.

When a new chapter starts, reduce your Profile by rolling 2d6. (Characters without this talent only roll 1d6).

All Watch Checks made against you suffer a –1d6 penalty.

You may claim a +2 assist bonus where not having any history would help you.

① Unique: You may have only one "Identity" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Identity" descriptor.

Celebrity

(Credit, Identity, Unique)

You are famous all over the world!

Raise your Charisma by 1.

All Watch Checks made against you roll +1d6.

You may purchase Decoy-, Luxury- and Superior-grade items on credit

You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha to purchase items using your credit history.

① Unique: You may have only one "Identity" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Identity" descriptor.

Identity Thief (1/chapter)

(Credit, Identity, Unique)

Who are you, really?

You may claim a +2 assist bonus on rolls to pass as someone else. You can assume other identities at any time. You have several "weak" identities you can use to quickly pass background checks. Even if people discover your "real" identity, your fake identities have their own histories attached to them, so who you really are isn't as important as what you've been doing.

You can assist other people by lending them your fake identities, when having a new identity is useful. Roll 2d6+Int+Cha for your assist roll.

You have two Profiles instead of one

You still have only one Heat rating. The other Profile starts the game at zero.

Any time you get a Profile increase or decrease, choose which one of the Profiles changes. The Game Host rolls the Watch Check using the one that just increased. For example, if you have two Profiles of +7 and +3, and you just got a profile gain of +2, you could put the +2 on the +3. You would then have profiles of +7 and +5, and you would trigger a Watch Check at +5.

Any time you are not rolling a Watch Check, you may tap this talent to drop one of your Profiles down to zero. This talent recharges at the start of the next chapter.

① Unique: You may have only one "Identity" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Identity" descriptor.

Property

(Identity, Unique)

You belong to someone else – a person, a government, a corporation. Injuring or destroying you is considered vandalism, not murder.

Raise your Dexterity and your Wisdom by 1. Lower your Charisma by 1.

You may claim a +2 assist bonus on rolls to influence your owners.

① Unique: You may have only one "Identity" talent

You may not have any other talent with the "Identity" descriptor.

"The purpose of the Cyborg ... is to provide an organizational system in which such robot-like problems are taken care of automatically and unconsciously, leaving man free to explore, to create, to think, and to feel."
– Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline, "Cyborgs and Space"

Augmentation Talents

These are talents where human and machine are combined.

Augmented Reality

(Bionic, Post-Human)

You have an array of enhanced senses and a computer link that connects directly to your senses, called *augmented reality* or AR.

Increase your Wisdom by 1.
Decrease your Dexterity by 1.

You have a built-in, no-hands computer that can run two slots of *software*. This computer can connect to Wi-Fi and make calls like a cell phone. (See page 110 for more information about software and firmware.)

Your built-in computer also runs two firmware programs:

- The Augmented Interface firmware lets you claim an extra action on your turn – a Control action, to operate an Augmented device.
- The Sensory Enhancement firmware lets you claim a +2 equipment bonus to observing your environment, and lets you treat obscured targets as unobscured.

Bionic Surge (1/Fix)

(Multiple)

You know how to push your bionics past their normal operational parameters.

After making any roll that uses your bionics or prosthetics, you may tap this talent to claim a +5 surge bonus to the roll.

This bonus applies to any roll using Dexterity... *if* your Dexterity was reduced due to bionics or prosthetics.

You recharge this talent by fixing the bionics or prosthetics you used to claim the surge. (In game terms, you only have to make the usual repairs. In story terms, however, it's assumed you blew the fail-safes on the device to push it past its limits, and those features have to be replaced before you can use this again.)

You may take this talent multiple times

Each additional "Bionic Surge" talent grants you one more use of the +5 surge bonus. However, you may only claim the +5 surge bonus once per roll.

Cyber Body (1/Fix)

(Bionic, Cyber, Post-Human)

Your entire body has been replaced with superior cybernetics. You might be a brain inside a robot shell, or you might be an android.

Increase Strength by 2. Decrease Dexterity by 2.

As long as this talent has *not* been tapped, you look reasonably human. (The game host may call for deceit rolls of 2d6+Int+Cha+2 to convince others that you're not a cyborg.)

You may also claim a +2 cybernetic bonus to rolls involving fighting people in hand to hand combat (Fighting skill), to perform physical feats (Athletics skill), or in other situations where being more human than human would help you.

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 bionic bonus to a Soak roll

Tapping this talent to negate damage reveals your cyber-body to everyone (as sparks fly, fluids leak, metal bends, etc.) and removes your +2 cybernetic bonus to Athletics, Fighting, etc. (Your attributes are unchanged.) Once you're fixed, you get your advantages back.

You may not have any "1/heal" talents.

If you have a Cyber Body, you *cannot* have "1/heal" talents. You don't have any organs to heal! If you had any before you acquired this talent, retrain them.

Cyber Brain (1/Fix)

(Bionic, Cyber, Post-Human)

The outer surface of your brain is encased in a protective shell. This shell serves as a mind-machine interface, letting you use computers to think and your brain to compute. Raise your Intelligence by 1, but lower your Dexterity by 1.

As long as this talent has not been tapped, your brain functions as a built-in, no-hands computer that can run two slots of *software*. This computer can connect to Wi-Fi and make calls like a cell phone. (See the Equipment chapter for more details.)

Your brain runs the Productivity Suite firmware, letting you claim a +2 equipment bonus to Computer skill rolls when you use your brain as a computer.

Your brain runs software.

Software running on your cyber-brain is software running on *your brain*, so you're vulnerable to hacking like a sophontic computer (as per pg. 75).

Your brain has wifi.

Your brain can wirelessly network with other computers.

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 bionic bonus to a Soak roll

Tapping this talent to negate damage reveals your cyber-brain to everyone and disables your on-board computer. This disables your brain's software, firmware, and wifi.

Cyber Limb Graft (1/Fix)

(Bionic, Cyber, Post-Human)

You have an extra cybernetic limb, such as another arm or a tail. Raise your Strength by 1, but lower your Dexterity by 1.

As long as this talent has not been tapped, you may claim the following benefits:

- You may take an extra action every turn: an Equip action.
- You gain a +2 assist bonus on any activity where having another limb would be useful.

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 bionic bonus to a Soak roll

Tapping this talent to negate damage breaks your cybernetic limb. You can't use the limb again until you get it fixed.

Cyber Shell (1/Fix)

(Bionic, Cyber, Post–Human)

You are reinforced with redundant systems. Subtract 1 from your Dexterity.

As long as this talent has not been tapped, you may claim a bonus 1d6+Str+Int to your Soak rolls.

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 bionic bonus to a Soak roll

Until you refresh this talent, you may no longer claim a bonus 1d6+Str+Int to your Soak rolls.

Memory Upgrade

Requires a talent that grants software slots

(Multiple, Post-Human)

Choose any one talent that you have that grants you software slots. Increase its software slots by 1.

You may take this talent multiple times

Each extra talent adds 1 more software slot to one talent of your choice.

Cyber Speed (1/Fix)

(Bionic, Post–Human)

You have move-by-wire reflexes which make you amazingly fast, but they've cost you some of your fine coordination. Subtract 1 from your Dexterity.

Did you just take a Guard or a Scramble action? Is this talent not tapped? You may claim a bonus Scramble or Guard action, whichever you *haven't* taken already. (The standard rule of 'never the same action twice in the same round' still applies.)

Before you roll your dice for a Scramble, you may declare you will use *super-speed*, which grants you a fixed +10 bonus. (If that's too much speed for you to handle, too bad!)

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 bionic bonus to a Soak roll

After you tap this talent, you may no longer claim the bonus action or the super-speed bonus until you can get the bionics fixed.

Cyber Strength (1/Fix)

(Bionic, Cyber, Post-Human)

You have bionically-enhanced strength, which can make you rather clumsy. Add 2 to your Strength, but subtract 2 from your Dexterity.

While this talent is *not* tapped, you may claim the following boons:

- a +2 assist bonus to attack (but not counter!) with *Fighting* weapons.
- a +2 assist bonus with any activity where having cold, unfeeling, artificial muscles would help.
- You may negate one *Burden*.

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 bionic bonus to a Soak roll

After being tapped, your attributes remain the same, but you can no longer negate a Burden, claim the bonuses to attacks, etc., until you can get it fixed.

Weapon Implant (1/Fix)

(Bionic, Cyber, Post-Human)

You have an implanted weapon, which you may use as long as this talent isn't tapped. Lower your Dexterity by 1.

If the weapon is Proscribed, then you are Proscribed, too. Unless you hide your weaponry, you may find it hard to get around in polite society.

You may claim an extra action: an Equip action, but just to equip or to reload your weapon implant.

You may claim a 1d6 bonus when using your implanted weapon. You control it like part of yourself.

Your weapon consumes ammo normally and can be reloaded by an external port.

If the weapon is two–handed, it's so large that it replaces your off–hand. If the weapon is a Burden weapon, you suffer the Burden penalty all the time.

If the weapon is a good–hand weapon, you may mount it inside either hand or forearm (no penalty). You may still hold things in the hand.

If the weapon is an off–hand weapon, you may mount it inside either hand or forearm (no penalty), and the weapon gains the *Undetectable* descriptor.

Tap this talent at any time for a +5 bionic bonus to a Soak roll

Once tapped, the weapon is broken and can't be used again until it is fixed.

"The US government may try to encourage people to place their data where the US government can seize it without showing them a search warrant, rather than in their own property. However, as long as enough of us continue keeping our data under our own control, we can still do so. And we had better do so, or the option may disappear."
– Richard Stallman, The Guardian

Hacker Talents

These talents improve your ability to work with computers in ways you're not supposed to.

Bot-Net (+1 Profile)

(Hacker)

You have a personal *bot-net*: several computers slaved to you, throughout the world. These computers are running a virus that waits for a cue for you to launch a distributed-systems attack.

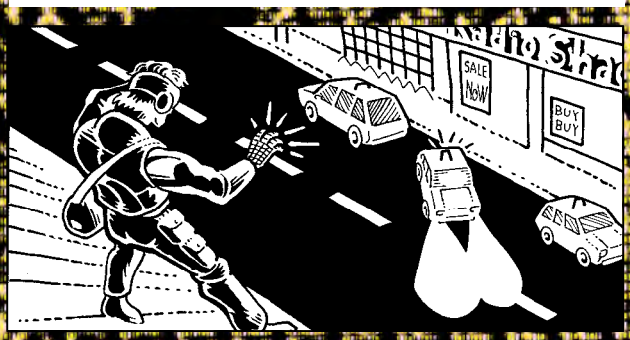
While you have a working telecom, tap this talent to activate these zombies to give yourself a +10 distributed bonus to any one computing roll, provided you have a net connection to your bot-net. Using this ability immediately raises your Profile by 1 and triggers a Watch Check.

Cracking (0/+1 Profile)

(Hacker)

By using secret computer methods, you may claim *three spare dice* to any roll to change a computer's attitude.

By using not-so-secret computer methods, you can claim *an additional* +3d6 cracking bonus ... but claiming this bonus immediately raises your Profile rating by 1 and triggers a Watch check.



Code Grinder

(Hacker)

You may claim a +5 coding bonus to make your own software (per pg. 121.)

When using software that you crafted, yourself, you may claim a +2 DWIM bonus to any rolls benefiting from that software. For example, if you use Productivity Suite software that you crafted yourself, you gain a (+2+2=) +4 bonus. Other users don't get that DWIM bonus. (You may not understand why they don't appreciate your functional, elegant code.)

If you craft your own malware, that malware's removal DC is increased by 5 when you install it.

If you begin play with the Code Grinder talent and any software, you may declare that you coded all that software yourself, and thus you would get the +2 DWIM bonus when using it.

Data Miner

(Hacker)

When using computers or telecommunications, you may take 10 times as long to perform the task for a +5 mining bonus to whatever you're doing.

Deleting Records (1/chapter)

(Hacker)

While you have a working telecom, you may use viruses and exploits to reduce your profile. Declare a Control action, then tap this talent. Reduce the Heat rating (if any) on you *and* your other party members by one die, *and* reduce the Profile rating on you and your party members by 2.

False Data

(Hacker)

By employing sophisticated software that can falsify sensory input, you know how to alter the perceptions of computers.

When you have a working telecom, you may claim a +5 ghost bonus to Evasion skill vs. any cybernetic system. That's +5 to hide, to sneak, and (most importantly) to dodge. You may claim this bonus vs. any system that uses any cybernetic enhancement at all – augmented reality, smart sighting, an assist bonus from a computer, etc.

Phreaking

(Hacker)

You are an expert at using digital communication systems.

While you have a working telecom, you may shut down or jam communications. Declare a "control" action, then make a Telecom roll of 2d6+Int+Wis+2 vs. 10. If you are successful, you may shut down all digital communications for your opponent's side, meaning they no longer have a working telecom.

To restart digital communications after you've been shut down, declare a Control action and make a Telecom roll of 2d6+Int+Wis+2 vs. any roll made to shut your own communications down. (You do not need the Phreaking talent to do this, but you do need appropriate equipment.)

You may claim a +2 phreaking bonus to all telecom rolls. (Yes, that +2 is already included in the rolls above.)

System Optimizer

(Hacker)

Other people's computers are a mess of bloatware, fragmentation, and legacy code. You know better.

Any computer that you use gains +1 *Software slot*.

If anyone else who does not have this talent uses that computer, it immediately loses the extra slot. If the loss of that slot means there's not enough space for all the programs, the computer immediately crashes. (You can try to explain to people what they did wrong, but they won't understand you!)

"The whole privatization of the biological world has to be looked at, so we don't suddenly all find ourselves in the position of saying, 'How did we get here? Everything is owned."
– Stuart Newman, Washington Post

Genetic Talents

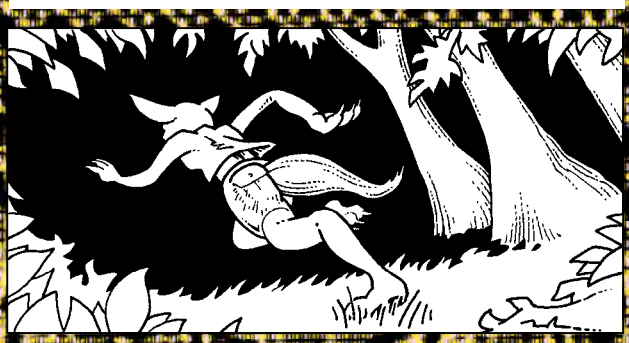
These talents work on the genetically modified.

GMO Bio–Weapons

(GMO, Post-Human)

You have claws, teeth, thorns, and other strange weapons. You can use the GMO Bio-Weapons attack (per page 101), and you may claim a +2 genetic bonus to all attacks and counters made with them, and to any rolls where having bio–weapons would be useful.

GMO Bio-Weapons don't have to be equipped. They are always ready for use.



GMO Constitution (1/Day)

(GMO, Multiple, Post-Human)

Your body has been designed to be extra resilient.

Did you just make a roll that requires Constitution? Declare you will tap this talent to claim a +5 genetic bonus to your Constitution for this one roll.

∞ You may take this talent multiple times

Each time gives you an extra use of GMO Constitution, but you may still only claim this bonus once per roll.

GMO Monster

(GMO, Post-Human)

Genetic modification has made you into a hulking freak that is a mockery of God's master plan.

Add 2 to your Strength. Add 1 to your Constitution.

Subtract 1 from your Dexterity. Subtract 1 from your Charisma.

GMO Regeneration 1/scene

⚠ *Requires* at least one "1/heal" talent

(GMO, Post-Human)

You have superhuman regeneration. At any time, tap this talent to recharge all of your "1/heal" talents. This talent recharges five minutes later (at the start of the next scene).

You may claim a +2 genetic bonus to any roll to resist a chemical or electro-muscular effect. You may also claim that bonus to resist poison, disease, or anything else where having rapid regeneration would help you.

GMO Senses

(GMO, Post-Human)

You have enhanced senses. You can see infrared and ultraviolet light. You can hear ultrasonic sounds. Your sense of smell is highly developed, so you can track people by scent.

You can treat *obscured* targets as unobscured, but *concealed* targets are still concealed.

You may claim a +2 genetic bonus where having enhanced senses would help you.

GMO Speed (1/Guard)

(GMO, Initiative, Post-human)

You are capable of amazing bursts of speed. Tap this talent – then, until your next turn, you may claim a +2 genetic bonus to your dodge rolls, +10m to your Dash, and +3d6 to your Scramble.

GMO Soak

(GMO)

You are made of sterner stuff. Add +2 genetic bonus to your Soak.

∞ You may take this talent multiple times

You may take this talent up to four more times, for a maximum +10 genetic bonus to Soak.

GMO Strength (1/Day)

(GMO, Multiple, Post-human)

You have extra reserves of strength.

Did you just make a roll that requires Strength? Declare you will tap this talent to claim a +5 genetic bonus to your Strength for this one roll.

∞ You may take this talent multiple times

Each time gives you an extra use of GMO Strength, but you may still only claim this bonus once per roll.

> "Making is fundamental to what it means to be human. We must make, create, and express ourselves to feel whole. There is something unique about making physical things. Things we make are like little pieces of us and seem to embody portions of our soul."
> – Mark Hatch, The Maker Movement Manifesto

Maker Talents

These talents help you when crafting things.

Chemistry

(Maker)

You may claim a +5 maker bonus on rolls that involve knowing, crafting, and working with chemicals.

If you take 5 times as long to work on your chemistry, you may claim an additional +5 maker bonus.

When you first buy this talent, you immediately gain one Premium-cost, Scrounged-grade item of your choice … if it could have been crafted with chemistry.

Electronics

(Maker)

You may claim a +5 maker bonus on rolls that involve knowing, crafting, repairing, and disabling electronic devices.

If you take 5 times as long to work on an electronic device, you may claim an additional +5 maker bonus.

When you first buy this talent, you immediately gain one Premium-cost, Scrounged-grade item of your choice … if it could have been crafted with electronics.

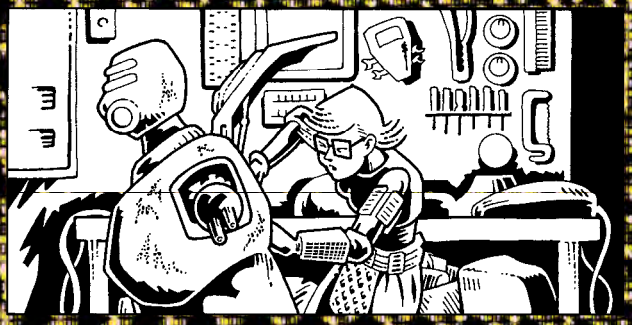
Mechanics

(Maker)

You may claim a +5 maker bonus on rolls that involve knowing, crafting, repairing, and disabling mechanical devices.

If you take 5 times as long to work on a mechanical device, you may claim an additional +5 maker bonus.

When you first buy this talent, you immediately gain one Premium-cost, Scrounged-grade item of your choice … if it could have been crafted with mechanics.



Packrat 1/Special

You may carry a bag of assorted rare parts and junk around with you.

As an Equip action, you can reach into your bag of stuff and pull out an item. Make a roll of 2d6+Int+Wis. You may instantly produce any one *Scrounged-grade* equipment of that grade or less. (In the game narrative, you built it a while ago, and just happened to have it on hand.) You suffer no Watch checks, even if the item is Premium, Extravagant, Proscribed, etc. Make a note of what you just scored!

To recharge this talent, you must spent one hour scrounging for replacement parts. You must roll 2d6+Int+Wis vs. the DC of the item you just crafted.

"Encounters with death and danger are only adventures to the survivors."
—Robert Anton Wilson, Masks of the Illuminati

Major Talents

You may only take these talents if you are a major character or a player-character. Minor characters (such as allies) may not have these talents.

Luck (1/chapter)

(Major, Multiple, Plot)

Tap this talent to add *three spare dice* to *any roll.*

Like all talents, using the Luck ability has to be approved by the Game Host. Luck should be used to get your character out of trouble, for the miracle saves at just the last moment. Luck should not be used as a hammer to just get your way.

∞ You may take this talent multiple times

Each Luck talent adds three more spare dice to any roll.

Overconfidence

(Major, Plot)

Before you make a skill roll, you may declare that you will use *overconfidence.* You suffer a –7 penalty, but you may roll a bonus 2d6.

Social Talents

These talents enhance your social relationships.

Black Marketer

(Credit)

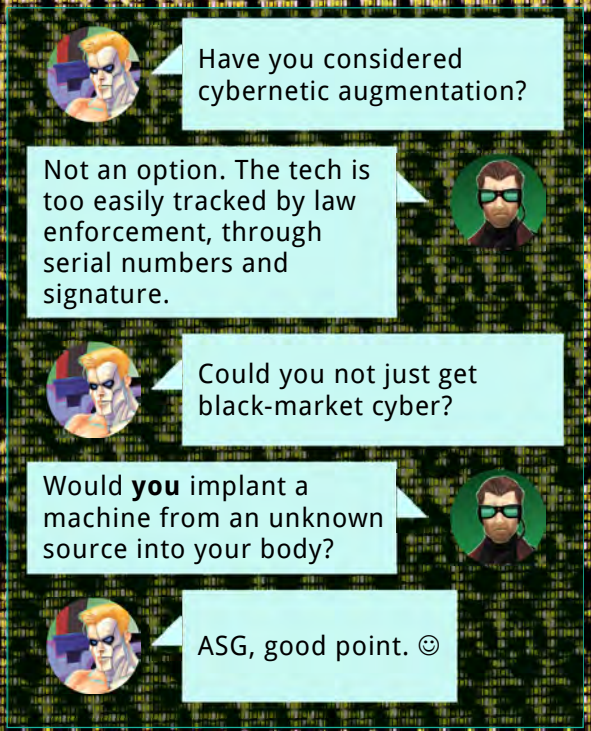
When you buy Proscribed items, your Profile Rating increases by only +1. (Characters without this talent would suffer a +2 increase.)

You may gain 10% of the cash value for liquidating a Proscribed item. (Characters without this talent only get 5% for liquidating Proscribed items.)

You may purchase Proscribed items on credit (Profile)

This talent enables you to purchase Proscribed items using *credit*, instead of debit or money. You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha, with a +5 assist bonus. (Using this talent may increase your Profile – see the credit check rules for more details.)

This talent only enables you to purchase Proscribed items on credit. To purchase other, non-proscribed items on credit, you will have to use other abilities.



"[T]he current state of UNIX is the result of the labors of a large number of people. ... I have not worked on mainstream UNIX in many years, yet I continue to get undeserved credit for the work of others. Therefore, I am not going to talk about UNIX, but I want to thank everyone who has contributed."
– Ken Thompson, "Reflections on Trusting Trust"

Common Reward for Accomplishing Goals

Favor with [Organization of choice] (1/chapter)

(Plot)

You can gain important information without going through the time and trouble of doing a lot of research. Favors can also be used to acquire the loan of equipment or documents, or to receive other minor assistance in the course of an adventure.

Make a favor roll, rolling 2d6 + Intelligence + Charisma. The Host sets the DC based on the scope of the favor being requested. The DC ranges from 10 for a simple favor to as high as 30 for formidable and highly dangerous, expensive, or illegal favors. Appropriate talents and assists may add bonuses to this roll.

If your roll is successful, the character grants you the favor. *Tap this talent.* This talent recharges at the start of the next chapter.

If your roll is unsuccessful, your favor is denied. *Do not tap this talent.*

Favors should help advance the plot of an adventure. A favor that would enable a character to avoid an adventure altogether should always be unavailable to the character, regardless of the result of a favor roll.

The Host should carefully a player's use of favors to ensure that this ability isn't abused. The success or failure of a mission shouldn't hinge on the use of a favor, and getting a favor shouldn't replace good role–playing or the use of other skills. The Host may disallow any favor that is disruptive to the game.

Flea Marketer

(Credit)

You can liquidate *Scrounged-grade* goods at 10% of their cost. (Other characters may not liquidate Scrounged goods.)

You may claim a +5 bonus on all rolls to notice if an item is *Malicious-grade*. (You gain no bonus to sell them, sadly.)

You may purchase Decoy-grade, Inferior-grade, and Scrounged-grade items on credit (Profile)

This talent enables you to purchase Decoy-grade, Inferior-grade, and Scrounged-grade items using *credit*, instead of debit or money. You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha. (Using this talent may increase your Profile – see the credit check rules for more details.)

This talent only enables you to purchase Decoy, Inferior, and Scrounged items on credit. To purchase other grades on credit, you will have to use other abilities.

Common Reward for Accomplishing Goals

Insider with [Crowd of Choice]

(Credit, Manifold)

You may claim a +5 assist bonus on rolls related to your crowd of choice, such as to negotiate terms or to gain insider information.

You may claim a +5 bonus to hack into computers and into *Malicious-grade items* that are friendly to your appropriate Insider group. You may use a computer to send signals to shut down Malicious-grade equipment friendly to your Insiders, by rolling 2d6 + Int + Cha + Insider's 5 vs. 15.

You may purchase items on credit (+1 Profile)

You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha to purchase items using your insider connections. You may claim a +2 assist bonus from your Insider connections.

Each time you use this ability, raise your Profile by 1.

You may claim a cash advance (+1 Profile or more)

You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha to get money advanced to you, by calling in favors from your insider buddies. You may claim a +2 assist bonus from your Insider connections.



Getting a cash advance always increases your Profile, which also forces a Watch Check. See the Equipment and Economy chapter for more details.

You may have many different Insider talents

Each time you buy this *Manifold* talent, choose a different crowd to be an Insider with.

Each extra Insider talent after the first adds another +2 assist bonus to future credit-check rolls. (The maximum assist bonus is +10.)

Pirate Marketer

(Credit)

You may claim a +5 bonus to liquidate Bootleg-grade, Cracked-grade, Knockoff-grade, or Malicious-grade equipment.

You may claim a +5 bonus on all rolls to notice if an item is *Malicious-grade*.

You may purchase Bootleg-, Cracked-, Decoy-, and Malicious-grade items on credit (+1 Profile)

You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha to purchase such items, with a +5 assist bonus. Each time you use this ability, raise your Profile by 1.

This talent only lets you buy Bootleg-grade, Cracked-grade, Knockoff-grade, or Malicious-grade equipment on credit. To buy items of other grades, you will need other talents.



Unlimited Access (+1 Profile)

You may claim a +3d6 bonus to rolls to gain access to private functions, social gatherings, exclusive perks at hotels, backstage at concerts, and to other places where the general public isn't admitted without special consideration. Whenever you claim this bonus, add 1 to your Profile.

Wealth

(Credit, Multiple)

You command vast sums of money, from your various investments, inheritance, off-shore accounts, or what have you.

The Game Host may rule that you have enough disposable income to buy a Bargain and Standard item using your vast disposable income, without worrying about the details of a credit check.

You may purchase Luxury- and Superior-grade items on credit (+0 Profile or more)

Tap this talent to purchase any item on credit. You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha. Each wealth talent that you have allows you to claim a +5 unlimited bonus on this roll.

You are already wealthy, so using this talent doesn't increase your Profile by itself... but what you're buying with credit will, because Luxury and Superior items are Extravagant.

You may claim a cash advance (+1 Profile or more)

You may roll 2d6+Int+Cha to get money advanced to you, by calling in favors from your insider buddies. You may claim a +5 wealthy bonus on the check.

Getting a cash advance always increases your Profile, which also forces a Watch Check. See the Equipment and Economy chapter for more details.

You may take this talent multiple times

Each Wealth talent lets you claim another +5 unlimited bonus to the credit check. (The rich get richer while the poor get the picture.)

"There will come a time when it isn't 'They're spying on me through my phone' anymore. Eventually, it will be 'My phone is spying on me'."
– attributed to Philip K. Dick

The Information Age

The 20th century saw the rapid rise of information technology. Where once it could take days to send a message to the other side of the country by post, almost overnight it was possible to send a radio message or a telegram to half a world away in mere seconds. *Digital media* allowed for perfect copying of books, music, and video. The invention of the *World Wide Web* made accessing this digital information easier than ever. Futurists talk of an inevitable *singularity*, where all information is shared instantly, all of the time, with a web of digital minds. That hasn't happened yet, but there's still a lot of amazing things that you can do with a computer.

Readme.txt – A Summary

Phones, robots, workstations, tablets, self-driving cars, etc, are all computers. Almost everything in the future has a computer in it, and a good hacker can exploit all of them.

Computers have an attitude toward you (Helpful, Hostile, etc) which determines how they treat you. If you can connect to a computer at all, you can use Computer skill to adjust its attitude with hacking. Most hacking is represented by changing the attitudes of computers.

You can use computers as tools to do all sorts of things depending on their software. There is a limit to how much software a computer can run at once, and not all computers can run all software.

You can use special hacking software to make other computers run whatever software you want. The software that you inject can make the computer vulnerable to you, impede whoever's using the computer, or make the computer believe falsehoods.

Computers can be people, and people can be computers. Artificial intelligences, and living creatures whose brains are augmented with digital bionics, may be able to run software. They're usually very good at affecting other computer systems. The downside is that malware and hackers can influence and confuse their thinking.

Connect for Effect

You can't talk people into anything if they can't hear you. Just the same, you can't hack a computer if you can't connect to it.

When can you connect to a computer?

- If it's your computer, or...
- If you can use its keyboard, touch-screen, or other interface, or...
- If it's on the internet and you have a computer with internet access, or...
- If it's on the same wired network as a computer that you are connected to and is Helpful to you, or...
- If it has wifi and is in wifi range of a computer that you are connected to and is Helpful to you, or...
- If you have done some weird, clever trick to get connected to it that isn't listed here.

Most computers have wifi, so getting connected to a computer is usually as straightforward as being near it with your own computer with wifi. However, computers in secure facilities will often be in small wired networks with no wifi and no internet access, meaning you'll need to get creative. The hacking section later on has more examples as to what 'getting creative' may entail.

Computers Have Attitudes

Just like people, computers will have an opinion about you - they're either Helpful, Friendly, Indifferent, Unfriendly, or Hostile towards you. This summarizes how the computer answers questions like, "Is this person allowed to use me?", "Does this person own me?", and the important "Should I kill this person?"

Your relationship with a computer determines how computer systems treat you and what you can get other computers to do.

Secure computers will have rules on who they let in or out. A firewall is any software on a networked computer that only grants access to friendly users. Unfriendly users are blocked.

These rules talk about computers as if they have feelings and emotions. This isn't just a metaphor. In the Permanent Emergency, even mindless computers often have user interfaces that fake intelligence and emotion. A helpful computer will act helpful; a hostile computer will act hostile.

Use a Control action to upgrade your relationship with a computer

Hackers will be able to use exploits, backdoors, and insider information to convince computers to become friendlier, even when they shouldn't have access. Rules for this action are listed under the Hacking section on page 75.

Helpful

A helpful computer actively wants to work with you. A helpful computer trusts you and will give you all access to all its programs.

Your own computer is helpful to you.

You may use a Control action to change out a helpful computer's Software slots, per the rules on page 74.

You may ask a helpful, autonomous computer to perform tasks for you. You don't need a control action to tell it to do things.

Friendly

A friendly computer will let you access it, will let you ask basic questions about what type of computer it is, where it's located, who owns it, etc. A friendly computer only lets you access files that are specifically set up to be shared to other users.

Your computer is friendly to all of your friends and allies.

You can't change the Software slots on a friendly computer. You don't have the access rights to do that.

You may use a Control action to request a friendly computer to do things for you. A friendly computer can then use its software to make Aid Another rolls to help you. A friendly computer does not help you unless you use Control actions to ask it for help.

You may use a Control action to attempt to upgrade a computer's attitude from friendly to helpful. A friendly computer gains a +5 bonus to its resistance DCs or rolls.

Indifferent

An indifferent computer will let you know that it exists by responding to your messages. Until you can convince an indifferent computer that you're an authorized user, it won't give you any more information.

Examples of indifferent computers include automatic teller machines and web servers. Yes, these computers will still serve the public — ATMs still dispense money, web servers still show web pages, etc. — but they won't accommodate any kind of special request, nor will they allow access to any data that isn't specifically public.

Your computer is indifferent to everyone who isn't you or your friends.

You may use a Control action to attempt to upgrade a computer's attitude from indifferent to friendly. An indifferent computer gains a +10 bonus to its resistance DCs or rolls.

Unfriendly

An unfriendly computer doesn't respond to any messages – it rejects them. An unfriendly computer treats you as an unauthorized user. Repeated attempts to talk to it will make the computer call for security. Unlike an indifferent computer, an unfriendly computer isn't interested in talking to anonymous or to public users.

Any computer that's not for general use by the public is unfriendly. Examples include police databases, security cameras, and private corporate LANs. Artificial intelligences who don't know you are assumed to be unfriendly.

You may use a Control action to attempt to upgrade a computer's attitude from unfriendly to indifferent. An unfriendly computer gains a +15 bonus to its resistance DCs or rolls.

Hostile

A hostile computer is actively working to make your life worse. A hostile computer will call security to arrest you. It will attack your own computers with viruses, exploits and other software in an attempt to destroy the computer. It might even order robots to attack you!

To be hostile, a computer must be using appropriate Software. *Antivirus* and *Intrusion Countermeasures* make a computer default to Hostile against unauthorized users. Autonomous computers can be ordered to regard specific people as Hostile. Sophontic computers can decide for themselves who to treat as Hostile.

You may use a Control action to attempt to upgrade a computer's attitude from hostile to unfriendly. A hostile computer gains a +20 bonus to its resistance DCs or rolls.

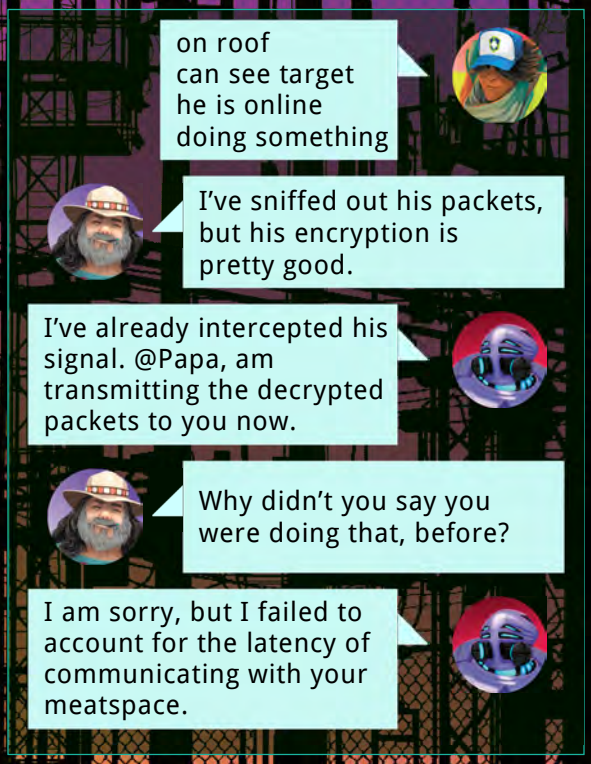
Software

All computers are assumed to run apps, little software that allows basic functions like instant-messaging, digital-photographing, and Tetris-playing. More sophisticated computers will be able to run Software.

Depending on what software a computer is running, a computer can do completely different things. The same tablet might run an autonomous AI, use image processing to reveal hidden enemies, or hack an electronically locked gate, depending on what software it's running.

Computers run software in limited slots

Software needs processing power and memory, and computers only have so much to spread around. In game terms, we measure processing power with software slots. The more powerful a computer is, the more slots for active programs it has.



Software can be swapped in and out of these slots. Some programs take up 1, 2, 3, or more slots. You must have enough slots free to run the entire program. Zero-slot Programs require no slots, so there's no limit on how many a computer can run.

For example, a Tablet Computer (with 2 slots) can run a Data-Mining program (2 slots) or a Database program (1 slot), but not both at the same time (because 2 + 1 = 3 slots, which is more slots than a tablet computer has).

Swap software with a Control action

Each Control action will allow you to de-slot one program out and slot one program in. It doesn't matter how many slots the programs take up - a 6-slot program and a 1-slot program both take a single Control action to slot or de-slot.

Computers have unlimited space to store software

In game terms, there's no practical limit to the number of programs that you can own — not only does your phone have gigabytes of storage space, there's also cloud storage, memory-card slots, the digital marketplace, etc.

Firmware is built-in Software that's always on

Programs that are embedded in the computer itself are called firmware. These programs are always on, whenever the computer is running, and they cannot be disabled without special tools. However, they do not use up any software slots The only downside to firmware is that such software is always running, whether you want it to be or not.

The most common firmware is Social Media. Phones and most other consumer electronics have Social Media as firmware. Most people have no problem with being able to chat and browse the web at any time... However, if that computer gets infected with malware, the microphone and webcam are now tools for other people to use against you!

This is only an abstraction

No one actually sits down in front of their computer and thinks, "I wish my computer had four slots for software instead of three!" These are only game rules made to simplify the complexities of computer systems, not in-setting descriptions of how the world works.

Software is listed in the Equipment/Commerce chapter on page 110

You'll find lists of available software, including applications, artificial intelligences, black-hat hacking tools, and malware.

Hacking

Someone with the right skill and the right tools can make computer systems jump through hoops, tie themselves in knots, and burn themselves to the ground.

You can crack computers into improving their attitude towards you in order to get unauthorized access, or you can install malware on to them using specialized intrusion software.

TL;DR

To stop people from hacking your computer, keep it off the internet. Keep your personal computer's wifi off at all times. Check it for malware regularly, and run *Antivirus* or *Intrusion Countermeasures* software whenever you connect it to a network.

To hack other computers, pick up Talents boosting your Computer skill and make sure the computer you bring on missions has wifi and the *Injection Attack* software. Wear an Outfit with Software slots, such as a Hacker or Cracker Outfit, so that you can hack hands-free.

If you are an AI or have a cyberbrain, they can get hacked, which affects your mind. Be very careful about exposing those to the internet.

Resist hacking with a flat DC or opposed roll

Hacking a computer requires you to pass a check. The DC is listed in the table below.

Hacking an autonomous or sophontic computer requires an opposed roll against the computer. The pool and attributes are listed in the table below. If the defending computer has any talents or traits that boost their computer skill, they apply to this defense roll.

Computers become harder targets as they become more hostile, because they close off more and more avenues of attack.

Target computer is...	Difficulty	Typical bot Int +0 Cha –5	Typical sophont Int +1 Cha –1
...Friendly	vs. 10	vs. 3d6	vs. 3d6+5
...Indifferent	vs. 15	vs. 3d6+5	vs. 3d6+10
...Unfriendly	vs. 20	vs. 3d6+10	vs. 3d6+15
...Hostile	vs. 25	vs. 3d6+15	vs. 3d6+20
...a Player Character	n/a	n/a	vs. 2d6+Int+Cha

Security Software running on the target computer can give the defending computer a bonus to resist this sort of thing.

Target computer is...	Difficulty	Bot/Sophont
...running Intrusion Countermeasures	+2 increase	+2 bonus
...running MILSPEC Intrusion Countermeasures	+5 increase	+5 bonus

Hacking vs. Trust

In game terms, a *hack* is getting a device to do something it normally wouldn't do. For example, an ATM normally wouldn't dispense money for someone who didn't have an account.

Computers are willing to do things for users that they *trust*. People with the appropriate credentials – passwords, thumbprints, voice-pattern, etc. – can gain access to computers that are already friendly or trusting. People without the appropriate credentials can hack a computer to do something it normally wouldn't do ... and that hack is to get the computer to trust them.

Use a Control action to change a computer's attitude, rolling 2d6+Int+Cha

If you can directly access a computer or you're connected to it, you can use a Control action to manipulate it into a friendlier attitude. This doesn't require any special software; it represents exploiting little-known holes in security to bypass restrictions.

Changing the computer's attitude is done by cracking (manipulating the list of users that the computer already has, and upgrading the computer's attitude manually), by spoofing (pretending you are someone else who the computer is already indifferent to) or an arcane combination of both.

Your knowledge of cracking techniques is boosted by your Intelligence. Your knowledge of what passwords people use, what sort of social engineering works, and other things about how people use their computers is boosted by your Charisma. Because of this, rolls to change a computer's attitude start at 2d6+Int+Cha.

Numerous talents, tools, and assists can grant bonuses to hacking rolls. Identity thieves and other criminals may use *social engineering* to find people's login information. Hackers don't just type in strange commands on keyboards – they go through people's personal information to find likely words they would use, root through their trash to see if they've written any passwords down, they fool other system administrators to "re-send my login, but to my new email address", etc. Clever hackers will find all kinds of ways to get leverage on a system they're trying to penetrate.

Attempting to crack a computer requires a Control action. The DC depends on the computer's current attitude towards you, per the chart below. Autonomous and Sophontic computers oppose your roll with a roll of their own in a Contest, using the die pools below.

If you succeed, improve your relationship by one step

A Hostile computer becomes Unfriendly, an Unfriendly computer becomes Indifferent, etc. You can't improve your relationship past Helpful.

If you fail, the computer is alerted and responds

The computer's owner can set it up to react to a failed cracking attempt however they like. Their options include, but are not limited to:

- Immediately becoming Unfriendly (or Hostile, if it has appropriate software)
- Making a permanent record of the attempt
- Notifying security personnel of the attempt (+1 Profile, and thus a Watch Check)
- Deactivating their wireless networking
- Turning off entirely
- Ignoring the failed intrusion attempt (a common choice of incompetent or lazy sysadmins)

Sophontic computers can change their minds

If you convince someone you're a stand-up guy who they should help out, they may change their minds if you follow up by burning down their house. Likewise, if you convince a sophontic computer to be friendly to you - whether through careful diplomacy and charm or through cracking - nothing stops them from getting angry at you again if you give them cause!

Autonomous computers never change their Attitude

An autonomous computer will never change its attitude unless ordered to do so by another person or sophont. A cracker may upgrade a computer's attitude towards them to be friendly, and then not use that computer again for days, weeks, or months. (This is sometimes called "leaving a back door".) Unless an administrator audits the computer and changes its security, that attitude never changes.

A sophontic computer, like a person, can change its mind about people. Sophonts have a moral compass. If they are asked to do things they would consider immoral, or at least against the principles of their primary function, they may change their attitude towards the user controlling them to take those actions. A sophont can ask itself, "why am I doing this?" and then decide not to.

Some player characters may be artificial intelligences or humans whose extensive mind-machine interfaces make them vulnerable to cracking. Player-Character AIs are just as vulnerable as all other computers! However, like all sophonts, a PC AI may use logic, experience, and assists from fellow Player-Characters to see through any deceptions. View these incidents as an opportunity for role-playing.

Like all computers, sophonts are still vulnerable to malware injection.

Use Injection Attack software to install malware with a Control action

Are you equipped with a computer running the Injection Attack software listed on page 111? Do you have a connection to another computer? You can use a Control action to attempt to de-slot a program and slot a new program from your own computer on to that computer!

Normally, you can only slot and de-slot programs on computers that are Helpful to you. Injection Attacks are an exception to that rule.

Roll your Computer skill versus the hacking difficulty for the target computer. If you succeed, you may de-slot one program from the target computer, and slot one program from your own inventory to the target computer.

Use a Control action to order a computer to do things

Are you dealing with a standard or autonomous computer? As long as the computer isn't Hostile, you can attempt to get it to work for you with a Control action. The better its Attitude, the farther you can push things.

Talking to Sophonts is a free action... but you can still Control them

Sophont computers are more like Non-Player Characters. They can make up their own minds. Just like you can talk to your fellow team mates, you can talk to sophonts to get them to do things, without spending a Control action. You can even use the Aid Another action on sophonts, just like you would with other characters.

However, if you have a computer connected to the sophont, you can also use Control actions to force them to change their attitude or perform a task for you.

Sophonts are self-aware, and they can change their own attitude. If you use a Control action to force a sophont do something it doesn't want to do... after performing the task, the sophont will become unfriendly or hostile. You will have to use Control actions to change the attitude back.

Roll 2d6+Int+Cha in order to...	Helpful	Friendly	Indifferent	Unfriendly
Perform maintenance	vs. 10	vs. 15	vs. 20	Impossible
Convince a computer to do its job	Auto	Auto	vs. 10	vs. 20
Convince a computer to do the unusual	vs. 10	vs. 15	vs. 20	Impossible
Convince a computer to do the forbidden	vs. 20	Impossible	Impossible	Impossible
Convince a computer to do the impossible	Impossible	Impossible	Impossible	Impossible
Apply *Cloaking* for ten rounds	vs. 5	vs. 10	vs. 15	vs. 20

Maintenance

Successful maintenance reveals the dates, locations, and times of purged records (see below) and of cloaking. A maintenance check may discover the presence of malware — compare the check result vs. the difficulty to notice the malware.

The Unusual, the Forbidden, and the Impossible

Even unfriendly computers will do *their job* without much trouble. An ATM will fight tooth and nail against anyone trying to poke around in it, but if you give it your debit card it'll spit out cash.

Unusual tasks are outside what the computer normally does, but they aren't explicitly forbidden.

Forbidden tasks are things the computer *could* do, but which it has been specifically instructed to *never* do.

Impossible tasks are things the computer just can't do – no matter what signals the computer spits out, it won't happen!

Example: Oscar needs a ride, so he hacks into a self-driving car. After a few rolls, he convinces the car's autonomous computer to be friendly.

Oscar asks the car to come drive and to pick him up. Driving around town is something the car normally does, and the car is already friendly, so he doesn't have to roll. The car comes to pick him up, no problem.

Oscar then wants the car to drive him off the main highways and into an abandoned industrial complex. While they're still driving on public roads, the complex isn't on the internal map. Driving off the map is unusual - it's something the computer doesn't normally do, but it's not specifically against the rules. Oscar needs to roll vs. 15, which is too high for him to take 10. He rolls 3d6+4, scores 17, and convinces the car to do so.

Unfortunately, it's a trap! Oscar is ambushed, and some thugs are blocking the road. Oscar orders the car to run some people down. Running people over is forbidden - it's definitely on the car's not-to-do list. Oscar will have to upgrade the computer's attitude to Helpful before the car will even consider running people over.

Oscar escapes the ambush, but somehow the police were tipped off and are now pursuing him on the freeway. Oscar orders the car to drive faster. Unfortunately, his car is a civilian model, and it has a mechanical governor inside the engine that prevents it from driving faster than 100kph. The police cruisers that pursue him have no such limitation. It doesn't matter what attitude the computer has, or how high Oscar rolls on his Computer checks — he can't order the car's computer to make the car do something it physically can't do.

Cloaking

When you inflict *Cloaking* on a computer, you specify an individual or a group of similar individuals, and the computer will ignore their presence. Cloaking can be useful for defeating security systems. Cloaking does not remove the actual records — it only hides them so that the computer isn't aware of them. Successful maintenance will restore the records.

Sophontic computers and player characters who have been affected by this trick will unconsciously ignore the specified characters, but successful maintenance can unlock their memory, just as with autonomous or normal computers.

Autonomous computers do their job automatically

You don't have to order an autonomous computer every round. An autonomous computer is capable of taking the standard two actions on its own.

However, an autonomous computer will only do its regular job. An autonomous computer never chooses to take actions that aren't part of its regular job. Following the above example, a self-driving car would never drive off its pre-programmed map, unless told to do so.

"I'm a technical manager but I don't have to take care of people. I only have to worry about technology itself."
– Linus Torvalds, Huffington Post

Use a Control action to aid an computer, rolling 2d6+Dex+Int

You can use a Control action to aid an autonomous — but not sophontic — computer. This control is a special case of the Aid Another action. Roll 2d6+Dex+Int (Computers).

- **5 to 9:** remove *stunned* from an autonomous computer
- **10 to 14:** remove *stunned* and *panicked* from an autonomous computer
- **15 or better:** remove *stunned* and *panicked* from an autonomous computer, then add *quickened*

Note that this is a Control action, and not an Aid-Another action. Under the "never the same action twice in one turn" rule, you could use a Control action to aid a computer, and then use an Aid-Another action to help a character, both on the same turn!

Use a Control action to do a Challenge to modify memory

Computers have memory. They not only have their own internal database of who has logged in and who they've talked to, but they also often record all of their sensory input — conversation logs, chat logs, videos, etc. — in their expansive gigabytes of memory.

Computers on the Internet will often copy their memory to cloud storage, which means that simply destroying the computer won't destroy the records. Instead, a hacker should convince a computer to modify its own memory, which will, in turn, modify the cloud backups.

Each time you fail the challenge attempt, downgrade the computer's attitude

For example, you may want to delete an inconvenient log from your own helpful computer. If you fail to beat the challenge on the first roll, downgrade your own access from helpful to friendly.

In between modify-memory challenges, you may want to switch to a control action to upgrade the computer's attitude, again. You may have to make choices under pressure — waste time switching back and forth between modify-memory and upgrade-attitude, or just go faster and hope the computer doesn't turn hostile too fast.

A computer that turns hostile towards you has locked you out. If you get locked out of your own personal computer – and yes, that *can* happen – other hackers will mock you mercilessly in the social-media forums. The company that sold you the computer will remind you that you violated the terms of the acceptable-use policy, they will ask if you paid extra for the extended-service plan, and they will charge you large sums of money to make your computer helpful again.

Computer Challenge	Helpful	Friendly	Indifferent	Unfriendly	Hostile
Purge Records: 2d6+Int+Cha	vs. 20	vs. 30	vs. 40	vs. 50	Impossible
Wipe Computer: 2d6+Int+Wis	vs. 30	vs. 40	vs. 50	Impossible	Impossible
Secretly Copy Data: 2d6+Int+Wis	vs. 15	vs. 20	vs. 30	vs. 40	Impossible
Falsify Data: 2d6+Int+Cha	vs. 30	vs. 40	vs. 50	Impossible	Impossible

Purge Records

The easy option is to tell a computer to *purge* any logs of your presence. Purging removes the evidence that you were there from any casual observer, but anyone who performs a routine maintenance check will find evidence that someone was there. They won't know who they were – they will just find the evidence that records were purged. To completely remove your tracks, either *falsify* the logs (in effect, telling the computer to lie to people that nothing was deleted) or just *wipe* the whole computer (crash and burn).

Wipe Computer

Also called "the nuclear option", a wipe cleans the computer out. All memory is removed from the computer – *everything*. The computer becomes hostile to everyone. All software crashes and shuts down, but firmware will reboot next round. (So yes, Social Media firmware will restart, but you'll still have to convince the computer all over again that you're not hostile…) The computer can be restored from backups (which were usually made a Chapter ago), but that will take a long time – at least 1 hour per slot that the computer has.

Secret Copy

Normally, when you copy files or memory from a computer, you leave evidence that can be detected with maintenance. It's possible to copy memory from a computer without leaving evidence as a Challenge.

Assume that top-quality video files – 4K resolution and high quality sound – take half as long to copy as it does to play. (For example, copying an ultra-definition 2-hour movie would take 1 hour). Lower quality can be as much as ×10 faster. Audio-only can be thousands of times faster. Still photos and text will transfer almost instantly.

The copy action will either let you download memory from a remote computer to yours… or instead, you can upload from your computer to the remote.

You can also use a copy challenge to force an early backup. Backing up a computer usually takes 1 hour per software slot that the computer has, whether it's being used or not. (Firmware doesn't count, only software slots.)

Falsify

You can also put in fake names, addresses, user logs, and the like, by telling the computer to *falsify* memories. Falsifying can take quite some time, depending on how sophisticated you want to get. For example, changing the access log to list someone else's name, instead of yours, is quick. But putting in fake video evidence will require you to craft the video somehow and to upload it.

You can use a *copy* challenge to upload video to a computer… and then follow that with a *falsify* challenge to then make the copied data look like something the computer may have made in the first place. For example, you could craft your own fake surveillance footage, copy it to a remote computer, then falsify the date, time, and location stamps to make it look like the remote computer had recorded all of this.

"This is the dawn of a new age. No longer do you have to worry just about the theft of money or intellectual property, but also about attacks that are designed to be as destructive as possible—and to influence your behavior."
– Matt Devost, president and CEO of FusionX LLC

Telecoms

All throughout history, humans have used methods to communicate over long distances. Signal flags were flown or waved from a high hill. Messages would be written down and carried from place to place. In the 19th century, electronic signals were sent, first by wire, then later by radio signal. The Information Age had its genesis with the rise of *telecommunications technology*, or "*telecom*" for short.

In the 21st century, telecom is about *unified communications* – all methods to get a message to someone: video-conferencing, social media, instant messaging, texting, phoning, Morse code, what have you. Telecom may be *synchronous*, happening in real time, such as a phone conversation between two people. Telecom can also be *asynchronous*, such as an email that sits in your inbox, waiting to be read.

All telecom gives away your *presence* — information about where you are and what technology you are using. When you call someone using a cellular network, your phone gives your physical location to the signal towers. When you send an email, that message contains all kinds of information about you, such as your location, your computer's make and model, what software you used to make the message, etc. Any device that is constantly connected is also constantly reporting your location.



"The world's urban poor and the illiterate are going to be increasingly disadvantaged and are in danger of being left behind. The web has added a new dimension to the gap between the first world and the developing world. We have to start talking about a human right to connect."
– Tim Berners-Lee, New Statesman

Networks

In the 21st Century, Internet connections are common. Many people use an *Internet Service Provider (ISP)* to connect, usually through a wireless connection such as a smart phone. Most ISPs charge a fee for this service. Many businesses, and even some cities, have wireless ISPs that can used free of charge… provided that you are in range of their *wireless hub*. Using a wireless connection on an ISP that you don't pay for is called *piggybacking*. A skilled hacker can piggyback on someone else's wireless hub, if the security is weak or misconfigured.

Internet and the World Wide Web

When most people think of computers, they think of the *Internet*, the vast network of interconnected computers all around the world. The friendliest part of the Internet is the *World Wide Web*, or just "Web", which has friendly pages with pictures, sound, and video that you can click on.

In the early 21st Century, the Web became host to many *social media sites*. People sign up for these social-media sites, then use them to post personal information such as their names, their locations, their family photos, links to articles that interested them, diary entries about what they did that day, insults to people they don't like, etc. Social media has made people more connected than ever... but the companies that own the social-media sites are also quite invasive into people's privacy.

Deep Web

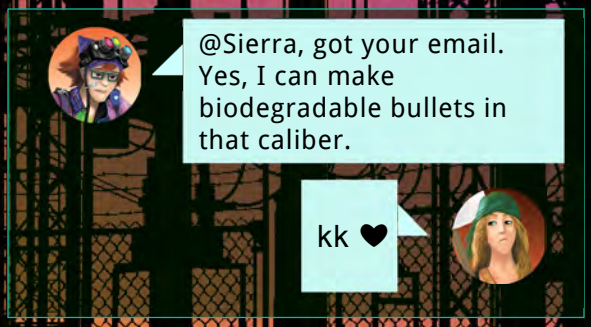
Many web pages can be found using *search engines*. You enter a word, image, or other bit of information, and the search engine reports which web pages use that content.

The *Deep Web* are the websites not indexed by search engines. While still technically a part of the public Internet, the Deep Web isn't a part of the global network that casual users just blunder into.

To find what you're looking for, you have to have insider knowledge on which sites to visit, which passwords to enter, which Internet-Protocol numbers to choose, and (in some cases) which custom software to run. The Deep Web is run by specialists for specialists, so don't expect people to be nice. Many Deep Websites are host to dangerous *viruses*, programs that will infect users who aren't careful and who don't know what they're doing.

Darknet

Not all websites are legal. Unauthorized copies of music, television and film ... top-secret documents ... networks of criminal activities... the Internet is host to a lot more than what the public can see. *Darknets* are peer-to-peer networks that can't be accessed unless you are "in the know." Darknets are password-protected, and they require specialty software.



Darknets are run by people who don't want just anyone accessing their data. To use a Darknet, you either have to be one of the appropriate insiders, or you have to crack the system to let you in. Darknets are usually administrated by sophisticated hackers. Intruding on a Darknet is done at great risk.

Wide-Area Network

The Internet is made up of several smaller networks linked together. A *Wide-Area Network*, or WAN, is a sub-network of many computers talking to each other, distributed over a large area. Banking networks, voting machines, police information, and other networks that aren't publically accessible are examples of WANs. Each WAN has one or more *gateways* – computers that connect to both the Internet and to the WAN, like a bridge that connects an island to the rest of the highways. Most businesses don't have a direct connection to the Internet – a computer on the WAN connects to the gateway, then the gateway connects them to the Internet.

There's two ways to access a WAN. One is to find a gateway and to convince the computer to let you in. Another is to find a computer already connected to the WAN and to use that. Gateways are high-security systems designed to shield against a constant barrage of hackers. WAN computers, however, are inside buildings with physical security – if you can somehow get inside and can connect directly to a WAN computer, you will probably find the digital security is much lighter.

Local Area Network

Even smaller than a WAN, a *Local Area Network*, or LAN, is another sub-network of computers, on a very small scale. LANs are often directly wired to one another – they're so close together that they use wires, which are faster and more secure than wireless.

A LAN may have a gateway that connects to the Internet, or to a Wide-Area Network... but since a gateway is a security risk, a LAN might not have a gateway at all! The only way to access the LAN is to physically travel to where the LAN is, and to use a computer there. LANs without gateways include research facilities, top-secret government networks, and private repositories.

Artificial Intelligence

Robots and computer-programs may have the ability to make their own decisions – in other words, they may have *autonomy*. Particularly smart systems may be able to interact on the level as a human – they may be *sophont* systems.

In combat, an artificial-intelligence system is on someone's side. It attacks like another combatant.

Remote Systems must receive instructions

A remote system, such as a drone, takes no actions on its own.

Autonomous Systems have Int +0, Wis –2, Cha –5

An autonomous system, also called a *bot*, has mental attributes like other combatants: Int +0, Wis –2, and Cha –5. It has the Computer skill (and will take 10 as often as possible). With its low Charisma, it can be easily be fooled by social engineering.

Bots follow their programming in combat

An autonomous bot in combat starts with the instructions, "Guard, Attack, Dash, Ready." That is:

- First, the device takes a Guard action.
- Is there a hostile within range? If there is, take an Attack action.
- Is there a hostile not in range? If there is, take a Dash action to get closer to the hostile.
- Are there no hostiles? Take a Ready to Attack action, so that you can interrupt any hostile that moves within range.

As a Control action, a user may order a bot to take different actions, under a variety of conditions. These controls can be very complex. The Host may call for computing rolls of 2d6+Dex+Int vs. 10 or more to relay complex instructions in a hurry.

Autonomous systems can be programmed to respond to voice or UI commands with an artificial personality.

Sophont Systems have Int +1, Wis 0, Cha –1

A sophont system acts like any other combatant. It has a highly logical mind that can easily get locked into obsessive-compulsive disorder: Int +1, Wis 0, Cha –1. It has the Computer Skill talent, and it prefers to take 10 as often as possible. A sophont can acquire other talents with practice, training, or software. With their above-average intelligence and measureable people-skills, a sophont is much harder to fool through social engineering tricks. In fact, many sophonts fool humans!

Sophonts can be illegal

Sophonts are banned in some countries and states. Malaysia bans them for religious reasons, and Russia bans them as a threat to public safety. Many people find them unsettling – too human to treat like an object, but too inhuman to trust.

How and Why - Autonomous and Sophontic Computers

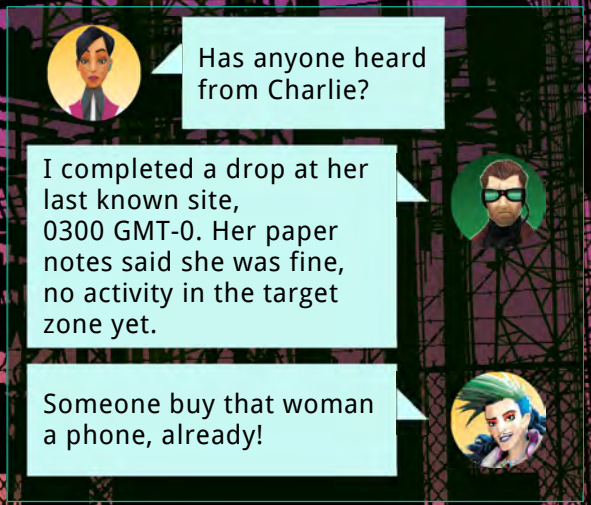
Computers can use a variety of sensors — audio microphones, motion detectors, facial recognition, database analysis, etc. — to perceive the world. And computers will have ways to react, whether it's simply to send a text message to call for help, to sound an alarm, or maybe even to operate a remote-control gun turret!

Any computer is autonomous – it can decide to take actions, and it can decide how it wants to do those actions, using very sophisticated reasoning to do so. For example, if a person ducks behind a box to hide, a computer will still be aware that person just hid behind the box, and it could switch to viewing another camera or guide a drone to move around the box.

Only ultra-high-tech, bleeding-edge computers are sophontic – they not only have autonomy to decide how they will do things, they can question why they do the things they do. Sophonts can consider philosophical issues such as "what is beauty?", "is it ever justified to take a life?" and "what does it mean to have a soul?" Computers with mere autonomy never question why they do the things they do.

Computers can be very clever and sophisticated. Many computers will have avatars – they will respond using spoken words, sometimes with an animated picture of some cartoon, pet, or a realistic human face. Many users will customize a computer's avatar, and some people get very attached to their avatars, like they might get attached to a family pet. Sophontic computers can make up their own avatars.

Autonomous computers are not self-aware. While they can figure out *how* to do something, they don't know *why* they do it. Autonomous drones will fly into suicidal situations without question if ordered to do so. Sophonts are much more complex – they may look out for their own self-interests ahead of their creators'.



In game terms, autonomous computers usually have a Charisma of –5. They believe almost any human being and they have only the weakest defenses against social engineering. Sophontic computers have a Charisma of –1. They're about as savvy as a real human when it comes to making personal decisions, and they can be just as willful.

"Someone's writing down your mistakes. Someone's documenting your downfall."
– Nicole Blackman, Blood Sugar

Profile and Watch

In the 21st Century, the Internet saturates all of society. Companies trade in consumer's past purchase histories, to make *targeted advertising* tailored to a specific customer's needs. Many governments find it easier to buy this information from corporations rather than spy on the citizens themselves!

In game terms, each character starts with a *Profile* of +3. There are many talents that will increase or decrease your starting Profile. Your Profile represents how much data history there is to dig up on your character in the various social media around the world.

As the game goes on, characters may do things that attract attention, which raises their Profile. As time goes on, Profile naturally decreases.

Event	Effect
High-profile event	+5 Profile, then Watch Check
Circumstantial link to crime	+2 Profile, then Watch Check
Dealing with Proscribed goods	+2 Profile, then Watch Check
Purchasing items on Credit	See Credit rules
New chapter	–1d6 Profile, Heat –1d6

A *high profile event* is any public incident such as a shoot-out or car crash that happens in an area where cameras or people are present. An *extremely* high-profile event – say, a shoot-out in front of the courthouse, or an assault on a mega-corporation's branch office – could raise your Profile by even more than 5 points.

A *circumstantial link to a crime* is where a character was known to be somewhere where something went down, but there's no direct evidence that they were there. Characters who successfully cover their tracks and who leave no direct evidence, but who still commit crimes that are reported to the authorities, will gain +2 Profile.

Dealing with Proscribed goods is the +2 to Profile that happens when characters buy or sell Proscribed goods.

Reduce your Profile and Heat every chapter

Each time a *new chapter* starts (as per page 115), each player rolls a die, and they reduce their character's Profile by that amount. If the character has any *Heat* dice, reduce the Heat by one die, as well. (It's not that the authorities don't care about your crimes. They just need to worry about everyone else's crimes also.)

"Through data mining, agencies can quickly and efficiently obtain information on individuals or groups by exploiting large databases containing personal information aggregated from public and private records. Information can be developed about a specific individual or a group of individuals whose behavior or characteristics fit a specific pattern. The ease with which organizations can use automated systems to gather and analyze large amounts of previously isolated information raises concerns about the impact on personal privacy."
– US Government Accountability Office

Watch Checks

A *Watch Check* is 2d6 + the character's Profile + any Heat dice (see below).

Watch Checks are triggered whenever the character's Profile increases

Any time a character's Profile increases, even by 1 point, the Game Host rolls a Watch Check in secret. Some results will be obvious immediately – for example, the character's Heat may increase. Other results might not be so obvious, such as a tipoff to the character's enemies.

2d6 + Profile + Heat dice	Outcome
9 or less	**Paranoia.** Nothing of interest happens.
10	**Tell player to increase their Heat +1d6.** Nothing else of interest happens.
11	**Tipoff: Petty Theft.** Local authorities have been tracking a stolen item. If the player just bought a Proscribed item, that's the one they're looking for. They will attempt to find the Player-Character, but they won't be looking very hard (DC 10 to avoid). The dragnet will end when the next chapter starts.
12	**Mistaken identity.** Local authorities are looking for someone who is similar, but not the same, as the Player-Character. They will attempt to detain the character and to question them (DC 15 to avoid). If they catch the PC, they will detain them for an hour or so. (Hopefully the PC hasn't committed any other crimes?) The dragnet will end when the next chapter starts.
13	**Tipoff: Rivals.** If the PC has made any local enemies, or if they have any rivals, they are informed of what the PC just did, and where they did it. The rivals may choose to send people to act against the PC. The rivals will lose interest when the next chapter starts.
14	**Victim of fraud.** A random hacker takes advantage of the PC. They may over-inflate the charges they just made by ×2 to ×10 as much, so they can steal the over-ages. Or they may steal their debit-card ID and run up charges. If caught (DC 15), the hacker will threaten to *dox* the PC's personal information if they aren't let go. If the PC doesn't let the hacker go, raise the PC's profile by 2d6 and roll another Watch Check. When the next chapter starts, the hacker will disappear, and the trail will be too cold to follow them.
15	**Tell player to increase their Heat +1d6.** **Tipoff: Grand Theft.** Local authorities have been tracking a stolen item. If the player just bought a Proscribed item, that's the one they're looking for. They will seriously attempt to find the character (DC 15 to avoid) to arrest or to detain them. The dragnet will end when the next chapter starts.
16	**Embarrassing media.** The character is caught by cameras or made into a story example. Tell the player to increase their character's Profile by +3... and then roll *another* watch check.
17	**Tell player to increase their Heat +1d6.** **Person of interest.** Local authorities are looking for someone who matches the profile of the Player-Character. They will attempt to detain the character and to question them (DC 15 to avoid), but once caught, they will thoroughly investigate the PC's activities. The dragnet will end when the next chapter starts.
18	**International criminal check.** Ask the player how many Proscribed Items they are currently carrying. Roll another Watch Check, with a +1 criminal bonus for *each* Proscribed item.
19	**Tell player to increase their Heat +1d6.** **Tipoff: Rivals.** If the PC has made any local enemies, or if they have any rivals, they are informed of what the PC just did, and where they did it. They may choose to send people to act upon it. The rivals will lose interest when the next chapter starts.
20	**Debit frozen.** An automated system puts a lock on the character's debit transactions. The debit will become unfrozen and available again when the next chapter starts. **Net lockdown.** The PC is banned from the Internet. Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile computers will not communicate with the PC. (The PC will have to use injection-attacks to improve their attitude.) The lockdown lasts until the next chapter starts.
21	**Tell player to increase their Heat +1d6.** **Debit frozen.** An automated system puts a lock on the character's debit transactions. The debit will become unfrozen and available again when the next chapter starts. **Net lockdown.** The PC is banned from the Internet. Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile computers will not communicate with the PC. (The PC will have to use injection-attacks to improve their attitude.) The lockdown lasts until the next chapter starts.

2d6 + Profile + Heat dice	Outcome
22	**Debit frozen.** An automated system puts a lock on the character's debit transactions. The debit will become unfrozen and available again when the next chapter starts. **Net lockdown**. The PC is banned from the Internet. Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile computers will not communicate with the PC. (The PC will have to use injection-attacks to improve their attitude.) The lockdown lasts until the next chapter starts. **Tipoff: Grand Theft.** Local authorities have been tracking a stolen item. If the player just bought a Proscribed item, that's the one they're looking for. They will attempt to find the character, but not very hard (DC 15 to avoid) to arrest or to detain them. The dragnet will end when the next chapter starts.
23	**Tell player to increase their Heat +1d6.** **Debit frozen.** An automated system puts a lock on the character's debit transactions. The debit will become unfrozen and available again when the next chapter starts. **Net lockdown.** The PC is banned from the Internet. Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile computers will not communicate with the PC. (The PC will have to use injection-attacks to improve their attitude.) The lockdown lasts until the next chapter. **Tipoff: all enemies.** Every enemy that the PC has ever made, ever, discovers the current location of the PC. (Stray photo? Random blog entry?) One or more of them may choose to use money, people, or other resources to act against their rival. The hunt will end when the next chapter starts.

2d6 + Profile + Heat dice	Outcome
24	**Debit frozen.** An automated system puts a lock on the character's debit transactions. The debit will become unfrozen and available again when the next chapter starts. **Net lockdown.** The PC is banned from the Internet. Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile computers will not communicate with the PC. (The PC will have to use injection-attacks to improve their attitude.) The lockdown lasts until the next chapter. **Enemy Combatant.** Local authorities believe the player character is guilty of heinous crimes. They will attempt to detain the character and to question them (DC 15 to avoid). Once caught, the PC will need legal representation or a jail-break... or they risk being jailed, deported, or worse. The dragnet will end when the next chapter starts.
25 or more	**Tell player to increase their Heat +1d6.** **Debit frozen.** An automated system puts a lock on the character's debit transactions. The debit will become unfrozen and available again when the next chapter starts. **Net lockdown.** The PC is banned from the Internet. Neutral, Unfriendly, or Hostile computers will not communicate with the PC. (The PC will have to use injection-attacks to improve their attitude.) The lockdown lasts until the next chapter. **Public Enemy #1.** Everyone who has a grudge against the PC, anywhere in the world, is notified of the PC's location, current appearance, and general status. Also, all authorities are aware of all Proscribed items that the PC is carrying. The character's activities are reported in major news feeds, spawning several discussion threads and a viral video or two.

Heat

Heat is a bonus to future watch checks. Heat dice are cumulative. (For example, two Watch checks of 10 or better will add +2d6 Heat Dice.) There's no limit to how much Heat dice a character can accumulate.

The more Heat, the more information is circulating about how dangerous or how wanted the character is.

When doing research on a character, Heat dice count as bonus dice to find out information, as many agencies will be trading what they know.

Heat decreases by 1d6 at the start of each chapter.

Heat is the game's abstraction for just how much unwelcome attention the character is gathering. Player-Characters will be getting alerts in their social-media streams that warn them about increased interest in their business. Characters who have Heat would be well advised to tone down their activities until the Heat dies down.

Tipoff

If rival characters make their own investigations into a character, they may include the Heat dice as bonus dice into their investigations.

If the character has made any enemies, a Tipoff informs one or more of those enemies of your location, and of the activity that triggered the Watch check. Any police or security organizations in the area may react according to the severity of the crime. If there are outstanding warrants or bounties on the character, a Tipoff will draw interest from those parties. It's up to the Game Host to decide exactly what a Tipoff does.

Finding a Tipoff for a specific character can require a roll of 2d6+Int+Cha vs. 15. Don't forget to add the bonus dice from any Heat!

Frozen Debit

When a character's debit is frozen, they may not make purchases using debit cards or other electronic transactions. No standard system with authorize them.

Their credit, from various other resources, will continue to work.

Net Lockdown

A character who suffers net lockdown cannot use freely-available networks, cell phones, or other digital media. Any complaints that the character makes to service-providers will be deflected or ignored, as the character is trapped in a world where privacy is not a right, identities are bought and sold, and individuals have fewer rights than corporations or governments.

The lockdown will disappear at the start of the next chapter.

Other Results

Watch Check results don't usually bring an armored SWAT team or deadly assassin within minutes, so the Player may not immediately know what's just happened.

Profile and Watch Checks for Non-Player Characters

Watch Checks aren't just for Player-Characters. They apply to the characters that the Game Host controls, too. Usually, Watch Checks won't be worth bothering with for minor characters. Major Characters who have Heat on them may be *laying low until the heat dies down,* holed up at some secret location.

"ALL INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN NEW LEFT EXTREMIST ACTIVITY SHOULD BE CONSIDERED DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF THEIR ADVOCACY AND USE OF EXPLOSIVES, REPORTED ACQUISITION OF FIREARMS AND INCENDIARY DEVICES AND KNOWN PROPENSITY FOR VIOLENCE"
– repeated quote found in FBI files on The Anarchist Cookbook, 1971–1999

Combat

Adventurers live in a dangerous world. Sometimes, someone will want to do someone else harm.

Most of the game will take place in *narrative time*. For example, the Game Host might say, "Three weeks go by as you wait in the Sudan for more information." Narrative time is driven by the needs of the story – it could be minutes, hours, days, or more.

When a fight breaks out, every character is going to want to get to do something. Their lives are on the line! In *Bleeding Edge*, we play out such altercations in *combat time*. We divide the combat into two or more sides, with the Player-Characters and their friends on one side, and their enemies on the other. First, everyone on one side gets to do something, then everyone on the other side gets to do something. We go back and forth like this, until one side wins or loses.

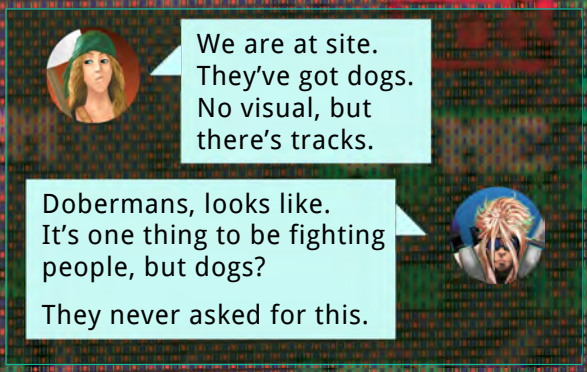
Starting the Combat

Roll Initiative

At the start of the fight, targets roll initiative. *The initiative test doesn't decide who goes first.* Roll 2d6+Dex+Wis vs a typical DC of 10. If your opponents showed up with weapons drawn, the DC is 5. If you aren't in the fight, but you hear your friends getting into trouble, the DC is 15. If you are totally surprised, the DC is also 15.

If you pass the initiative test, you may equip a weapon (if you don't already have one out) and move up to 5m. (We recommend moving behind some cover.)

If you already have your weapon out, and you're already behind cover when combat starts, passing the initiative test won't help you. If passing the initiative test won't help you, you can skip rolling it.



Recharge your Initiative Talents

When you roll initiative, talents with the 1/Hide or 1/Guard descriptors are charged and ready. As a reminder, these talents have the Initiative descriptor.

Divide the fight into sides.

Usually there will be two sides to any battle: the Player Characters, and their opposition. However, there could be three or more sides to a fight. For example, if our heroes stumble into a firefight between a gang and the police, they might be unfriendly to both. Or the Player-Characters are shooting it out with a local militia when a PMC black-ops squad shows up to liquidate everyone there. Or our heroes could tip off robot sentries, catching innocent people in the cross-fire.

Whichever side started the fight goes first

The initiative test doesn't decide who goes first. Whichever side started the fight goes first.

Ties go to the Player Characters

If it isn't clear which side started the fight, the Player Characters go first. If the Player Characters don't go first, *they always go second*, no matter how many sides are in the fight.

(This rule gives the player characters an unfair advantage, but it saves enough time to be worth it.)

Noncombatants go last

To save time, the Game Host can lump all non-combatants into the last side to act. "Finally, all the business people run screaming from the building, ducking behind cubicle walls and streaming into the exits."

Everyone on a side goes before the next side goes

Every unit on the same side goes in order before other sides go. For example, if the Player Characters go first, no Non-Player Characters act until after all of the Player Characters have acted. The Player Characters won't go again until every Non-Player Character has taken their turn.

This rule is important because it helps the player characters work together on their turn.

Rounds and Turns

Combat takes place in rounds. A *round* is a vague amount of time for how long it takes to act. If it matters, assume a round is six seconds long.

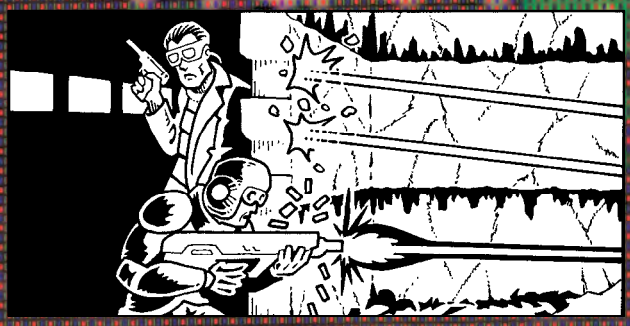
When a side acts on a round, each combatant takes a *turn*. When all the combatants are done, their side is done. Move on to the *other* sides.

Once every sides' characters have taken their turns, it's the *end of the round.* Some things happen at the end of the round. For example, a burning building might suffer more damage, or a bullet train might move another kilometer closer to its destination. Advance the clock six seconds, then start the next round, from the top.

Most Logical Order of Battle

Characters on the same side should take their turns in the most logical order. If they can't decide what that is, then the Game Host should impose an order.

- First: if someone is *stunned,* they should go *last.* Going last will give their allies time to help them.
- Second: leaders using the Aid Another action to rally their allies go first. Anyone who is in charge will give orders.
- Next, combatants who are close to the enemy go before combatants farther away. For example, a character who has a hostile a mere one meter away should act before a character who doesn't have anyone within 50 meters.
- *Player-Characters can act in whatever order their Players agree on.* If the players can't agree, the Game Host should impose an order. As usual, it's a good idea for leaders to go first and stunned characters to go last. The Host could also go clockwise around the table, just to make it easier to remember who goes when. If the Players still can't decide what order to take their actions in, the Host can declare they will act in order from the highest-scoring Initiative roll to the lowest.



Any Two Actions, as long as they're different

Each round, a combatant typically gets to do two *actions*. Actions include shooting people, punching people, running around the battlefield, controlling robots, etc.

You can never take the same action twice, in the same round. For example, if your first action is to Attack, then your second action can be any other action that is *not* the Attack action. Even if you get more than two actions a turn, such as from the *quickened* condition, you still can't do the same action twice in the same round.

Summary of Actions	
Aid Another	Improve an ally's status
Aim	Pick a target, gain +1d6 to attack
Attack	Use a weapon against a target
Control	Use a computer, vehicle, or device
Dash	Move up to 10m in a straight line
Equip	Swap weapons, or reload one
Guard	+2 to all defenses until next turn
Ready	Declare you'll do this, if that happens
Scramble	Move a random distance
Stunt	Do something weird, become reeling

Aid Another to remove their stunning and panic

You may aid another ally with advice and moral support. The ally must be able to hear your voice and they must be able to understand your language.

Yes, you can aid an ally over the telephone.

Roll 2d6+Wis+Cha.

- **5 to 9:** Remove the *stunned* condition from an ally.
- **10 to 14:** Remove the *stunned* and *panicked* conditions from an ally.
- **15 or better:** Remove the *stunned* and *panicked* conditions from an ally, and your ally becomes *quickened* until the start of your next turn.

Aim at a target for a 1d6 bonus

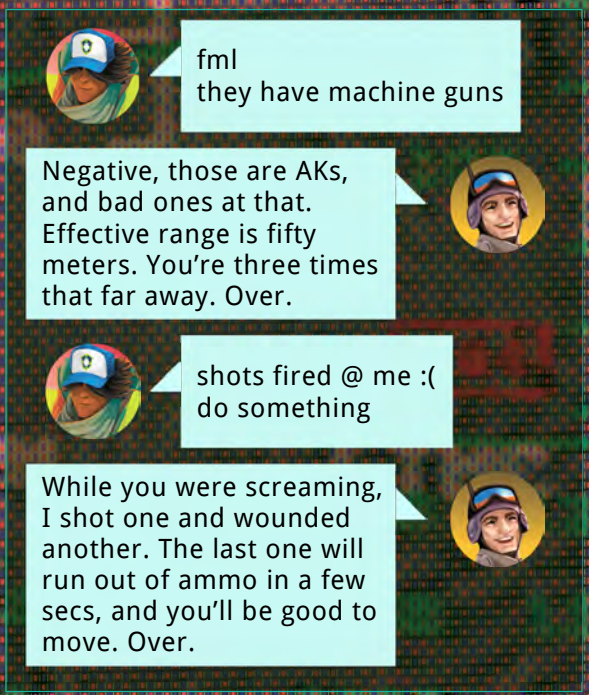
Declare a target. You may claim a bonus 1d6 to attack *that target*, until the start of your next turn. This bonus to attack only applies to that target, so it won't help if you attack anyone else.

Attack a target

Attack a target. The target will then immediately choose a *defense* as a free reaction, to defend themselves. (That is, it's not aspecial action just to defend yourself.) See page 90 for details.

Control a vehicle, robot, or device

Use a computer, vehicle, robot, or other device.



Rolling to control a device

If you can access a robot or other device by remote control, you may immediately make a roll of 2d6+Dex+Int to command the device.

Your DC to control the device is 5 for friendly or helpful devices, 10 for devices that have no security but otherwise you've never used before, and at least 12+Int+Cha for autonomous devices that are not friendly to you. Some autonomous devices may have an even greater resistance.

In case it matters, attempting to control a device requires 1 success before 2 failures. A second failure can set off an alarm, a Watch check, or all kinds of crazy things.

Use a control action to operate a computer

Accessing computers to get things done requires a Control action. You can use a Control action to order a computer to use a program. Or, you can use a Control action to remove one program from memory (de-slot) and then load a different one into memory (slot).

Use a control action to activate a talent

Some talents require you to use a Control action to activate their abilities. See the talents' description for more details.

Use a control action to command a remote-control weapon

Using a remote-control weapon requires *two* actions: a control action to command the device, and then an attack action to order the device to attack.

Dash in a straight line

Move up to your Dash distance in a straight line. For most characters, a Dash is only 10m. Some characters have Talents or other traits that change their Dash movement.

Characters who are *burdened* have their dash distance halved (typically to 5m). Characters who are *over-burdened* cannot dash at all – to cover ground, they must Scramble or use the Run stunt.

Yes, a straight line

The character doesn't have to move in a *perfectly* straight line – they might step out of cover at the start, or pivot in to cover at the end – but a Dash is in a straight line.

Equip to swap weapons or reload

Use this action to ready your equipment. Choose one:

- Put one weapon away and draw another one. (You can normally only swap one weapon with a single equip action.)
- Reload one weapon. You must have two free hands to reload.

Guard for a bonus +2 defense, remove stunning

Once you declare this action, you are *guarding*. While guarding, you may claim a +2 to all counters and dodges until your next turn.

If you were *stunned*, then performing a Guard action removes the stunned status.

If you have a 1/Guard talent, performing guard action lets you recharge it. You may only recharge one 1/Guard talent per guard action.

Ready to perform an action

Declare an action you will perform and under what conditions you will perform it. If those conditions come up before your next turn, you immediately perform that action. *The action that you are readying can't be an action that you already performed on this turn.* (For example, if you attacked someone, then you can't declare you will Ready an Attack action.)

Some common ways to use Ready are:

- Guard, then Ready to Run if anyone attacks you.
- Aim, then Ready to Attack if your target does anything but put down their weapons.
- Dash towards the exit, and Ready to Control a detonator to set off the explosives if anyone tries to stop you.

Scramble a random distance

Declare a line. Roll 2d6. Move that many meters in a straight line.

You can fine-tune a scramble distance by 1 or more meters. The maximum you can change the distance is the sum of your Dexterity and Constitution. For example, if your Dex is +4, and you Con is –1, then you may add or subtract up to 3m from the scramble distance.

If you roll so high on your Scramble that you'll hit a wall no matter how much you reduce your movement, you hit the wall, but not hard enough to be damaged.

If you roll so high on your Scramble that you'll fall off a cliff no matter how much you reduce your movement… you fall off the cliff!

Characters usually only scramble if they are not allowed to dash for some reason. For example, Characters who are *blinded* or *over-burdened* cannot dash. Also, because of the "never the same action twice in the same turn rule", a character who has already used a dash might choose a scramble as their next move. That way, they can turn before they keep moving, and they can go farther than before, without getting Stunned like they would be with the Run stunt.

Yes, a straight line

The character doesn't have to move in a *perfectly* straight line – they might step out of cover at the start, or pivot in to cover at the end – but a Scramble is in a straight line.

Perform a dangerous Stunt

A stunt is an action that puts you at risk. Performing a stunt *always* ends your turn, and you become *stunned*. While you're stunned, others may claim a +1d6 bonus to attack you.

Reason

You and your target contest 2d6 + Intelligence + Charisma.

If you win, your target's next turn will be to take the following two actions: Guard, and Ready to "Attack anyone who attacks me".

If the target was hostile, they become *unfriendly*. If the target was unfriendly, they become *neutral*.

Regardless of the outcome, your turn ends and you are *stunned*.

Scare

You try to scare your target in to backing off.

You and your target contest 2d6 + Strength + Charisma. If you win, the target becomes *panicked*. If the target's attitude was neutral or better, they now become *unfriendly*.

Regardless of the outcome, your turn ends and you are *stunned*.

Taunt

You and your target contest 2d6 + Wisdom + Charisma. If you win, the target becomes *confused*. If the target's attitude was neutral or better, they now become *unfriendly*.

Regardless of the outcome, your turn ends and you are *stunned*.

Run

Move 25m, with as many twists and turns as you like. Then your turn ends and you are *stunned.*

Hide

You may attempt to take cover and lower your profile.

Declare a spot within 10m, then move to that spot. Roll 2d6+Dex+Wis vs 10. If you pass, increase your cover and concealment by one step each. (If you have an appropriate Skill talent, consider taking 10.) If you fail, there's no effect – you're more visible than you thought!

You become *stunned* afterwards whether you passed or failed the roll.

If you have a 1/Hide talent, performing the hide stunt lets you recharge it. You may only recharge *one* 1/Hide talent per Hide stunt.

"I'll sneak past him!"

The Vermillion system models stealthy movement in two ways. In combat, the Hide stunt represents attempts to conceal yourself and move cautiously behind cover. However, when time isn't being tracked turn-by-turn, it's best to use abstract contests or challenges (per pgs. 9 and 12) for tests of stealth.

The Hide stunt is used for combat situations, where everyone is already on high alert, is surging with adrenaline, and is highly sensitive to danger. Outside of combat situations, the Game Host may prefer to use skill challenges of Evasion (and Stealth) vs. target numbers. See the Spot Rules for more details.

Crawl

You may crawl 5 meters, then become *stunned.*

Swim

Roll 2d6+Str+Dex and apply an appropriate penalty, such as 5 for calm, warm water or 10 for open ocean in rough weather. Whatever you rolled, you may swim that many meters in any direction. If you roll zero or less, you don't cover any distance. (If you have an appropriate Skill talent, consider taking 10.)

Swimming is a stunt, so after the swim, you are *stunned.*

Climb

You may attempt to climb over an obstacle. Roll 2d6+Str+Dex and apply an appropriate penalty, such as 5 for a ladder or 10 for a chain-link fence. Whatever you rolled, you may ascend that many meters, or descend twice that many meters .

Climbing is a stunt, so after the swim, you are *stunned.*

Do something weird

Opening a door, gathering up spilled items, operating heavy machinery... any weird thing that can't be done with an Attack, Control, or Equip action requires a stunt.

Some tasks may require multiple stunts. For example, a crank that takes a minute to turn will require 10 stunts.

Defense

When a character is attacked, they have the option to defend. Any target that isn't helpless can use a defense. Targets can either *counter* or *dodge.*

Defending isn't an action, it's a reaction to an attack. There's no specific limit to the number of times a character can defend in a round ... but failing one defense will leave you stunned, and being stunned is a penalty to your future defenses.

Counter with an appropriate weapon

If a target counters, the attacker will roll their attack dice with their weapon, and the counter–attacker rolls their attack dice with their own weapon. These rolls might be different.

You can only counter if you threaten the attacker with a weapon. You threaten targets if they are within the standard range of your weapon. For example, a sub-machinegun with a range of 25m threatens all enemies within 25m.

(While a weapon may have + for long range or ++ for very–long range, the weapon still only threatens up to its standard range.)

Whoever rolls higher hits whoever rolled lower. On a tie, both combatants hit each other!

Dodge with 2d6+Dex+Wis

If a target dodges, the attacker will roll their attack dice with their weapon, and the target will roll 2d6 + Dexterity + Wisdom.

The dodging combatant must roll higher than the attack roll. The dodging combatant is hit on a tie.

Characters who are *burdened* suffer a –2 to dodge.

Summary of Defenses

Counter	Attacker in range of your weapon? Roll your own attack dice. If you roll higher, you are missed *and* you hit your ttacker.
Dodge	Roll 2d6+Dex+Wis to avoid.

Which defense is better?

Most characters will choose to *counter*. Their counter defense is usually much higher than their dodge defense. But it's not always that simple.

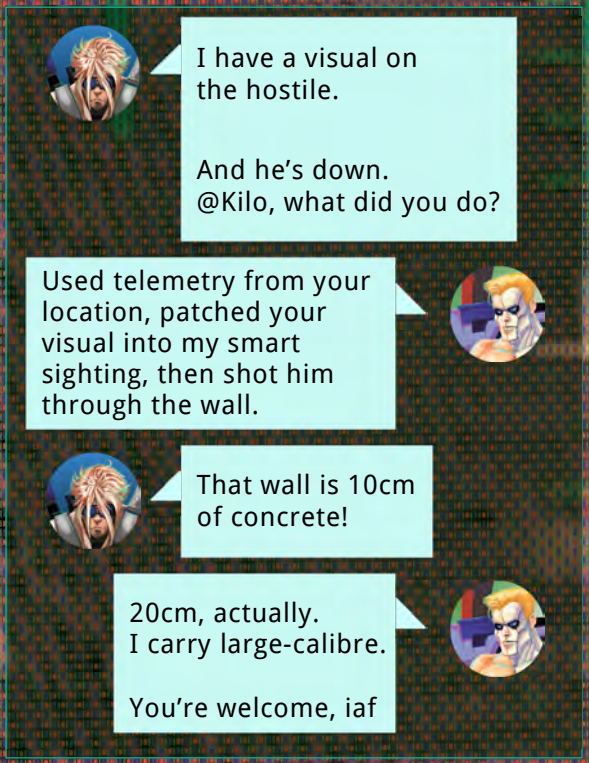
You can only counter if you're in standard range! If your attacker is outside your weapon's range, you will have to dodge. You can also force your opponents to dodge by attacking at long range or very-long range. Attackers with rifles and rockets may be too far away to be counter-attacked.

Only dodges claim bonuses from cover and concealment. If you have a wall to duck behind, or smoke to obscure you, your dodge might actually be better than your counter-attack.

Counter-attacks with guns will use up ammunition. If your weapon is running low on bullets, or if you want to save your shot for a choice target, you might choose to dodge instead.

You might not have your gun ready. If someone gets the drop on you, you might not have equipped your weapon yet. If you don't have a weapon to counter, then you will have to dodge.

You might not want to use a gun. A gunshot is a loud noise that can be heard several kilometers way. Modern and future security systems can use sound telemetry to quickly locate where a gun was fired, and many automated systems will automatically call police.



(In game terms, merely shooting a gun in a populated area will raise Profile.) Firing a gun also covers your hands in powder burns, it leave behind bullets that can be matched to your own firearm by using ballistic science, and can otherwise leave behind incriminating evidence. And if someone is foolish enough to use a gun when they're only 1m away, you can use a barehanded attack to grab them or disarm them.

Modifiers

Your attacks and defenses are affected by your condition and your circumstances. This chart describes how each situation modifies your attacks, counter-attacks, and dodges.

For more talk about modifiers and what they do, see the Spot Rules chapter, page 116.

Situation	Attack	Counter	Dodge
You are *burdened*	No mod	No mod	–2
You are *guarding*	No mod	+2	+2
You are *stunned*	–5	–5	No mod
Your target is *hurt*	Bonus 1d6	No mod	No mod
Your target is stunned or surprised	Bonus 1d6	Bonus 1d6	No mod
You *aimed* at your target	Bonus 1d6	No mod	No mod
Your target is *obscured*	–2	–2	No mod
Your target is *concealed*	–5	–5	No mod
You are *concealed* from your attacker	No mod	No mod	+2
You claim soft cover	No mod	No mod	+2
You claim fair cover	–2	No mod	+5
You claim total cover	–5	No mod	+5
You are at Long Range (2x Range, + weapons only)	–5	Cannot counter	No mod
You are at Very Long Range (5x Range, ++ weapons only)	–10	Cannot counter	No mod

"The loudest sound in the universe is the last heartbeat."
– Breugel, "Baby Grobags"

Combat Effects

When a target is hit, they suffer either a standard *Effect* or an improved *Critical*. Both of these are determined by the weapon used in the attack.

If you rolled doubles, you score either the standard Effect or the Critical effect...

For example, if your attack roll came up 6, 6, 5, 4, then you have a *double*, because two of your dice rolled the same number.

You always inflict just one Critical result. It doesn't matter how many doubles you rolled. If you rolled 6, 6, 4, 4, that's still just a simple Critical.

In the standard rules, triples and such don't matter, ether. If you rolled 5, 5, 5, 2, that's still good enough for one Critical, and only one.

With no doubles, you can only choose the standard Effect

If none of your dice match, then the target just suffers the standard Effect, and you can't inflict the better Critical effect.

Taking 10 prevents Criticals

A character who takes 10 on their attack – that is, they choose to declare a roll of 10 rather than roll any dice – didn't roll any doubles. So if you take 10, you can only choose to inflict the standard Effect.

Are your attacks not doing enough damage? The Game Host may consider adding the *super-critical* variant rule. Using super-criticals greatly increases the random chance that someone will get killed. See page 169.

Soak vs. Damage

The most common effect of being hit is a *Soak challenge*. When forced to make a "Soak vs. " check, a character rolls their Soak Dice. The weapon Effect will describe the consequence of failure.

Soak starts at 2d6+Constitution...

Once hit, the target attempts to prevent the effect with a *Soak* roll. The default Soak roll is 2d6 + Constitution.

... plus any Armor bonuses

Many *Outfits* that your character can wear will have anti-ballistic mesh, ceramic plating, smart-plastic rigidity, and other life-saving measures, in the form of *Armor*. Armor adds both more dice and more bonuses to your Soak test.

Damage is a challenge with three tries

When a target is hit with Damage, the target must immediately make a Soak test vs. the Difficulty of the Damage. For example, Damage 20 means the target must roll their Soak greater than 20.

If your first Soak roll is equal to or greater than the Damage, then you've shrugged off the Damage. There are no lasting effects. Damage does not stack.

1st Failure: Target is Panicked, Roll Again

On the first try, if the target's Soak roll fails to defeat the Damage's Difficulty, then the target becomes *panicked*, and they immediately try again.

As per all challenges, for the next roll, add your previous roll's result as an unlimited bonus.

For example, if your first roll's total was an 18, your next roll will have a +18 unlimited bonus.

2nd Failure: Target is Incapacitated, Roll Again

On the second try, if the target's Soak roll fails to defeat the Damage's Difficulty, then the target becomes *incapacitated*, and they imme

diately try again.

As per all challenges, for the next roll, add your previous roll's result as an unlimited bonus. For example, if your second roll's total was 36, your third roll will have a +36 unlimited bonus.

3rd Failure: Target is Dead

On the third try, if your Soak roll fails to defeat the Damage's Difficulty, then the target is dead.

(In the interest of keeping the game moving quickly, the Game Host may stop rolling the Soak for Minor Characters after the second try. Incapacitated targets can just be assumed to be out of the fight.)

Attacks may have other Effects, too

Some effects will force different kinds of rolls instead of Damage, or in addition to Damage. For example, an electro-muscular shock might force a roll of 2d6+Con vs. 10 to avoid becoming *confused*.

Effects can also be things such as knocking the target *down*, restraining them in a *grapple*, or *pushing* them away. Read the effect for more details.

Statuses

A character may be under some unusual effects, for good or for ill. A *status* is an unusual condition that changes how a character acts, defends, resists, etc.

A character can suffer from multiple status effects. For example, a character can be both *berserk* and *quickened.* The same status effect doesn't stack – for example, you're either *quickened*, or you're not.

Most status effects last only for one scene, or about five minutes. Each status is different.

There are many status effects, detailed in the Spot Rules section, starting on page 126. Here's a quick summary of common statuses.

Stunned characters suffer –5 to attacks and counters, are attacked at +1d6

Characters who perform dangerous stunts, who are knocked off balance, or who are hit by attacks will become *stunned.*

Stunned targets suffer –5 to all attack and counter rolls. Their dodge rolls are not affected.

Attackers may claim a +1d6 surprise bonus to attack a stunned target. (This bonus is the same as attacking from surprise or concealment. Technically, everyone has concealment vs. a stunned character.)

A character can be cured of *stunning* if someone else rolls high enough with an Aid Another action. Also, when a character takes the Guard action, they are cured of *stunning*.

Panicked characters cannot aid another or attack (but can still counter)

Characters suffering battle fatigue or shock & awe are *panicked*. Panicked characters cannot take an Aid Another action or an Attack action. (They may still counter anyone who attacks them.)

The *panicked* status can be cured by performing a Hide stunt, or by not participating in a combat for a whole scene (five minutes).

Incapacitated characters are incapacitated and at risk of death

A character that is *incapacitated* has fallen down, is barely conscious, and is unable to take any actions.

An incapacitated character must pass a Challenge to stay alive. They must roll 2d6+Con+Wis, every round, with a Challenge target of 20 and only three tries. If they fail to reach the target of 20 within those three rolls, they die. If they succeed, they are no longer in danger of death, but they're still incapacitated.

Dead characters are beyond help

A character that is *dead* is out of game play. Only super-advanced medical science can bring them back, and even then they won't be the same.

Quickened characters can take three actions (instead of two)

Help from other characters can give you extra insight, making you *quickened.* When a quickened character's turn comes up, they can take three actions. (Non-quickened characters usually only get two actions.)

The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same turn" still applies. So yes, you get three actions, but you couldn't declare the Attack action twice. You'd have to declare three *different* actions, such as Guard, Aim, and Attack.

A character cannot be *quickened* if they lack confidence (say, because they are *panicked*) or if they lack mental competence (say, because they are *confused* or *stunned*). A character who is *confused, stunned,* or otherwise unable to be *quickened* does not get the benefit of three actions.

Burdened characters suffer –2 to Str, Dex, Con rolls, and they only Dash 50% as far

Characters weighted down with heavy loads will be *burdened.* Burdened characters suffer a –2 to any roll that uses Str, Dex, or Con, and their Dash speed is reduced to 50% of normal.

Confused characters suffer –2 to Int, Wis, Cha rolls, cannot take certain actions

Characters who are disoriented or dizzy are *confused.* Confused characters suffer a –2 to any rolls that use Int, Wis, or Cha. They cannot take the Aid Another action or the Dash action. (They can still use the Scramble action.)

Ending the Combat

A combat ends when one side is unable or unwilling to continue combat.

- If all of one side has become *panicked,* they will either flee the scene or surrender. (A side that is particularly out-classed might flee or surrender even before this.)
- If all of one side has become incapacitated, then the combat is over.

At the end of the fight, the Player-Characters will either be pressing on, or they'll stop.

If the Player-Characters still have pressing matters, deal with those first. Are they fleeing the battle? Did they win the fight, but now they have to high-tail it out of there before the cops show up? Are they in an urgent hurry to be somewhere else? If so, don't give anyone any time to recharge anything. Play out any big issues with appropriate rolls.

If there's nothing urgent, the Player-Characters can take a few minutes to deal with the matters at hand. Player-Characters who can take five minutes can do the following:

- Remove all confused, panicked, and stunned statuses.
- Perform first aid to recharge 1/Hurt talents
- Reload any or all weapons.
- Re-slot any or all programs.
- Recharge all 1/Guard, 1/Hide, and 1/Scene talents.
- Loot all bodies.

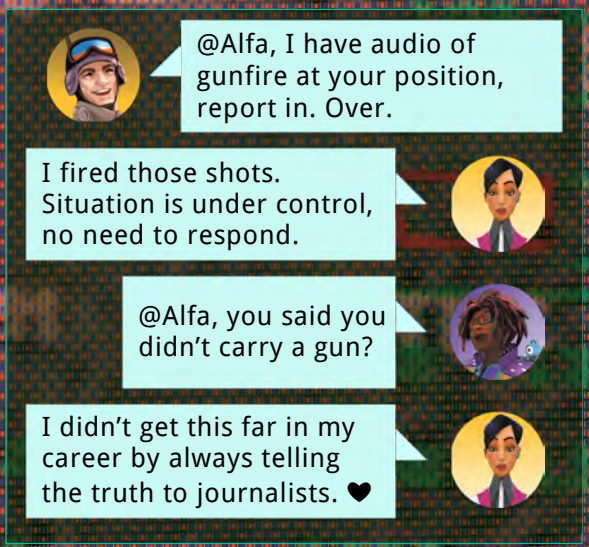
While many Players will take for granted that they can just take care of these things "after a fight", it's a good idea for a Game Host to let some Players know that the fight is over and it's time to "take five" to deal with these things.

Weapons

Characters will often equip weapons.

Using a Weapon with your Hands

Every character gets one *good hand* and one *off–hand*. An off-hand weapon can be used in either hand with no penalty... but a good hand weapon should be used with your good hand – if you use a good-hand weapon in your off-hand, you suffer a –5 handedness penalty.



A 2-handed weapon requires two hands to operate. If the weapon is not a *Burden* weapon, it can be held in your good hand until you're ready to use it. (So you could do things with your off-hand while you're not using the weapon, like open a door or operate a computer.)

Ranges: Threat, Long+, and Very Long++

Weapons can attack up to the listed range. Weapons only *threaten* up to their listed range.

If the range has a single plus sign (+), then the weapon can strike up to *long range* – that is, twice the listed range... but at that range, the attacker suffers a –5 range penalty to attack rolls. You do not threaten at long range... which means you can't counter at long range, either.

If the range has a double plus sign (++), then the weapon can strike up to *very long range* – that is, up to five times the listed range – but you suffer a –10 range penalty to your attacks.

Fighting and Shooting Skill

If you have a Weapon Skill Talent that applies to the weapon you're using, you may claim a bonus 1d6 to your attack. Punches, clubs, axes, and other hand-to-hand weapons use Fighting skill. Pistols, crossbows, rifles, and other ranged weapons use Shooting skill.

Rolling more dice not only gets you higher rolls, it also increases your odds of scoring a critical.

If you are skilled, then instead of rolling, you may take 10. Unfortunately, if you don't roll, you can't score Criticals, nor can you claim any other benefits from dice. Also, *Junk* weapons can *never* take 10 on attacks or counters, they *must* roll.

Effect

Most weapons cause damage, but some do other things like shock or immobilize targets.

Criticals

If you roll doubles with your attack roll, you may claim a Critical result. Criticals usually increase the base effects of the attacks, but they sometimes add new effects.

Descriptors

Any other notes about the weapon go here. Many talents only benefit certain types of weapons. For example, Rapid-Fire Burst only works with weapons that have the *Rapid-Fire* descriptor.

"Which would you prefer: a computer or a gun?"
– Jello Biafra, "The Power of Lard"

Economy and Equipment

For thousands of years, the nations of the Earth have traded goods and services. The 19th century heralded the *Industrial Revolution.* New business practices, standardization of measurements, and powerful machines allowed for cheap production of household items on a large economy of scale. The dawn of the 21st century was dominated by *globalization,* where a large business could buy cheap resources and then ship them for cheap labor, then ship them again to their final markets, all by taking advantage of cheap shipping costs. *Neoliberal* governments turned a blind eye to capitalist interests. In fact, many services run by the state became *privatized* to be run by for-profit businesses.

In the world of the Permanent Emergency, globalism is falling apart. Countries are wracked with violence, from sectarian and ideological causes. Rising energy costs and rampant piracy have ruined shipping routes. Rampant pollution and disease are making the necessities of food and water ever more expensive. Things fall apart and the center cannot hold. In a world where everything is for sale, nothing has any value.

Money

In the information age, the definition of money has become very flexible.

Debit

Most money is assumed to be *debit.* That is, the character has a debit card and a bank account, and their transactions are made electronically.

Purchasing Proscribed items with *debit* requires the seller to cooperate with you in accounting fraud to avoid creating a permanent electronic record that you made an illegal purchase. This deceit raises your Profile rating by 3 and triggers a Watch check.

Cash

Cash money is still popular in the future. Some currencies, such as the United States' dollar ($), the European Union's euro (€), and Japan's yen (¥), are accepted all over the world.

Large denominations of paper money will be traceable, either by the serial numbers on the bills, or by magnetic strips embedded in the money.

Untraceable Money

Diamonds and other precious stones – still uncut – can be traded for goods and services.

Gold can be exchanged, as bars or bullion rounds. A popular vehicle for private ownership of gold is the *krugerrand*, a coin that is legal–tender in South Africa.

Items made by hand won't have serial numbers, nor will they be in any manufacturers' databases. Every now and then, a skilled cracker will find a way to remove any records of certain devices, rendering them untraceable.

Buying and Selling with Items for Cash

You can buy Bargain and Standard items in most places with cash, easily and without raising any eyebrows.

Buying Premium or Elite items with cash is suspicious and difficult. Only large-volume dealers will be able to traffic in such large amounts of money.

When selling a used or looted item, you can expect to get 20% of its cash value. For example, an Aramid outfit has a value for $100. Selling such an item used might get you only $20. Generally, you can't liquidate Bargain items – no one is interested. Only special shops will buy Premium items, and very few people will traffic in Elite items.

Buying or selling a Proscribed item for cash raises your Profile rating by 1 and triggers a Watch check. Only criminals or licensed dealers will traffic in such items, and such dealers are always under some kind of surveillance, even when you deal in cash.

> "[A] peer-to-peer electronic currency uncontrolled by central bankers or politicians is a perfect object for the anxieties and enthusiasms of those frightened by the threats of inflation and currency debasement, concerned about state power and the surveillance state, and fascinated with the possibilities created by distributed, decentralized systems."
> – James Surowiecki, Technology Review

Credit Rating

Many characters will choose to purchase things on credit. In game terms, credit represents investments, credit–cards, layaway plans, stock dividends, crypto–currencies, and other means of measuring wealth. The value of credit can change radically as stocks increase, credit–plans change, crypto–currencies became fashionable, etc. To represent this, buying on credit will require random die rolls.

Only characters with the correct talents can use credit.

Talents with the Credit descriptor allow you to make purchases on credit. These talents include *Celebrity*, *Identity Thief*, *Insider*, and *Wealth*.

Credit	2d6+Int+Cha vs.	Profile increase?
Purchase a Bargain item	DC 5	As per talent
Purchase a Standard item	DC 10	As per talent, +1 if your check fails
Purchase a Premium item	DC 15	As per talent, +1 if your check fails
Purchase an Elite item	DC 20	As per talent +2
Purchase an Optimum item	DC 25 or more	As per talent +5
Item is Proscribed	DC +5	Another +2
Purchasing Parts, not the whole Item	DC –5	No mod

Generally, after failing on a credit check, you must wait another hour before buying again.

Purchasing parts gets you the raw materials that someone with the appropriate skill and talent can use to build the item.

Any increase in Profile sets off a Watch Check. The Profile increases listed here are *in addition* to any other Profile increases (due to Proscribed items, credit checks, etc.), but you need only make one Watch Check.

Converting Credit Rating to Currency

We've listed a lot of items in this chapter. In the world of *Bleeding Edge*, prices are commonly listed in *special-drawing rights* (XDR), the currency of the International Monetary Fund.

Here's an approximation for converting Credit DCs to US Dollars, Euros, or Japanese Yen. You can use this as a guideline for converting to other currencies. Round up to the next highest DC.

Example: Papa wants to use credit to buy the rare vinyl figurine of Katamoto from the *Aura Battler Tylenol* anime. The price is listed as ¥22,000. Rounding up on this chart, his credit check roll would have a Difficulty Class of 11.

Credit	US Dollars (USD)	Euros (EUR)	Japanese Yen (JPY)	IMF Special Drawing Rights (XDR)
DC 0	$2	€ 2	¥315	¤2
DC 1	$2	€ 3	¥472	¤3
DC 2	$3	€ 4	¥629	¤4
DC 3	$4	€ 6	¥944	¤6
DC 4	$7	€ 9	¥1,573	¤10
DC 5	$10	€ 14	¥2,359	¤15
DC 6	$14	€ 18	¥3,145	¤20
DC 7	$20	€ 27	¥4,718	¤30
DC 8	$33	€ 44	¥7,863	¤50
DC 9	$46	€ 62	¥11,008	¤70
DC 10	$66	€ 88	¥15,725	¤100
DC 11	$98	€ 132	¥23,588	¤150
DC 12	$131	€ 176	¥31,450	¤200
DC 13	$229	€ 307	¥55,037	¤350
DC 14	$327	€ 438	¥78,624	¤500
DC 15	$490	€ 657	¥117,936	¤750
DC 16	$718	€ 964	¥172,973	¤1,100
DC 17	$1,109	€ 1,489	¥267,322	¤1,700
DC 18	$1,631	€ 2,189	¥393,120	¤2,500
DC 19	$2,284	€ 3,065	¥550,368	¤3,500
DC 20	$3,588	€ 4,816	¥864,864	¤5,500
DC 21	$5,545	€ 7,443	¥1,336,608	¤8,500
DC 22	$8,481	€ 11,382	¥2,044,224	¤13,000
DC 23	$12,395	€ 16,636	¥2,987,712	¤19,000
DC 24	$18,266	€ 24,515	¥4,402,944	¤28,000
DC 25	$27,399	€ 36,773	¥6,604,416	¤42,000

Credit	US Dollars (USD)	Euros (EUR)	Japanese Yen (JPY)	IMF Special Drawing Rights (XDR)
DC 26	$41,099	€ 55,159	¥9,906,624	¤63,000
DC 27	$60,669	€ 81,425	¥14,624,064	¤93,000
DC 28	$91,329	€ 122,575	¥22,014,720	¤140,000
DC 29	$136,994	€ 183,863	¥33,022,080	¤210,000
DC 30	$202,229	€ 271,416	¥48,746,880	¤310,000
DC 31	$306,605	€ 411,502	¥73,906,560	¤470,000
DC 32	$456,645	€ 612,874	¥110,073,600	¤700,000
DC 33	$652,350	€ 875,535	¥157,248,000	¤1,000,000
DC 34	$978,525	€ 1,313,302	¥235,872,000	¤1,500,000
DC 35	$1,304,700	€ 1,751,069	¥314,496,000	¤2,000,000

Note that the prices listed here have DCs that don't neatly match up with the DCs listed on the credit-check table. The cost of an item isn't the same as its monetary value.

Cash Advances

Some talents allow you claim a *cash advance*, by borrowing against equity. Not all talents that grant you Credit will let you claim a cash advance.

Credit	2d6+Int+Cha vs.	Profile increase
Cash advance of ¤100	DC 10	+1
Cash advance of ¤750	DC 15	+2
Cash advance of ¤5,500	DC 20	+3
Cash advance of ¤42,000	DC 25	+5

Pricing Equipment Grades and Modifications

Each item of equipment has a *grade*. Equipment is assumed to be *standard grade* by default. Some grades increase the quality and the price of the item. (For example, a *Superior*-grade item gives +1 to rolls.) Other grades decrease the quality and the price of the item. (For example, *Inferior*-grade equipment penalizes all rolls by –2). Still more grades make changes to how the equipment works.

Each item of equipment might have one or more *modifications*, sometimes abbreviated as *mods*. While there's no limit to the number of mods that equipment may have, you will reach a point of diminishing returns after three mods or so.

You may only apply grades and modifications to compatible equipment. For example, *Civilian*-grade can only be applied to equipment with the *Military* descriptor.

Increases in price are listed as multipliers, such as "×2". Decreases in price are listed as percentages, such as "50%". Multiply all increases and decreases together to find the final cost.

When figuring cost by cash, apply all multipliers one at a time, then reduce by percentages, one at a time.

For example, you want a Magnum Pistol (¤220). You want to keep this on the down-low, and you don't want to spend a lot of money, so you're going to get one that's Scrounged-grade. You want to use this gun to assassinate people by surprise, so you make it Disguised and Suppressed.

First, apply the multipliers. The weapon costs ¤220. Disguising it costs ×2, so it's now ¤440. Suppressing it costs ×1.5, so it's now ¤660. All the multipliers have now increased the cost.

Last, apply the discounts. Scrounged-grade reduces to 50%, so the price drops to ¤330. (That's ¤220 ×2×1.5 ×50%).

You now have your custom weapon. Your Scrounged-Grade Magnum Pistol (Disguised, Suppressed, and Handcrafted) now requires a stunt to equip (as you unfold it into shape or piece it together). It attacks at a range of 25m+, rolls 2d6+Str+Dex–2 (with a risk of *Junk* failure). Its Effect is Soak DC 12 or Mortal, with a Critical of Soak DC 17 or Mortal. It's now *Proscribed* and *Untraceable*... and most importantly, it's no longer *Loud*.

When figuring cost by credit, just use the most expensive DC

Computing cost using credit is way easier. Just add or subtract all the DC changes. Following the above example, our custom pistol is a Premium-cost Item (DC 15), and it's Proscribed (DC +5), for a final credit check DC of 20.

Equipment Descriptors

Items of equipment won't have their full rules listed with them – there are too many for that. Instead, they have *descriptors*, listed in italics. Rules for those descriptors, if any, are listed here. (Some descriptors don't have rules – they're just descriptive!)

Ammo

Equipment can have a limited amount of uses before its spent, hereafter referred to as *ammo*. Ammo can be a number, or simply High or Low.

When using an *Ammo: High* item, check your skill roll. If you've rolled at least one six, your ammo count stays the same. If you didn't roll any sixes, then drop your ammo count to *Ammo: Low*.

When using an *Ammo: Low* item, check your skill roll. If you've rolled at least one six, your ammo count stays the same. If you didn't roll any sixes, then drop your ammo count to *Ammo: Zero*. The weapon must be reloaded before it can be used again.

When using an equipment with an Ammo and a number, such as *Ammo: 1*, *Ammo: 2*, *Ammo: 3*, etc., then each shot reduces your ammo count by one. It doesn't matter if you roll at least one six. When an *Ammo: 1* equipment fires its last shot, it's out of ammo and cannot be used until reloaded.

The Ammo Conservation talent on pg. 56 will help you avoid running out of ammo in combat.

Anti–Materiel

Anti–Materiel weapons are designed to breach walls and to disable vehicles.

Beam

Beam weapons project energy to damage targets at range. Many beam weapons have two or more projectors that send out a wave of energy, and the weapon is only effective where those waves overlap. *Beam* weapons have some kind of active range–finding ability, such as a laser, to properly focus their effects.

While *beam* weapons can be silent and precise, their power requirements and fragility make them difficult to use in the field.

The Beam-Weapon Control talent on pg. 56 will improve your ability to use these weapons.

Brawling

Brawling weapons are not really weapons – they're unarmed attacks you can make without any weapons.

The Brawling talents listed on pg. 58 can make you much more dangerous with your bare hands.

Burden

Burden equipment slows you down. If you have at least one equipment with the *Burden* descriptor, then your character is *Burdened*. Burdened characters suffer a –2 to any roll that uses Str, Dex, or Con, and their Dash speed is reduced by ½.

Carbine

A *carbine* is a compromise between rifles and pistols. They are two-handed, but small enough to maneuver in close quarters.

CCW

Conceal-Carry Weapons (*CCW*) are small and easily hidden from view. The Host may give characters a +2 CCW bonus for rolls to conceal these weapons.

The CCW Assassination talent on pg. 56 makes you more dangerous with these weapons.

Chemical

A *chemical* weapon uses toxins or irritants to hurt or incapacitate living creatures. They are ineffective against robots and cyber-bodies.

Confused

Targets hit by attacks from this weapon must pass a test of 2d6+Con+Wis vs. the DC of the attack or become *confused*. *Confused* characters suffer a –2 to any rolls that use Int, Wis, or Cha. They cannot take the Aid Another action or the Move action. (They can still use the Scramble action.)

Consumable

A *consumable* item is destroyed after use. For example, a grenade explodes into bits and can't be used again.

CQC

Close-Quarters Combat (*CQC*) weapons are for combat at distances of 5 meters or less, such as cramped interior spaces.

Dazzle

Dazzle weapons use laser beams to emit bright lights to disorient targets. Dazzle weapons fired into glass cause minute imperfections in the glass to turn an opaque, brilliant green.

"The 'TASER' trademark is one of several trademarks of TASER International and is properly used as follows: TASER® conducted electrical weapon (CEW). ... Do not use a TASER trademark as part of any other trademark, company name, website URL, or metadata."
– TASER International

Electro–Muscular

Electro–muscular weapons deliver an electric shock to the target, to incapacitate their muscles and nervous system.

The Electro-Muscular Control talent on pg. 57 can improve your ability to use these weapons.

Premium

This item costs a lot of money.

Explosion

Explosion attacks are listed with "Explosion Range: Effect". For example, an "Explosion 10m: Damage 10" attacks forces all targets within 10m of the center point to pass a Soak challenge versus Damage 10.

When you make an Explosion attack, declare a central point for the attack, and roll your attack dice once. All targets within the explosion's range must defend against the explosion, using their dodge defense (and not counter).

Extravagant

This item costs a lot of money. If you have to ask how much, you can't afford it. Such items are only available in specialty shops and they often have to be made–to–order. For example, a personalized photo shoot for your holiday cards is an Extravagant item, because you can only get these photos at specialty shops, you have to make an appointment, and you have to get skilled labor to take the picture for you.

Expires

An item that *Expires* stops working after a certain amount of time. In game terms, an item *expires* when a new chapter starts. An item might also expire if a long amount of "narrative time" passes (like a month or two).

Fencing

Fencing weapons are largely used in combat sports or in historical re–enactments.

Firearm

Firearm weapons burn a chemical propellant to launch a projectile at high velocity.

Gauss

Gauss–effect weapons use electro–magnetic forces to launch a projectile at high velocity. Certain talents can make you more effective with *Gauss* weapons.

Grenade

Grenade weapons are small explosive devices.

Handcrafted

Handcrafted weapons are made out of improvised materials.

Installation

Installation equipment is much too big to be carried around personally. It must be mounted in a vehicle or a building.

Junk

Junk equipment is less likely to keep working. Firstly, you may *not* take 10 when working with *Junk* equipment.

Secondly, after rolling, check your dice. If *all* of your dice are showing odd numbers (1, 3, or 5), then your equipment suffers a breakdown. If even one of your dice (best or spare) has an even number (2, 4, or 6), then you don't suffer a breakdown.

The Junk Quick–Fix talent lets you repair broken-down *junk* equipment quickly.

"The sight of the bare katana inspires everyone to a practically Nipponese level of politeness."
—Neal Stephenson, Snow Crash

Kenjutsu

Kenjutsu weapons are from the traditional schools of Japanese swordsmanship, in particular those that predate the Meiji Restoration. The Kenjutsu Control talent can make you much more dangerous with *kenjutsu* weapons.

Loud

Loud weapons make so much noise that they can be heard several kilometers away whenever they're used.

Melee

Melee weapons are for hand–to–hand combat.

Microjet

Microjet weapons fire tiny missiles guided by gyroscopic rockets. The weapon is cheap and reliable, but the *ammunition* is quite expensive. Microjets have a variety of payloads for many purposes.

Microwave

Microwave weapons cause disruption in electrical systems, and they can disrupt human brain–wave patterns to cause unconsciousness or death.

Military

This hardware is made for armed forces. It could be surplus, or stolen. *Military* hardware is extensively documented and can be tracked to its origins. The Military Tactics talent can make you better at supporting your team-mates with *military* weapons.

Parachute

This equipment includes a device for slowing a fall by increasing wind resistance.

Piercing

Piercing weapons are designed to penetrate armor. Against a Piercing attack, do not roll the target's Armor dice (if any). However, only Armor *dice* are affected. Flat bonuses still apply.

For example, a target that has Armor 3d6+2 is hit by a Piercing attack. Instead of rolling their three dice, the target only gains +2 to Soak.

Piercing has no effect on Soak dice. Combatants still roll their 2d6+Con, as normal. If they have talents that add Soak dice, they may roll those, too. Talents that reduce damage also work normally.

Pistols

Pistols are guns light enough to use with one hand. They're cheaper, lighter, and more concealable than carbines or rifles, but they have poor range.

Proscribed

Proscribed equipment is controlled by law. Even in countries that allow permits to carry personal weapons and armor, *Proscribed* arms are still prohibited to civilians.

Acquiring *Proscribed* equipment will be difficult, and thus they will be more expensive (usually x3 more than comparable equipment.)

Reload/#

This equipment, when it's out of ammo, can be reloaded. The number listed is how many Equip actions it takes to reload. For example, a *Reload/1* weapon can be re–loaded with only one Equip action, but a *Reload/3* weapon takes three Equip actions to re–load. As you can't take the same action twice in the same turn, it will take at least three rounds to reload a *Reload/3* weapon.

Rapid–Fire

Rapid–Fire weapons fire a large volume of bullets in a short amount of time. Examples include a fully–automatic assault rifle. Certain talents can make you more effective with Rapid-Fire weapons.

Rifles

Originally, a *rifle* referred to a weapon with a rifled barrel, but these days it refers to a long-barreled firearm that needs two hands to use. Rifles have great range, but they can be unwieldy in close quarters.

Shock

A *shock* weapon incapacitates the target. The target must make a 2d6+Con+Wis test vs. the DC of the attack. (The DC may increase from criticals).

If the target fails to resist, they fall asleep.

Shotgun

Shotgun weapons are smooth–bore firearms. They're typically used to fire canisters of shot, hence the name, but they can fire many kinds of specialized ammunition.

Squad

Squad weapons are large weapons designed to support troops. They are heavy and awkward.

Squawk

A *Squawk* weapon uses a range finder and two twin–barreled projectors to combine two near–ultra–sonic frequencies at a set distance. Such devices cause heat, irritation, disorientation, and sometimes death in living creatures. While the target feels overwhelmed with intolerable noise, targets who are not the focus of the beam hear very little.

Undetectable

Undetectable weapons are made of unusual materials such as polymers and ceramics. *Undetectable* weapons can pass through typical scanners such as chemical-trace detectors, x-ray devices, or metal detectors.

Untraceable

This weapon has no serial numbers, no RFID tags, no cameras. The ammo that it fires match no forensic databases. *Untraceable* weapons are the prime choice of contract killers and assassins.

Weak

Weak attacks are less likely to hurt a target with lots of soak. All soak bonuses count double, and all soak dice (including Armor dice) are rolled twice.

Unarmed Combat

For simplicity, we treat all unarmed attacks as weapons. You don't have to equip an unarmed attack in advance, but you do have to have the free hands to do it. For example, you can't grab someone if you don't have at least one off-hand free.

Unarmed combat attacks have the *Brawling* descriptor. The Fighting Skill talent boosts all *Brawling* attacks. Job talents that say they add +2 to combat "with weapons" or "with arms" do *not* boost Brawling combat.

Weapon	Use	Range	Attack	Effect	Critical	Descriptors
Break Free	While Grappled	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Attacker escapes Grapple	Damage 7+Str Attacker escapes Grapple	Brawling, Wrestling
Brutalize	2 hands	1m	2d6+Dex+Con (Fighting)	Weak Damage 15+Str	Damage 10+Str	Brawling
Disarm	Good hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 12+Str Disarmed of one-handed gear	Damage 7+Str Disarmed of two-handed gear	Brawling, Wrestling
GMO Bio-Weapon	Requires talent	1m	2d6+Dex+Con (Fighting)	Damage 12+Str	Damage 15+Str	Brawling, GMO
Grab	Off hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 12+Str Grappled	Damage 7+Str Grappled	Brawling, Wrestling
Kick	None	1m	1d6+Dex+Con (Fighting)	Weak Damage 15+Str	Damage 10+Str	Brawling
Punch	Off hand	1m	2d6+Dex+Con (Fighting)	Weak Damage 12+Str	Damage 7+Str	Brawling
Rush	None	1m	2d6+Dex+Con (Fighting)	Weak Damage 7+Str Push 1m	Damage 7+Str Push 3m	Brawling
Shove	Off hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 12+Str Push 1m	Damage 7+Str Push 3m	Brawling, Wrestling
Squeeze	2 hands, vs. Grappled target	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 18+Str	Damage 13+Str	Brawling, Wrestling
Tackle	2 hands	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 15+Str Target *down*	Damage 10+Str Target *down*	Brawling, Wrestling
Throw	2 hands, vs. Grappled target	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 15+Str Push 1m	Damage 10+Str Push 1m Target *down*	Brawling, Wrestling
Wrestle	2 hands	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 10+Str Grappled	Damage 5+Str Grappled	Brawling, Wrestling

Fighting Weapons

Armed combat attacks with hand-to-hand weapons have the *Melee* descriptor. The Fighting Skill talent boosts all Melee attacks. Job talents that say they add +2 to combat "with weapons" or "with arms" also boost Melee combat.

Weapon	Use	Range	Attack	Effect	Critical	Descriptors	Cost
Baton, Expandable	Off hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 16+Str	Damage 11+Str	CCW	Standard, ¤40
Baton, Shock	Off hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 15+Str 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 10 or *confused*	Damage 10+Str 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 13 or *confused*	CCW, Electro–Muscular, Ammo: High, Reload/2	Premium, ¤100
Fireman's Axe	2 hands	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Damage 15+Str	Damage 18+Str		Premium ¤150
Flashlight	Off-hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Weak Damage 15+Str	Damage 10+Str	CCW	Standard ¤50
Glove, Shock	Off hand	1m	2d6+Dex+Con (Fighting)	Weak Damage 12+Str 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 10 or *confused*	Damage 7+Str 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 13 or *confused*	CCW, Electro–Muscular, Ammo: High, Reload/3	Premium, ¤200
Improvised (1-handed)	Off hand	1m	Junk 2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Damage 10+Str	Damage 13+Str		Bargain
Improvised (2-handed)	2 hands	2m	Junk 2d6+Str+Con (Fighting)	Damage 12+Str	Damage 15+Str		Bargain
Katana	Good hand	2m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Damage 10+Str	Damage 13+Str	Kenjutsu	Extravagant ¤750
Wakizashi	Off hand	2m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Damage 7+Str	Damage 13+Str	Kenjutsu	Extravagant ¤500
Knife	Off hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Damage 7+Str	Damage 13+Str	CCW, Thrown	Standard ¤40
Rapier	Good hand	2m	2d6+Dex+Int (Fighting)	Damage 7+Dex	Damage 13+Dex	Fencing	Premium ¤300
Riot Shield	Off hand	1m	1d6+Str+Con (Fighting)	Weak Damage 12+Str Push 1m	Damage 7+Str Push 1m	Cover (Fair)	Premium ¤100
Switchblade	Good hand	1m	2d6+Str+Dex (Fighting)	Damage 7+Dex	Damage 13+Dex	CCW	Standard ¤30

Shooting Weapons

Weapon	Use	Range	Attack	Effect	Critical	Descriptors	Cost
Anti-Materiel Rifle	2 hands	200m++	2d6+Str+Con (Shooting)	Damage 20+Dex	Damage 26+Dex	Burden, Firearm, Anti-Materiel, Military, Loud, Rifle, Proscribed, Ammo: Low, Reload/2	Premium ¤1,200
Assault Rifle	2 hands	100m++	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 15+Wis	Damage 20+Wis	Rifle, Firearm, Military, Loud, Rapid–Fire, Proscribed, Ammo: High, Reload/1	Premium ¤1,600
Coil Rifle	2 hands	100m++	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 15+Dex	Damage 23+Dex	Rifle, Gauss, Loud, Military, Rapid–Fire, Proscribed, Ammo: High, Reload/1	Extravagant ¤3,700
Compound Bow	2 hands	50m++	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 12+Str	Damage 15+Str	Archery, Bow, Untraceable, Ammo 1 shot, Reload/1	Standard ¤100
Compound Crossbow	2 hands	100m+	2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 12+Str	Damage 15+Str	Archery, Crossbow, Untraceable, Ammo: 1 shot, Reload/2	Standard ¤150
Dazzle Box	2 hands	10m++	2d6+Int+Wis (Shooting)	2d6+Con+Int vs. 10 or *confused*	2d6+Con+Int vs. 15 or *confused*	Ammo: High, Burden, Beam	Extravagant ¤1,700
Explosive	2 hands	10m+	2d6+Str+Dex (Athletics)	Damage 16+Int	Damage 21+Int	Thrown, Grenade, Loud, Proscribed, Ammo: 1	Standard ¤150
Grenade Launcher	2 hands	25m++	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 18+Int	Damage 21+Int	Burden, Squad, Military, Grenade, Loud, Proscribed, Ammo: 4, Reload/2	Premium ¤1,200
Hand Grenade	Off-hand	10m+	2d6+Str+Dex (Shooting)	Damage 15+Int	Damage 21+Int	Thrown, Military, Grenade, Loud, Proscribed, Consumable	Standard ¤70
Hunting Rifle	2 hands	100m++	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 16+Wis	Damage 21+Wis	Rifle, Firearm, Loud, Ammo: Low, Reload/2	Standard ¤220
Incapacitating Spray	Off hand	1m++	3d6+Str+Dex	2d6+Con+Wis vs. 10 or *confused*	2d6+Con+Wis vs. 13 or *confused*	CCW, Chemical, Ammo: High	Standard ¤30
Light Anti-Tank Weapon	2 hands	50m++	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 20+Int	Damage 30+Int	Rocket, Loud, Proscribed, Military, Anti-Materiel, Ammo: 1, Consumable	Premium ¤750
Machine Gun	2 hands	200m++	2d6+Str+Con (Shooting)	Damage 16+Dex	Damage 21+Dex	Burden, Squad, Firearm, Anti–Materiel, Military, Loud, Proscribed, Ammo: High, Reload/2	Average ¤2,500
Machine Pistol	Good hand	25m+	2d6+Str+Dex (Shooting)	Damage 12+Wis	Damage 15+Wis	CQC, Firearm, Loud, Rapid–Fire, Military, Proscribed, Ammo: Low, Reload/1	Premium ¤350
Magnum Pistol	Good hand	25m+	2d6+Str+Dex (Shooting)	Damage 14+Wis	Damage 19+Wis	CQC, Firearm, Loud, Ammo: Low, Reload/1	Standard ¤220
Microjet Pistol	Good hand	25m++	2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 12+Int	Damage 15+Int	CCW, Rocket, Loud, Military, Ammo: Low, Reload/1	Standard ¤500

Weapon	Use	Range	Attack	Effect	Critical	Descriptors	Cost
Microjet Rifle	2 hands	100m++	2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 15+Int	Damage 20+Int	Rocket, Loud, Military, Proscribed, Ammo: Low, Reload/1	Standard ¤750
Microwave Gun	2 hands	100m	2d6+Dex+Int (Shooting)	Damage 15+Int	Damage 25+Int	Ammo: High, Burden, Microwave, Proscribed	Premium ¤2,500
Mini-Crossbow	Good hand	50m+	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 10+Str	Damage 13+Str	Archery, Crossbow, Untraceable, Ammo: 1 shot, Reload/1	Standard ¤70
Nail Gun	2 hands	25m++	Junk 2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 12+Dex	Damage 15+Dex	Rifle, Gauss, Handcrafted, Ammo: High, Reload/10	Premium ¤750
Net Gun	2 hands	10m++	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Weak Damage 10 2d6+Str+Dex vs. 10 or Grappled	Damage 10 2d6+Str+Dex vs. 15 or Grappled	Burden, Net, Ammo: 3, Reload/3	Premium ¤350
Railgun	2 hands	500m+	2d6+Dex+Con (Shooting)	Damage 15+Wis	Damage 25+Wis	Burden, Squad, Anti–Materiel, Gauss, Military, Loud, Proscribed, Ammo: 1, Reload/1	Premium ¤5,500
Rocket Propelled Grenade	2 hands	200m++	2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 15+Int	Damage 30+Int	Rocket, Grenade, Anti-Materiel, Military, Loud, Proscribed, Ammo: 1, Reload/2	Standard ¤750
Shotgun	2 hands	5m++	3d6+Str+Dex (Shooting)	Damage 12+Dex	Damage 20+Dex	CQC, Shotgun, Loud, Ammo: Low, Reload/2	Standard ¤70
Silenced Pistol	Good hand	10m++	2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 12+Dex	Damage 15+Dex	CCW, CQC, Firearm, Undetectable, Proscribed, Ammo: Low, Reload/2	Standard ¤100
Small Pistol	Good hand	25m+	2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 12+Dex	Damage 15+Dex	CCW, CQC, Firearm, Loud, Ammo: High, Reload/1	Standard ¤70
Squawk Box	2 hands	100m	2d6+Int+Wis (Shooting)	Weak Damage 10 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 10 or Grappled	Damage 10 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 15 or Grappled	Ammo: High, Burden, Squad, Beam, Military, Proscribed	Premium ¤1,700
Sub-Machinegun	2 hands	50m++	2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 12+Dex	Damage 15+Dex	CQC, Firearm, Loud, Military, Rapid–Fire, Proscribed, Ammo: High, Reload/1	Premium ¤350
Zip Gun	Good hand	10m++	Junk 2d6+Dex+Wis (Shooting)	Damage 12+Dex	Damage 16+Dex	CCW, CQC, Handcrafted, Loud, Ammo: 1, Reload/10	Standard ¤30

Ammunition

Weapons can be loaded with a variety of ammunition. For simplicity, we don't recommend mixing ammunition in the magazine. (Different ammo sizes, powders, and weights could jam the gun, and we don't encourage counting every single bullet with the "Ammo: High" and "Ammo: Low" rules.)

AP (Armor Piercing) rounds contain a slender penetrator of dense metal. They lack "stopping power" because they are more likely to pass clean through the target, rather than deform on impact, but they are much more likely to penetrate armor.

APEX *(Armor–Piercing Explosive)* rounds have a soft metal cap, then after punching through the plate, an explosive detonates inside the projectile. The Geneva Convention bans using APEX rounds on human targets.

BAG *(Bag–bean)* are fabric sacks filled with small shot, designed to be less lethal.

CS *(Ortho–chlorobenzalmalononitrile)*, sometimes called *tear gas*, is a riot–control agent that stings the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs of human beings. (It has reduced effect on animals.) It can be made into an aerosol gel, a liquid, or a powder.

DD *(Diversionary Device)* is a pyrotechnic device that emits a loud bang and dazzling light, hence the nickname "flash–bang". A common version is the XM84.

DD–BC *(Diversionary Device, Biotechnical, Calmative)* are pyrotechnical devices that also fill the affected area with dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) and a sedative such as ketamine or alfentinil.

HEX *(High–Explosive)* rounds have a small bursting charge that detonates on contact. The Geneva Convention bans using HEX rounds on human targets.

HP (Hollow Point) rounds expand upon impact with the target. This effect can increase internal damage to tissue and electronics, but it is much less likely to penetrate armor.

MARK *(Gelatin–Marker)* weapons splatter the target with an indelible paint. The paint can be in any color, including an ultraviolet only visible under special light.

NET weapons are meshes with several strands, sometimes sticky with glue. Net guns fire their nets at range, while net grenades explode upwards.

OC *(Oleoresin Capsicum)* is commonly known as "pepper spray", an irritant to the eyes, nose, and mouth.

+P (over–Pressure) ammunition has powder that burns faster, which provides a shot with higher muzzle velocity. Over–pressure ammunition greatly accelerates wear–and–tear on a firearm.

PD *(Photic Driver)* uses ultra-sonic noises and flashing infrared lights in an extended stroboscopic display, powerful enough to penetrate closed eyelids. Photic weapons can cause epileptic fits.

ST *(Splat–Thixotropic)* special purpose low lethality anti–terrorist projectiles deform on impact.

SUB *(Subsonic)* bullets are heavier bullets, but they burn less powder. Such bullets have a much shorter range than typical bullets, but they also are much quieter.

XREP *(Extended Range Electro–muscular Projectile)* discharges electricity on impact to incapacitate targets. Firearm bullets and Microjet missiles have a small, non–rechargeable battery, but gauss XREP projectiles are charged by the magnetic coil that fires them.

Ammo	Use	Effect	Descriptors	Cost
(default)	Archery, Crossbow	--		Standard ¤10/12 reloads
(default)	Firearm	--		Standard ¤10/10 reloads
(default)	Gauss	--		Standard ¤6/10 reloads
(default)	Rocket	--		Standard ¤15/10 reloads
Ammo Case	(any)	×20 reloads	Burden	Premium ×15
AP	Firearm, Gauss, Archery, Crossbow	Damage –3, Piercing	Proscribed	Premium ¤70/10 reloads
APEX	Rocket, Crossbow	Piercing	Proscribed	Premium ¤100/10 reloads
BAG	Gauss, Shotgun, Archery, Crossbow	Weak		Premium ¤20/10 reloads
CS	Rocket, Grenade, Crossbow	Remove Damage 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 10 or Blinded	Chemical	Premium ¤100/10 reloads
DD	Rocket, Shotgun, Grenade	Weak Damage 2d6+Con+Int vs. 10 or Confused		Premium ¤70/10 reloads
DD–BC	Rocket, Grenade	Weak 2d6+Con+Cha vs. 10 or Panicked	Chemical	Premium ¤150/10 reloads
HEX	Rocket	Explosive 10@5m	Explosive	Premium ¤150/10 reloads
HP	Firearm, Gauss	Damage +7, Weak		Premium ¤70/10 reloads
MARK	Firearm, Gauss, Crossbow	Damage –7		Premium ¤50/10 reloads
NET	Gauss, Grenade, Shotgun	Damage –7, target Grappled		Premium ¤100/10 reloads

Ammo	Use	Effect	Descriptors	Cost
OC	Rocket, Grenade	Damage –7, target Confused	Chemical	Premium ¤100/10 reloads
+P	Firearm	Junk; Damage +5		Premium ¤50/10 reloads
PD	Rocket, Grenade	Damage –3, target Blinded		Premium ¤70/10 reloads
ST	Firearm, Gauss	Weak		Premium ¤50/10 reloads
SUB	Firearm, Gauss	Range drops to 50%	Remove Loud	Premium ¤50/10 reloads
XREP	Rocket, Shotgun, Gauss, Archery, Crossbow	Damage –7, 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 10 or Unconscious	Electro–Muscular	Premium ¤150/10 reloads

☼ Equipment Grades

You can buy different *grades* of equipment. A given piece of equipment may only have one grade. Some grades are better than others, but low-grade equipment is cheaper to buy. Most equipment is assumed to be *default-grade* (that is, it works exactly the way as intended) unless otherwise specified. Some talents may allow you to use credit to obtain equipment without paying cash, but only for specific grades of gear. If you modify an item, each mod has the same grade as the item it's modifying, with all appropriate bonuses, penalties, and effects.

Grade	Usable on...	Effect	Descriptors	Change cost to...
Bootleg-grade	Any	--	*Remove* Military *Add* Proscribed	Standard ×1.5
Cracked-grade	Any	--	*Add* Untraceable	Premium ×7
Decoy-grade	Any	Becomes useless Assist bonus +2 to Deceit		Bargain 10%
Inferior-grade	Any	All rolls have –2 penalty Effect & Critical DC –2	*Remove* Military	Standard 70%
Luxury-grade	Any	All rolls gain +1 Etiquette bonus +2		Extravagant ×25
Scrounged-grade	Not Junk	All rolls are *Junk* rolls	*Add* Handcrafted, Untraceable	Standard 50%
Superior-grade	Any	All rolls gain +1		Extravagant ×5
Undetectable-grade	Any	All rolls –2 penalty Effect & Critical DC –2	*Add* Proscribed, Undetectable, Untraceable	Extravagant ×25

Bootleg-grade items are unlicensed copies of regular items, often made by ripping off the original designs. Bootlegs are almost impossible to tell apart from the originals, except to the eyes of a trained professional. Most notably, bootleg-items will be missing any classified or military components.

Cracked-grade items have no traceable information. They have no serial numbers, they leave no chemical signatures, they have no identity tags. They show up in no inventories or sales records.

Decoy-grade items don't really work. Decoy items *do* set off the same kind of detectors for their standard-grade counterparts, which can make them useful for distractions. Because Decoys are very convincing, you may claim a +2 assist bonus to any Deceit rolls that you make, to convince someone you have the real thing.

Inferior-grade items are worse than standard-grade items. All rolls suffer a –2 penalty, and all Damage is reduced by –2. Inferior items may be cheap knockoffs, or standard items that have degraded over time.

Luxury-grade items don't just use top-of-the-line materials, they also have all kinds of fancy filigree, gilding, jewelry, and other "bling". Luxury items gain a +1 assist bonus to all rolls, and they also give another +2 bonus to impress other people.

Scrounged-grade items are hand-crafted using improvised materials. Since scrounged items don't have serial numbers or inventory tracking, they leave no information trail in any database.

Superior-grade items are better versions of standard-grade items. They are made of better materials, they are crafted to higher standards, and they cost a lot more money. All rolls using Superior-grade gear may claim a +1 assist bonus.

Undetectable-grade items are made using space-age polymers, shielded batteries, and other classified materials. They will defeat common chemical sniffers, metal detectors, and x-ray devices.

Prosthetics

Bionic prosthetics replace the body part in question. For example, if you have a prosthetic good hand, then your "flesh" good hand is gone forever. Only differently-abled, crippled, or injured characters will have prosthetics.

Never as good as "the real thing", prosthetics reduce a character's attributes. The reductions stack: if you have one bionic arm and one bionic leg, then you have –2 Dex. The more cybernetic replacements you get, the better they work together. (Steel on steel is much stronger than steel on bone.) Replacing all your senses with cybernetic ones works better than the confusion of neural networks vs. fiber-optics.

Prosthetic limbs can be of any quality.

- Bootleg-grade prosthetics are only found in places where regular prosthetics are banned by law.
- Cracked-grade prosthetics can't have their serial numbers traced through records.
- Decoy-grade prosthetics are false hands or glass eyes — they don't do anything, so people who have them might suffer –2 Dex or worse.
- Inferior-grade prosthetics impose their –2 penalty on any activity that uses the prosthetic — for example, firing a gun with an Inferior bionic hand is at –2 (and yes, that stacks with the Dex penalty).
- Likewise, Luxury-grade and Superior-grade prosthetics give a +1 to all rolls involving their use, and they look nicer, too. The Cyber Body cannot be upgraded to Luxury or Superior grade… it already is Superior grade.
- Scrounged-grade prosthetics are made from spare parts, improvised materials, and a little love — they look terrible and they often break (as per the Junk rules).
- The mythical Undetectable-grade prosthetics mimic body temperature, hair follicles, sweat secretions etc. to fool sophisticated scanners — and yet they also don't leave behind any DNA traces or readable fingerprints!

Prosthetic limbs need power to function, just like living limbs. If your prosthetics aren't powered, they suffer a –2 cybernetic penalty to Strength and Dexterity, on top of whatever penalties they already had.

Prosthetic limbs can pull power from the cyborg's body. If you're well fed, your prosthetic limbs are powered. If you're starving, they aren't. The more prosthetics you have, the more you need to eat!

For game purposes, prosthetic eyes and ears don't consume so much power that you need to keep track of it. There are special talents that will let you push bionics far past their operating specifications….

Prosthetic	Replaces	Effect	Descriptors	Cost
Bionic hand	Off hand	–1 Dex	Bionic, Prosthetic	Extravagant ¤750
Bionic arm	Off hand & arm	–1 Dex	Bionic, Prosthetic	Extravagant ¤1,500
Bionic pair of arms	Both arms	+1 Str, –1 Dex	Bionic, Prosthetic	Extravagant ¤3,000
Bionic leg	One leg	–1 Dex	Bionic, Prosthetic	Extravagant ¤850
Bionic pair of legs	Both legs	+1 Str, –1 Dex	Bionic, Prosthetic	Extravagant ¤1,700
Bionic eye	One eye	–1 Wis	Bionic, Prosthetic	Elite ¤3,500
Bionic ear	One ear	–1 Wis	Bionic, Prosthetic	Elite ¤2,500
Bionic senses	Both eyes, both ears	–1 Wis	Bionic, Prosthetic	Elite ¤12,000
Cyber Body	Everything but the brain	+2 Str, –2 Dex	Bionic, Prosthetic	Optimum ¤1,000,000, Requires Talent

Drones

Characters can buy all kinds of robot *drones* to assist them. Drones also have a number of custom modifiers. Drones have a fixed number of *mount* spaces they can use to add accessories that require mountings. Larger drones have more mount spaces.

Basic drones must *roll* to move. They move fast, but they will not be able to get over most obstacles. Drones that can *walk* can cross any terrain that people can. Drones that can *fly* can go anywhere; their practical operating ceiling is about 5,000 meters off the ground, which is usually good enough for 15km of line-of-sight.

Drone	Usable on...	Effect	Cost
Diminutive Frame	Any	Str –5, Dex +3, Con –4, Soak 3d6–4, 1 mount, Roll 30m	Premium ¤2,500
Tiny Frame	Any	Str –3, Dex +1, Con –2, Soak 3d6–2, 2 mounts, Roll 30m	Premium ¤750
Small Frame	Any	Str –2, Dex 0, Con –1, Soak 3d6–1, 3 mounts, Roll 30m	Extravagant ¤5,500
Medium Frame	Any	Str –1, Dex –1, Con 0, Soak 3d6, 4 mounts, Roll 30m	Extravagant ¤13,000
Biped	Any	Walk 30m, Add 1 to Str & Dex & Con	Premium, Increase price ×5
Quadruped	Any	Walk 20m, Add 1 to Str & Con	Premium, Increase price ×3
Treads	Any	Roll 15m, Add 1 to Str & Con	Standard, Increase Price ×2
Flight	Diminutive	Fly 30m	Standard, Increase Price ×2
Flight	Tiny	Fly 25m, Loud	Premium, Increase Price ×5
Manipulators	1 mount	Add 1 to Str & Dex, add 1 Off-hand	Premium, Increase price ×3
Sensors	1 mount	Treat obscured as un-obscured	Standard, Increase price ×2
Stealth	1 mount	+5 assist bonus to hide	Premium, Proscribed, Increase price ×7
Satellite hookup	1 mount	Can access satellite networks	Premium, Increase price ×3
Autonomous	Any	Int –2, Wis –2, Cha –2 Add one Program slot	Premium, Increase price ×3
2-hand weapon implant	2 mounts	Use Weapon	Standard, Proscribed, Increase price ×2, plus cost of weapon
Good-hand weapon implant	1 mount	Use Weapon	Standard, Proscribed, Increase price ×1.5, plus cost of weapon
Armor	1 mount	Armor 1d6+4	Premium, Increase price ×3

Equipment Mods

Items may be modified to add or to subtract features. In general, it's pretty obvious when an item has been modded. (One notable exception is the Malicious mod – see below.) While there's no specific limit to the number of mods that a piece of gear can have, the Game Host is free to use common sense to veto anything they find too silly.

Items with the Malicious mod look just like the real thing, but they also have RFID chips, software systems, surveillance systems, and other gear in place that spy on you, to some third party. Identifying Malicious-grade items requires a highly skilled check (DC 20 or more) with appropriate skills. When an item is first modified to be Malicious, choose an Insider group that reaps the benefits of the maliciousness. (In the future, many Malicious electronics are sold to customers, sometimes at a discount, sometimes not, so that the corporations can exploit their user base.) Malicious items can usually be shut down remotely, with a simple request from a Social Media program, provided you know the password. Crafting an item to make it Malicious costs ×1.5 of the item's original price ... but buying or re-selling a Malicious item costs the standard price, or less. After all, the malicious resellers want the items to get out there, to help them keep tabs on you. Detecting Malicious modifications requires special talents.

Yes, if you start the game with an item, you can choose a modification to another item. Modifications have the same grade as the item they are modifying – see page 106.

Mod	Usable on...	Range	Attack	Effect	Criticals	Descriptors
Attachment: any 1-handed weapon	2-handed weapon	As per weapon	Both weapons –2	As per weapon	As per weapon	*Add* Proscribed *Reduce* Attachment to Ammo: 1 shot Standard ¤100
Augmented Weapon	Requires Augmented Interface	--	+2	--	Damage +3	Premium ¤500
Bayonet	2-handed weapon	2m	2d6+Str+Con (Fighting)	Damage 10+Str	Damage 13+Str	Premium ¤100
Belt-Feed to Ammo Case	Ammo	--	--	Weapon auto-reloads at end of round	--	*Add* Proscribed Premium ¤500 + Cost of Ammo Case
Disguised	Any weapon Now requires *Stunt* to equip	--	–2	Damage –1	Damage –1	*Add* Undetectable, Proscribed Premium ×2
Double Barrel	Ammo: 1	--	--	Damage –1	Damage –1	*Change to* Ammo: 2 shots Premium ×1.5
Extended Magazine	Ammo: Low	--	–2	--	--	*Add* Proscribed *Change to* Ammo: High Standard ¤50
Full-Auto conversion	Ammo: Low or Ammo: High		*Add* Junk	--	--	*Add* Proscribed, Rapid-Fire Premium ×1.5
Gatling conversion	Rapid-Fire	--	*Requires* extra control action Bonus 1d6	--	--	*Add* Proscribed Premium ×3
Heavy Weapon	Any weapon	--	After use, attacker is *stunned*	Damage +3	Damage +3	*Add* Burden, Heavy, Proscribed Premium ×3
High Capacity Magazine (HCM)	Ammo: Low or Ammo: High	--	Attack –5, bonus 1d6	--	--	*Add* Proscribed Premium ×1.5 reload's cost
Hopper	1 shot	--	*Add* Junk	Damage –2	Damage –2	*Add* Proscribed *Change to* Ammo: High Premium ¤200
Large-Bore conversion	Ammo: High	--	–1	Damage +1	Damage +3	Change to Ammo: Low
Malicious from [Insider of Choice]	Any	--	[Insider] can track, shut down			Special – see page 108
Peace-Bound	Any weapon	To zero	Weapon no longer works	Weapon no longer works	--	Bargain ¤30
Prosthetic Armor	Prosthetic	--	--	Add +1 Soak		*Add* Proscribed, Military Premium ×2
RFID-Locked	Any weapon	--	Only works with proper RFID tag	Only works with proper RFID tag	--	Premium ¤200
Shield Gun	2-handed	Reduce to 20%	–2	--	--	*Add* Burden, Hard Cover Premium ¤750
Single-Shot conversion	Ammo: Low	--	–1	Damage +1	Damage +3	*Change to* Ammo: 1 shot

Mod	Usable on...	Range	Attack	Effect	Criticals	Descriptors
Smart Sighting	Any	--	+2 vs. Aimed target	Vs. Aimed target: Damage +1	Vs. Aimed target: Damage +3	Premium ¤200
Spikes	Outfit	1m	2d6+Str+Con (Fighting)	Damage 7+Str	Damage 10+Str	*Add* Burden, Proscribed Premium ¤350
Suppressor	Loud	--	--	Damage –2	Damage –2	*Add* Proscribed *Remove* Loud Premium ×1.5
Telescopic Sighting	Range+ or Range++ only	×2 vs. Aimed target	No range penalty vs. Aimed target	--	--	Premium ¤350
Wrist Mount	Good hand; Wrist mount frees hand	Reduce to 20% (Min 1m)	–2	Damage –3	Damage –1	*Add* Proscribed Premium ×2

Personal Computing

In the 21st Century, almost everyone carries a computer with them... and it's usually a simple *cellular phone.* The devices featured here are accessories. For wearable computing, see the *Outfits* section.

Computer	Equip	Programs	Descriptors	Cost
Burner Phone	Off-hand	Social Media	Expires, Untraceable	Bargain ¤20
Headset Phone	None	Social Media		Standard ¤50
Smart Phone	Off-hand	1 slot + Social Media		Standard ¤350
Satellite Phone	Off-hand	1 slot + Social Media	Satellite	Premium ¤750
Jailbreak Phone	Off-hand	2 slots		Proscribed, Standard ¤1000
Built-in Computer	As mod	2 slots	Modification	Elite ¤3,000
Tablet Computer	2 hands	2 slots + Social Media		Premium ¤1,100
Laptop Computer	2 hands	3 slots + Social Media		Premium ¤2,500
Desktop Computer	2 hands	5 slots + Social Media	Burden	Premium ¤1,700
Homebrew Computer	2 hands	4 slots + Productivity Suite	Burden, Handcrafted	Premium ¤2,500
Server Farm	Installation	7 slots	Installation	Extravagant ¤210,000
Mainframe Computer	Installation	9 slots	Installation	Extravagant ¤1,000,000
Augmented Reality	None	2 slots + Augmented Interface + Sensory Enhancement	Cybernetic, Post-Human	Requires Talent
Cyber Brain	None	2 slots + Productivity Suite	Cybernetic, Post-Human	Requires Talent
Artificial Intelligence	None	Productivity Suite + Singularity	Cybernetic, Post-Human	Requires Talent

Software

All computers are assumed to run *apps*, little software that allows basic functions like instant-messaging, digital-photographing, and Tetris-playing. More sophisticated computers will be able to run *Software.*

Some computers have built-in Software that always works. For example, a phone may have Social Media. Programs that are embedded in the computer itself is called *firmware.* These programs are always on, whenever the computer is running, and they cannot be disabled.

Computers have many gigabytes of storage space, not to mention access to data *clouds* stored on the Internet. There's no practical limit to the *number* of programs that you can own. However, your computer can only run so many programs at once. And some programs require more processing to run. In game terms, we measure processing power with *slots.*

Many computers will have *slots* that allow for Software to be swapped in an out. You must perform a Control action to swap software in and out; each Control action will allow you to de-slot one program out and slot one program in. Some programs take up 1, 2, 3, or more slots. You must have enough slots free to run the entire program. For example, if your Tablet Computer (2 slots) can run a Data-Mining program (2 slots) or a Data Base program (1 slot), but not both at the same time (since 2+1=3 slots). Since zero-slot Programs require no slots, there's no limit on the number of those that a computer can run.

What follows is a list of common software. Players and the Game Host should feel free to invent new ones.

Application Software

This software helps you get stuff done. Some software gives you extra actions, but only to do certain things. For example, the Augmented Interface program lets you take an extra control action every turn, but that control action must be to operate an Augmented device. The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same round" still applies.

Application Program	Slots	Effect	Cost
Antivirus	1	Your computer defaults to *hostile* (not just unfriendly) to unauthorized users	*Expires,* Premium ¤500
Data Base [of choice]	1	You gain a +2 assist bonus to rolls related to your Data Base of choice	Premium ¤250
Data Base [of choice], Proscribed	1	You gain a +2 assist bonus to rolls related to your Data Base of choice (illegal for regular consumers to own)	Proscribed, Premium ¤500
Injection Attack	1	Use a control action to start a program from your inventory onto a rival's computer	Proscribed, Premium ¤1,000
Productivity Suite	1	You gain a +2 equipment bonus to Computer skill	Free
Social Media	1	Text messaging, voice chat, web browsing; also informs you of when your Profile or your Heat changes	Free
Autonomy	2	Int –1, Wis –2, Cha –3, Computer Skill	Premium ¤250
Computer-Assisted Design	2	You gain a +2 equipment bonus to Craft skill	Premium ¤500
Data Mining	2	You gain a +2 equipment bonus to Intel skill	Premium ¤500
Intrusion Counter-Measures (ICM)	2	Your computer defaults to *hostile* (not just unfriendly) to unauthorized users; You may claim a +2 bonus to resist Injection attacks	Premium ¤500
Sensory Enhancement	2	You gain a +2 equipment bonus to Observation skill, treat obscured targets as unobscured	Premium ¤500
Augmented Interface	3	You may take an extra control action, but only to operate an Augmented device	Average ¤100
Command & Control	3	You may take an extra aid-another action	Premium ¤500
Designated Targeting	3	When you aim at a target, all your allies gain a +2 assist bonus to attacks, counters, and dodges vs. that target	Premium ¤1,000
Impersonation of [Person of Choice]	3	You gain a +5 equipment bonus to disguise yourself as [Person of Choice]	*Expires,* Proscribed, Extravagant ¤2,500
MILSPEC Intrusion Counter-Measures	3	Your computer defaults to *hostile* (not just unfriendly) to unauthorized users; You may claim a +5 bonus to resist Injection attacks	Extravagant ¤2,500
Threat Assessment	3	You gain a +2 equipment bonus to counters	Premium ¤500
Adaptive Integrative Development Environment (IDE)	4	You gain a +5 equipment bonus to Computer skill	Premium ¤500
Singularity	4	At the start of your turn, you may de-slot any and all programs, then slot to add any others, no control action required	Extravagant ¤42,000
Sophontic Intelligence	4	Int +1, Wis 0, Cha –1, Computer Skill, Hacking Specialty	Extravagant ¤42,000
Data Analytics	6	You gain a +5 equipment bonus to Intel skill, and you are notified of the full results of all Watch-check results of your own Profile rolls	Extravagant ¤1,000,000

Malware

You don't usually run malicious software, or *malware*, on your own computers. Rather, you use an Injection Attack to install these programs onto other people's computers. You might also disguise a program in order to con someone into installing malware, or you might install it on their computer when they aren't looking.

The worst malware takes up slot space. Not only does it hinder computer use when operating, but it also prevents other programs from being slotted in!

Malicious Program	Slots	Effect	Cost
Compromised by [Insider of Choice]	zero	[Insider of Choice] gains +5 to all rolls to change your computer's attitude; DC 20 to notice; DC 25 to remove	*Expires,* Premium ¤500
Firmware Crash	zero	Disable one firmware program on the target; DC 20 to remove	*Expires,* Proscribed, Premium ¤500
User Override	zero	Computer loses trust; everyone is *hostile*	*Expires,* Premium ¤500
Disconnect mode	zero	Computer cannot connect to other computers at all; Difficulty 15 to remove	
Berserk Mode	1	Your computer becomes *berserk*; Difficulty 20 to remove	Proscribed, Bargain ¤10
Panic Mode	1	Your computer becomes *panicked;* Difficulty 20 to remove	Bargain ¤10
Thrash Mode	1	All computer use suffers –5 penalty; Difficulty 20 to remove	Bargain ¤10

Outfits

Rather than write up rules for every single bit of inventory, your character's *Outfit* is that inventory. An outfit can be gloves, boots, wallet, personal phone, watch, house–keys, and anything else appropriate.

Outfits aren't just gear, they're also a lack of inappropriate gear. For example, a Stealth outfit isn't just dark colors – it's also *not* the ceramic plating, vision-obscuring helmet, and clanking belts of a Paramilitary outfit. Anyone only has to look at you to recognize what your Outfit is and how you're kitted out … though outfits with a Low Profile bonus will help you blend in with a crowd and to defeat software designed to recognize you by your face, gait, and other habits.

Usually, one Outfit can't be worn by another person without some sizing issues. Characters of similar builds (that is, Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) could probably swap outfits with little difficulty.

Almost all outfits include an armor bonus. Modern and future body-armor includes molds, inserts, weaves, and other custom-fittings which you can increase or decrease to your own comfort level. In game terms, we assume that characters will wear as much armor as they can carry (hence the Str bonus), that they can conceal (hence the Cha bonus), or that you have programmed to conform or deform to reduce damage (hence the Int bonus).

Outfits with social media include headsets and eyepieces to use wear-able computing. Outfits with sensory enhancement include low-lighting, passive sonar, and other sensors that work together with real-time computing to get a lot of information out of very little. Some outfits even have their own software slots to run other programs. Outfits with software can be hacked just like any other computer!

Players should embellish what their outfits look like. What colors do they wear? What logos are they branded with? What trends does that Fashion outfit follow that will expire next month?

Outfit	Effect	Descriptors	Cost
Homeless	Low Profile +2	Untraceable	Bargain ¤10
Aramid	Armor 1d6+Str		Standard ¤100
Casual	None		Standard ¤50
Concealed	Armor +2; Low Profile +2	CCW	Standard ¤250
Gang	Armor +2, Streetwise +2;	Proscribed	Standard ¤150
Hacker	Armor +2, 2 Software slots + Intrusion Counter-Measures		Standard ¤350
Jacker	Armor +2, 1 Software slot + Intrusion Counter-Measures		Standard ¤150
Police	Armor 1d6+Str; Policing +2; Social Media	Proscribed	Standard ¤500
Power User	Armor +2, 1 Software slot + Social Media		Standard ¤150
Scrap	*Burden*, Armor 2d6+Str+Con, Intimidate +2	Handcrafted, Untraceable, Proscribed	Standard ¤750

Outfit	Effect	Descriptors	Cost
Security	Armor 1d6+Str; Security +2; Social Media		Standard ¤250
Shop	Armor +2; Craft +2		Standard ¤150
Sport	Armor +2; Athletics +2		Standard ¤250
Stealth	Armor +2; Hide +2		Standard ¤350
Survival	Armor +2; Endurance +2		Standard ¤250
Animal Skins	Armor +2; Endurance +2	Handcrafted, Untraceable	Premium ¤1,200
Business	Social Media + Data Base for [business of choice]		Premium ¤500
Covert	Armor 1d6+Cha; Low Profile +2	CCW, Military, Proscribed	Premium ¤750
Cracker	Armor 1d6+Int, 3 Software slots + Intrusion Counter-Measures		Premium ¤1,700
Engineer	Armor 1d6+Int; Craft +2		Premium ¤750
Fashion	Charm +2; Social Media	*Expires*	Premium ¤250
Infiltrator	Armor 1d6+Int; Hide +2; Sensory Enhancement	Military, Proscribed	Premium ¤2,500
Medic	Armor +2; Medicine +2		Premium ¤500
Rigid	*Burden;* Armor 2d6+Str	Proscribed	Premium ¤1,200
Smart	Armor 1d6+Int; 2 Software slots + Social Media		Premium ¤2,500
SWAT	Armor 2d6+Str; Policing +2 Social Media + Sensory Enhancement	Military, Proscribed	Premium ¤2,500
Urbex	Armor 1d6+Str; Athletics +2 Social Media + Sensory Enhancement		Premium ¤1,200
Formal	Charm +5; Social Media		Extravagant ¤1,200
Paramilitary	Armor 2d6+Str; Policing +2; 2 Software slots + Sensory Enhancement + MILSPEC Intrusion Counter-Measures	Military, Proscribed	Extravagant ¤1,800
Rekker	Armor 1d6+Int, 4 Software slots + MILSPEC Intrusion Counter-Measures	Proscribed	Extravagant ¤13,337
Samurai	*Burden;* Armor 2d6+Str, Bushido +2	Proscribed	Extravagant ¤42,000
Socialite	Charm +7; Social Media	*Expires*	Extravagant ¤9,000
Tsuwamono	*Burden;* Armor 2d6+Str+2, Bushido +5	Proscribed	Extravagant ¤210,000
VIP	Armor 1d6+Cha; Charm +2; Social Media + Data Base for [business of choice]		Extravagant ¤7,500
Wingsuit	Armor +2; Social Media; Parachute		Extravagant ¤9,000

"I went to my first computer conference at the New York Hilton about 20 years ago. When somebody there predicted the market for microprocessors would eventually be in the millions, someone else said, 'Where are they all going to go? It's not like you need a computer in every doorknob!'
"Years later, I went back to the same hotel. I noticed the room keys had been replaced by electronic cards you slide into slots in the doors.
"There was a computer in every doorknob."
– Danny Hillis

Character Growth

As you play the game, your character improves. Characters earn *experience* (XP), points that they can spend to increase their attributes or to buy new talents. Also, by accomplishing goals, your character will earn respect, knowledge, and admiration from other people, which are represented by different talents.

§ Starting a new Chapter

A chapter is enough time to pass from one story point to another. It isn't a fixed length of time, but it's almost certainly longer than a day. In game terms, you shouldn't have more than one chapter break per session. When one adventure ends, and another starts, that would be the start of a new chapter.

When a new chapter starts:

- ***The character's Profile drops by 1d6 points.*** Information becomes out of date. People lose interest. Credit ratings increase as debt is assumed to be worked off.
- ***The character loses one die of Heat.*** Police and security firms no longer make finding your character a priority.
- ***All equipment that has the "Expire" descriptor no longer works.*** Burner phones lose their carrier and stop using social media. Anti-virus software becomes out-of-date.

🗣 Debriefing

At the end of each session of the game, the Game Host and the Players should take a minute or two to discuss how the game went, as a ***debriefing.***

How did the rules work? Is anyone confused about how the rules worked? Did something not play out the way people expected? Are there any math errors on any character sheets? Resolve any rules issues during this debriefing.

Does anyone want to make any changes to their character? You can change your character's *concept* during the debriefing. Does the Player have a new idea for the direction their character will take? Or did something happen during the game that has inspired a new take on the character? It costs no XP to change a character's concept.

Does anyone want to *re-train* a talent? A talent can be removed from a character. This trade-in gives the character 5 XP to spend on a different improvement. Characters should only re-train when things make sense. For example, removing an Insider talent is pretty easy – you just haven't been keeping up with that group. But re-training an Origin Talent is extremely unusual.



🏁 Accomplishing Goals

Each time you accomplish a goal, you earn a new improvement.

For typical goals, you will earn a typical talent:

- Favor with the people you just helped
- Insider with the people you just helped
- Local Knowledge of where the adventure just took place

For major goals, you will earn a major talent or improvement:

- +1 with an Attribute of your choice
- A new Skill Talent, with something that you just faked your way through, a lot.
- A new combat talent.
- New Bionic or Genetic gifts from bleeding edge tech you acquired

Experience (XP)

Major Characters also earn *experience* (XP) as they go through their adventures. XP is stored up and then spent to develop new Talents or raise Attributes.

Concept earns +1 XP

After every game session, if you didn't violate your character's concept, you earn +1 XP.

Take a look at the three questions about your character. Did your character stay true to their personal view? Did others still view them the same way? How about their enemies?

If the answer is "yes", then your character gain 1 XP.

If the answer is "not sure", then your character *still* gains 1 XP, but you should think about changing your concept to something different. The purpose of the concept is so you and your fellow players know what your character

Debriefing earns +1 XP

After every game session, talk to the Game Host about what worked and what didn't. You earn +1 XP.

New chapter earns +1 XP

Whenever a new chapter starts, characters earn +1 XP. Right after earning that experience, the Player can decide if they want their character to spend their XP or to save it for later.

10 XP buys +1 to an Attribute

Choose any one attribute. Spend 10 XP to increase the attribute by +1.

There is no practical limit to how high a player may raise their attributes, though the Game Host may demand that numbers above +5 require some justification for such extra-ordinarily high attributes.

10 XP buys 1 New Talent

You can buy any Talent that you qualify for. You must get Game Host permission first.

Strange talents, like Post–Human cybernetic upgrades, may have other issues.

Retrain a talent for 5 XP

With permission from the game host, you may lose a talent, but gain 5 XP.

You may be forced to retrain some talents. For example, if your Ally is killed, you have no choice but to retrain the talent.

After accomplishing goals, you may earn talents you don't think will really help you. For example, you might not care to have Local Knowledge of some place you never plan to go back to. Retrain that unwanted talent for +5 XP.



"The first 90 percent of the code accounts for the first 90 percent of the development time. The remaining 10 percent of the code accounts for the other 90 percent of the development time."
– Tom Cargill, Bell Labs

Spot Rules

The rules listed above should cover about 80% of what's going to happen in your game. Sometimes, though, you might need specific rules to cover operating a vehicle, or dealing with oxygen deprivation, or something strange. In this chapter, we've listed some *Spot Rules* that a Game Host can use to cover those rare, out-of-left-field events.

Calamity

Sometimes, things will happen that might kill players instantly. The world is just far too dangerous to list all the bad things, so here's a guideline.

Calamity	Effect
Nuisance	Damage 10
Dangerous	Damage 20
Incapacitating	Damage 30
Very deadly	Damage 40
Almost certain death	Damage 50
No human could survive	Damage 60

The Game Host may rule that certain equipment or talents can affect the calamity. For example, electricity will probably ignore a character's Armor.

Carrying Capacity

Generally, the *Bleeding Edge* rules assume that all characters can carry an outfit, a cell phone, a main weapon, a backup weapon, and 3 reloads for each weapon (if appropriate) without being burdened. The average character is assumed to be able to carry about 15 kg of gear. If the actual carrying weight matters, use this table:

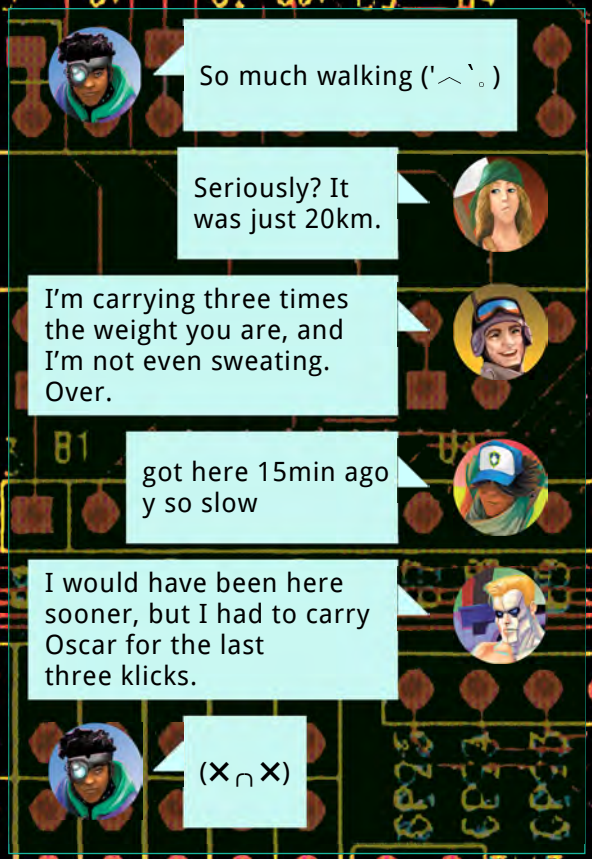
	Con –1	Con 0	Con +1	Con +2	Con +3	Con +4
Str –1	9.6 kg	12.0 kg	14.4 kg	16.8 kg	19.2 kg	21.6 kg
Str 0	12.0 kg	15.0 kg	18.0 kg	21.0 kg	24.0 kg	27.0 kg
Str +1	14.4 kg	18.0 kg	21.6 kg	25.2 kg	28.8 kg	32.4 kg
Str +2	16.8 kg	21.0 kg	25.2 kg	29.4 kg	33.6 kg	37.8 kg
Str +3	19.2 kg	24.0 kg	28.8 kg	33.6 kg	38.4 kg	43.2 kg
Str +4	21.6 kg	27.0 kg	32.4 kg	37.8 kg	43.2 kg	48.6 kg

The formula is (5+Str)×(5+Con)×(3/5 kg).

A character can carry ×2 their carrying capacity, but they become *burdened*: they suffer –2 to rolls that use Str, Dex, or Con, and their Dash distance is halved.

A character can carry ×3 their carrying capacity, but they become *over-burdened*: they suffer –5 to rolls that use Str, Dex, or Con, and their Dash distance drops to zero.

If you need to make up weights for items, you can improvise as needed. Off-hand weapons usually weigh 0.5kg. Good hand weapons usually weigh 1 kg. Two-hand weapons usually weigh 2 kg. An outfit weighs 5 kg or more. Any item with a *Burden* descriptor adds another 10kg.



The default rules don't track precise carrying capacity, and only concern themselves with how many Burdens a character carries. Tracking weight by the kilogram may produce slightly different results – characters who were un-*burdened* may become *burdened* or vice versa.

"If your hackers are all DJs and tattoo artists who crib their style from halfway in-between My Little Pony and Pinhead from Hellraiser, and have been so obviously work-shopped to oblivion that they might as well be snapping their fingers and referring to authority figures as 'Daddy-O', then you're already showing your ignorance, as most hackers are fat greasy shit-minglers with terrible beards who post Google Streetview images of the houses of people who think we should have to pay money to watch TV shows."
– Ben Croshaw

Characters

The game of *Bleeding Edge* has three kinds of characters.

Minor Characters are the supporting cast: the street vendors, the oppressed populace, the rank-and-file mercs, the street hoods, the young punks, the rent-a-cops, and what-have-you. Minor characters come and go from the story as needed.

Major Characters are the big names: the captains of industry, the leaders of human rights, the elite assassins, the gang leaders, the decorated police investigator, and other important players. Major characters are allowed to have talents which have the *Major* descriptor.

Player Characters are the avatars of the Players. Each Player gets one character, as their role in the game. Player Characters get all the benefits that Major Characters do, and more.

As the Game Host, you will be required to make up all the Minor and Major Characters. The world is a very big place! Here are some ideas to keep the supporting cast manageable.

Minor Characters

Minor Characters are just that – *minor*. They should have as few details as possible. Many Minor Characters won't even need names.

For simplicity, we recommend having four types of Minor Characters: the *Typical*, the *Elite*, the *Enforcer*, and the *Supernaut*. Each type is more powerful than the last. For your records, you can just write down a single line, and then you can know what these Minor Characters can do.

For example, if you write "Typical Mercenary with Fighting, Observation, and Shooting", then you know this character has 2d6 for most tasks, they roll 2d6+2 for anything Mercenary related, and they roll 3d6+2 when fighting, observing, or shooting (since those are required by their jobs). You also know that they can take 12 for any typical, skilled task … so to sneak past a Typical Mercenary who is just doing their job by rote, a Player Character would have to roll 13 or better.

Typical Character

The typical character has:

- Zeros in all attributes
- A Job talent for what they usually do
- Three Skill talents for what they do the most
- An Insider talent for who they usually work with

The typical character rolls 2d6 for most tasks, they roll 2d6+2 for anything related to their job, they roll 3d6 when they use their skills, and they roll 3d6+2 for skills that apply to their job. Typicals will usually take 10 whenever they can, which means they have a roll of 10 for their typical skill tasks, and 12 for when their skill and job overlap.

The majority of people in the world should be typicals.

Elite Character

The *elite* character has:

- +1 in all attributes
- A Job talent for what they usually do
- Three Skill talents for what they do the most
- An Insider talent for who they usually work with

The elite character rolls 2d6+2 for most tasks, they roll 2d6+4 for anything related to their job, they roll 3d6+2 when they use their skills, and they roll 3d6+4 for skills that apply to their job. Elites will usually take 10 whenever they can, which means they have a roll of 12 for their typical skill tasks, and 14 for when their skill and job overlap.

Elite characters are a cut above typical people. They're a little bit less powerful than a starting player character.

Enforcer Character

The *enforcer* character has:

- +2 in all attributes
- A Job talent for what they usually do
- Three Skill talents for what they do the most
- An Insider talent for who they usually work with

The enforcer character rolls 2d6+4 for most tasks, they roll 2d6+6 for anything related to their job, they roll 3d6+4 when they use their skills, and they roll 3d6+6 for skills that apply to their job. Enforcers will usually take 10 whenever they can, which means they have a roll of 14 for their typical skill tasks, and 16 for when their skill and job overlap.

Enforcer characters are rare, and they're serious business. They're a little more powerful than a starting character.

Supernaut Character

The *supernaut* character has:

- +3 in all attributes
- A Job talent for what they usually do
- The Expert talent for their job.
- Three Skill talents for what they do the most
- An Insider talent for who they usually work with

The supernaut character rolls 2d6+6 for most tasks, they roll 2d6+11 for anything related to their job, they roll 3d6+6 when they use their skills, and they roll 3d6+11 for skills that apply to their job. Supernauts will usually take 10 whenever they can, which means they have a roll of 16 for their typical skill tasks, and 21 for when their skill and job overlap.

The supernaut is a scary character, an effective "boss" villain, much stronger than a starting player character. A combat-type supernaut will have attack and defense rolls at frightening levels. It will take an entire team to deal with a supernaut, and even then, they will probably suffer casualties.

Custom Character

As the Game Host, you can build custom characters as adversaries. You can make them as simple or as complex as you want them to be. We made our standard types of "typical", "elite", "enforcer", and "supernaut" to be simple, so you don't get overwhelmed with all the details of exactly what numbers they have for whichever rolls.

Here are some examples:

- ***Gang Member:*** Typical build, add Streetwise and Veteran
- ***Wasteland Warrior:*** Typical build, add Packrat and Wilderness
- ***Successful Military Contractor***: Elite build, add Ammo Conservation and Veteran
- ***Killer Cyborg***: Elite build, add Cyber Body and Veteran
- ***SWAT officer:*** Enforcer build, add Armor Proficiency and Veteran
- ***Billionaire Tycoon:*** Enforcer build, add Wealth ×3.
- ***Console Cowboy:*** Enforcer build, add Hacking and Phishing
- ***The One:*** Supernaut build, add Brawling Advantage, Brawling Counter-Moves, and Brawling Equalizer
- ***Science Gone Wrong:*** Supernaut build, add Frenzy, GMO Bio-Weapons and GMO Soak

You can further improve characters into certain types:

- ***Leader:*** Take any one character, add the Leadership talent. (Making one character in a mob of bad guys into a leader instantly adds a tactical dynamic to any fight. Smart heroes will want to eliminate the Leader to stop all those Aid Another actions.)
- ***Boss:*** Take any one character, add Injury Soak ×2. (The Injury Soak talent greatly decreases the chance of taking the Boss character out with a single, lucky hit.)
- ***Pack:*** Take any group of characters, add Military Tactics and Hurt Soak. (Military Tactics gives the Pack members a bonus die when an ally also threatens, so they are at their best when they attack in force. Hurt Soak increases survivability.)
- ***Noncombatant:*** Take any one character, add the Coward and Pacifist talents. (Coward and Pacifist both add dodge bonuses, while reducing the character's ability to fight. The Noncombatant character is good for *escort quests*, where the Player-Characters have to get the Noncombatant through dangerous areas. The Players are less likely to resent the Noncombatant's "uselessness" in combat if they understand how the buffs from Coward and Pacifist work.)

Animals

Animals can be handled just like people. An animal's "job" is whatever that animal usually does. For example, a guard dog would get a +2 bonus on rolls related to sniffing out intruders. Listing every animal in the world would take up too much space, so you will have to improvise rules for new creatures, as needed.

- ***Attack Dog:*** Take any one character base. Small size. Str +1, Dex +3, Con +2, Int –4, Wis +1, Cha –3. Add Brawling Advantage, Brawling Counter-Moves, and Tracking.
- ***Horse:*** Take any one character base. Large size. Str +4, Dex +0, Con +3, Int –4, Wis +0, Cha –3. Add Increased Speed, Hurt Soak, and Serpentine.
- ***Genetically-Engineered Deinonychus:*** Take any one character base. Large size. Str +3, Dex +1, Con +3, Int –4, Wis +0, Cha –3. Add Brawling Advantage, Brawling Counter-Moves, and GMO Bio-Weapons.

Robots

Robot drones are listed in the equipment section.

Given enough resources, a facility might be staffed by many robots designed to mimic humans. *Combat androids* use human gear and accessories, but they work as security personnel. *Social androids* are designed to interact with people, often fooling them into passing as the real thing.

- ***Combat Android:*** Take any one character base. Str +2, Dex –2, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha –2*. Add Artificial Intelligence, Bionic Expert, and Cyber-Body. (*All attribute adjustments include talents.)
- ***Military Android:*** Take any one character base. Large size. Str +3, Dex –3, Con +3, Int +0, Wis –1, Cha –2*. Add Artificial Intelligence, Cyber-Body, and Weapon Implant: Machine Gun. (*All attribute adjustments include talents.)
- ***Social Android:*** Take any one character base. Str +1, Dex –2, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha –1*. Add Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality, and Cyber-Body. (*All attribute adjustments include talents.)

Major Character

A Major Character can be built just like a Player Character. You can give them whatever attributes and talents that you feel are appropriate. Use the minor characters as a guideline in terms of "power level".

As the Game Host, you are in charge of the whole game world. That means you have to plan all encounters, from the incidental to the epic. Don't make the game too complex for yourself. Use custom-designed Major Characters sparingly.

How Powerful Should I Make My Non-Player Characters?

As a Game Host, when you are making up your own characters, ask yourself, "What makes sense, in the context of the *world?*" For example, if a factory is described as having "lax security", then it should have a small number of Typical security guards. If a building is a top-secret, well-funded military instillation, then it should have Elites or Enforcers guarding the place.

Is the character someone who works a low-wage job that requires no special skills? Use a Typical build. A Player-Character should be able to roll right over most Typicals, especially when the Player-Character is in their element, using their best abilities.

Do people talk about how these characters are not to be trifled with, how they're a cut above? Use an Elite build. A Player-Character with superior fighting skills should be able to handle a few Elites no problem, but Player-Characters who lack good combat abilities will have trouble.

Are these characters considered "the best at what they do"? Are they special forces? One in a million? Use an Enforcer build. Player-Characters should always treat Enforcers with respect, or they'll get what's coming to them.

Is the character the stuff of nightmares? An amazing person that few people even encounter once in a lifetime? Use a Supernaut build.When a Player-Character has to deal with a Supernaut, they should have their escape route planned out in advance, in case things go poorly.

Climbing

Any incline more than 45 degrees requires a *stunt* to climb over it. The climber must roll 2d6+Str+Dex to make progress. Skills such Athletics definitely apply.

Climbing Situation	2d6+Str+Dex vs.
Ladder	DC 5
Rough wall, knotted rope	DC 10
Smooth rope	DC 15
Hand-over-hand with no footholds	DC 20
Slippery surface	Increase DC +5
Using both hands	Default
Using only one hand	Increase DC +5
Climbing speed 0.5m / round	Decrease DC –2
Climbing speed 2m / round	Default
Climbing speed 5m / round	Increase DC +5

The Game Host may rule that any roll to climb that fails to meet the DC by a margin of 5 or more results in a fall. For example, if you're trying to climb a rough wall (DC 10), a roll of 5 or less means that you would fall.

Skilled climbers who can take 10 can simply climb with no issues.

Concealment

Sometimes, it will be hard to see things. Poor lighting or smoke may hinder visibility.

Characters who are *obscured* are hard to see. Any attacks or counters made against an obscured target are at –2. Obscured characters can still be seen, but details will be hard to make out.

Characters who are *concealed* can't be seen at all. Any attacks or counters made against a concealed target are at –5. Also, a target may claim a +2 concealment bonus to a dodge an attacker that they are concealed from. Concealed characters can't be seen at all, and they may not even be noticed.

Characters who perform a *hide stunt* may make a roll of 2d6+Dex+Wis vs. 10. A successful hide stunt raises concealment by one step (that is, from nothing to obscured, or from obscured to concealed). Like all stunts, hiding also makes your character *stunned*. (A character who "hunkers down" may attempt to hide in plain sight … but really, the –2 penalty your attackers are going to suffer isn't doing much to offset the +1d6 bonus they may claim to shoot you because you're stunned.)

Concealment is relative. Some people will be able to see a target that others can't. Characters that are illuminated can be seen easily, but characters off in the shadows will be obscured or concealed.

Example: In the darkened alleys of urban blight, a firefight breaks out. With only the light pollution to see by, all combatants are *obscured*. All attacks and counters will suffer a –2 penalty. (Dodges are unaffected.)

Anticipating this very situation, Mike has put on his night-vision goggles. Mike will be able to see everyone just fine – and since no target is obscured, he won't suffer the –2 penalty. Mike himself is still obscured from the other people, who don't have night-vision, so they will still have a –2 to attack or to counter him.

Remote Viewing

Sometimes, you won't be using your own eyeballs. *Remote viewing* is using a camera from a different point-of-view to sight a target.

Using a remote viewer requires a *control* action. When using remote-viewing, use the concealment from the remote-viewer, not the attacker.

Example: Oscar uses his robot drone to spot a punk hiding behind a wall. Oscar first uses a control action to declare he'll use remote viewing. He then uses an attack action to lob a grenade where his target is hiding. Oscar would normally suffer a –5 concealment penalty to his attack, but since his drone can see the punk with no obstructions at all, Oscar will have no penalties. The punks won't get the +2 bonus to dodge, either.

Cover

Sometimes, combatants will hide behind things. In game terms, *cover* is a bonus to dodge rolls. Cover does not benefit counter-attacks.

Characters with *soft cover* may claim a +2 bonus to dodge rolls. Characters who are within 2m of a solid wall or other hard barrier may claim soft cover from the wall. Characters who are using Fighting weapons against other characters (sometimes called "in melee") may claim soft cover from the characters they are fighting with.

Characters with *fair cover* may claim a +5 bonus to dodge rolls. Characters who are attacking through tiny windows, or who only have their head and their one-handed firearm exposed, have fair cover. Characters with fair cover are almost always *obscured* as well (–2 to be attacked) … unless the attacker can somehow see around or through the cover.

Total cover makes most attacks impossible. Characters behind walls or inside sealed vehicles have total cover. Any attempt to attack a character with total cover must successfully breach the cover. In case it matters, a character with total cover may claim a +5 bonus to dodge (just like fair cover), and they will probably also be *concealed*, too (another +5 to dodge). If the character is somehow still hit, after all that, reduce the damage by the total cover's Soak – if and only if there is any damage left after that, then the target is hit.

Lobbed Attacks

Grenades, mortar fire, and other *lobbed* attacks are launched to go up and over cover. Characters can't claim cover from lobbed attacks unless there is a ceiling or other aerial cover to protect them. Characters can still claim concealment normally.

Crafting and Repairing

Player-Characters are an industrious lot, and the 21st century offers incredible tools for putting that industry to use. CNC manufacturing, 3D printing, and modern power tools can put the power of the industrial revolution in to the hands of a single worker.

The rules below describe how they can use PCs can use their industrious nature to build new tools and toys. They aren't intended to describe how everyone in the setting builds things. These rules can't encompass factories, assembly lines, and other massive infrastructure, and they don't try to. However, they can encompass lone Player-Character experts and their assistants quite nicely.

Fixing a 1/Fix item

By default, repairing a 1/Fix item requires appropriate parts (usually 20% of the cost of the item, or passing a Credit Check vs. the item's DC –5), and a *challenge* of 2d6+Dex+Int vs. 80. Each try takes 10 minutes, and only ten tries are permitted before the character quits in frustration.

Some 1/Fix talents can be recharged simply by discarding the broken item and replacing it with a new one at full cost.

Crafting a new hardware from scratch

Building new hardware takes 3 steps:

- Declare what you want to build, including its grade.
- Get the parts
- Pass the skill challenge.

Getting Parts

The parts cost 20% of the final device. If the item is Proscribed, the parts themselves aren't Proscribed… but ordering the parts on credit sets off a Watch check. If the item is Premium or Extravagant, then the parts are Premium or Extravagant, too. Parts can be purchased on credit, with a +5 bonus to the check.

Crafting Time

Craft checks are a Challenge, based on the cost of the item. There are many talents that will allow you to change the time required for your rolls.

Characters can craft up to 8 hours a day. A character may gain assist bonuses from outfits, workshops, and other characters.

More than one character can work together on an item. Either the characters can work in shifts, or they can work together (using the assist rules). The Game Host may limit how many characters may work on a single crafting. For example, building a motorcycle could involve six people or more, but building a smart phone is probably a two-person job at most.

Crafting an item usually requires fine motor skills (Dexterity) and some engineering knowledge (Intelligence). The Game Host may allow substitutions for other attributes. For example, digging out a trench might be manual labor (Strength) over long hours (Constitution).

Hardware	2d6+Dex+Int vs.	Attempts
Bargain	Challenge 100	10 tries, 1/minute
Standard	Challenge 150	15 tries, 1/hour
Premium	Challenge 250	20 tries, 1/hour
Extravagant	Challenge 400	25 tries, 3/day
Optimum	Challenge 600	30 tries, 1/day

Note that whether hardware is Proscribed or not only affects the cost of parts, and not the time or difficulty of crafting. It can be much less expensive to build Proscribed hardware with your own hands.

Crafting Software

Crafting software requires no parts. However, you will need a computer that has enough empty Program slots to hold the software once it's done. (Yes, that means if you use software to give you assist bonuses to your Computer skill, you'll also need enough slots left over to fit the software you want to make.)

Crafting software requires an analytical mind (Intelligence) and a keen intuition to figure out how states will resolve themselves (Wisdom).

Software	2d6+Int+Wis vs.	Attempts
Bargain	Challenge 150	10 tries, 1/minute
Standard	Challenge 200	15 tries, 1/hour
Premium	Challenge 300	20 tries, 1/hour
Extravagant	Challenge 450	25 tries, 3/day
Optimum	Challenge 650	30 tries, 1/day

Difficulty

The Game Host may have to make spot rules on how hard it is to do something.

A list of the Difficulty targets for everything a character could ever do would not only impossible… but it would make this game so large and cumbersome that it wouldn't be a game, it would be more like

How many people could do this?

Description	Difficulty
Anyone Could Try	DC 10
Experts Only	DC 15
Masters Only	DC 20
Grandmasters Only	DC 25
Legends Only	DC 30

For example, let's use a locked door. Who could pick the lock on this door?

If anyone could just jimmy the door open, then it's only a DC 10 lock. An interior door, or perhaps a tool-shed, might have a door like this. Anyone rolling 2d6 will, eventually, roll high enough to open this door. The major obstacle to getting the door open is that someone would look suspicious when picking the lock.

If the door is secure enough that only a trained locksmith could get it open, then it's a DC 15 lock. A Typical character who rolls only 2d6 will never, ever get this lock open. Business offices should have locks like this.

A door that only a serious thief could get open should be DC 20. These are bank vaults and mansion entrances with some of the best security money can buy. Only someone with specialized skill and the right tools even has a chance at this, and anyone who can do it casually will inspire awe.

A door built to protect national secrets or the life of the President of China might be DC 25. This sort of obstacle is beyond the reach of even wealthy private citizens – only plutocrats of large corporations or nation-states could afford the expense of creating them.

If there is a door on the planet which would be DC 30 to breach, it would have been a costly extravagance even for a great nation. Whatever lies behind it must be of global importance for it to need such security – but what could it be? When DCs of 30 are coming in to play, you're moving beyond the scale of the ordinary.

Difficulty as a Contest vs. Minor Character's Take–10s

Another way to assign difficulty could be to assume that the Minor Characters are skilled and taking 10. Like a contest of rolls, the Player-Character would have to defeat their opponents' rolls... but when an opponent is taking 10 instead of rolling, it functions the same as a typical DC.

Example 1: Looking for evidence of illegal animal testing, Sierra decides to sneak into a Welvar research lab.

Because Welvar is rich, they can afford Elite security guards. The Game Host decides that the security guard has +1 in all attributes, Observation Skill, and a Job: Security Guard talent.

Sierra declares that she will use her Intelligence, as she meticulously plans her path to sneak in. The security guards will counter with Wisdom, to spot her.

The Observation roll would be 2d6+Int+Wis. Being bored at work, the security guard takes 10 instead rolling. This gives him a roll of (10+1+1=) 12. The Host decides the guard's occupation bonus of +2 applies, too, so now the DC is (12+2=) 14. Sierra will have to roll 15 or better to win the contest.

If Sierra rolls a 14, she will tie on the contest, which could mean she only gets part of what she wants. (Maybe the Host will give her player the option to run away without getting caught or to subdue the guard.)

To make things even more difficult, Minor Characters might assist one another, or they might gain situational bonuses from their superior equipment and situation.

Example 2: Victor has gotten a tip-off that some Preppers have a cache of Cracked-grade weapons, stashed somewhere in the derelict suburbs. Victor decides he wants to sneak in and grab something for himself. When he gets there, he discovers over a dozen watchers in a little fortress, with no less than three rings of patrols. The Preppers are taking no chances.

The stash is guarded by Typical militia people – zeros in all attributes, Observation skill, and a Job: Military talent. However, the Preppers take their security seriously — there's several of them watching over the house. Any approach has at least three spotters. In addition, the Preppers have set up barracades and high watch-points to limit angles of approach.

Victor declares that he will use his Dexterity to sneak past the guards; the Preppers will counter with Wisdom, to spot him.

The Observation roll is 2d6+Dex+Wis. The Game Host decides that the Peppers will take 10, so this gives them a roll of (10+0+0=) 10. The Host decides that the Preppers' +2 occupation bonus applies, and that their superior situation gives them another +2. They're up to (10+2+2=) 14.

Instead of making Victor pass three different tests, the Host rules that the three patrols will work together – basically, one task master and two assistants. Using the take–10 as a guide, a patrol's score of 14 is good enough for a +2 assist bonus. Two assistants is a (+2+2=) +4 bonus, so the task-master has a score of (14+2+2=) 18. If Victor wants to sneak in, he has to beat a DC of 18.

Calculating skill rolls for Minor Characters can help give you some idea of what to expect from opponents. Rolling for every single Minor Character can be tedious and dull. And making a Player roll several times in a row can be seen as "rolling to fail", meaning making someone roll over and over until they fail so as to stop them from succeeding.

Challenge

Many rolls can be handled as a pass/fail test – climbing a tree, jumping a gorge, shooting a thug, etc. For other tasks, where failure is just a setback, and success will take a lot of work, the Game Host can rule that a character will have to pass a skill Challenge.

To set up a skill challenge, decide how challenging the task will be, how difficult each roll will be, and how much time each roll will take. Naturally, if the character's take–10 is enough to win, then there's no need to even roll. Here are some examples.

Task Description	Sample Challenge
Anyone could do this in about an hour	Challenge 80, 15 tries, 1 per 5 minutes
Only an expert could do this, and it would take a whole shift	Challenge 100, 10 tries, 1 per hour
Only a master could do this, and it would take all month	Challenge 500, 30 tries, 1 per 8 hours
An expert could do this in 5 minutes, but it would take an unskilled person an hour	Challenge 15, 15 tries, 1 per 5 minutes, each failure adds 5 to the Challenge
A grandmaster could do this in an hour. No one else should even try.	Challenge 300, 15 tries, 1 per 5 minutes
Anyone could try this, but rolling low could be dangerous	Challenge 50, 6 tries, 1 per 5 minutes, any failure that scores less than 10 causes something bad to happen

To choose a challenge target, decide how skilled a person would have to be to beat it, and how long it would take that person to complete the challenge. Divide the total time by the number of tries, and that gives you how long each attempt should take. Multiply the Difficulty target by the number of tries, and that gives you the Challenge target. To keep the numbers easier, the Game Host should consider rounding the number of tries *up* to a nice number, while rounding the Challenge target *down*.

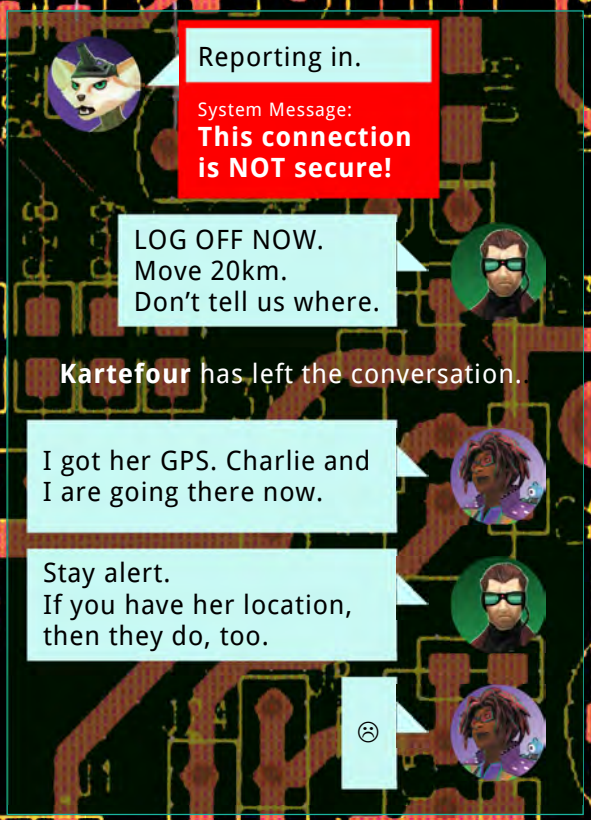
To make the challenge even more *dangerous*, the Game Host could declare that successes with certain attributes will give advantages, but that failures will cause setbacks that hinder progress. A setback could also be a *change of venue* – the character may have to use a different skill set or attributes to deal with the crisis.

Attribute used	Sample Advantage	Sample Setbacks
Strength	More loot	Dangerous fall, lost loot
Dexterity	Sneaky progress	Getting caught, clumsiness
Constitution	Last longer	Fatigue, disease
Intelligence	Better intel	Lost time, bad intel
Wisdom	More discovery	Lost way, confusion
Charisma	New friends	New enemies, Watch Checks

Example 3: Having been separated from the rest of the party, Kartefour has to travel from Des Moines, Iowa, to Orlando, Florida – a distance of about 2000km. Normally that wouldn't be a big deal... but Kartefour is carrying a solid-state drive filled with secrets on the Russian Mafia. Also, Kartefour is a genetically-engineered life-form with an unusual appearance, and she may be the target of prejudice. Kartefour will travel on foot as much as she can stand, but she will get rides when she can.

Kartefour is willing to endure long walks and sleepless nights to travel, even on foot if necessary. Kartefour declares she will use her Constitution.

The Game Host decides that over-land travel requires strategic planning and knowledge of people's routes. The Host declares that Intelligence will also be needed.



Rather than game out every step of the way, the Game Host decides to play out this adventure as a skill challenge. Traveling down Interstate 64 is something anyone could do. After consulting a mapping program to calculate the walking time, it looks like it will take about 40 days. To keep things moving at a brisk pace, the Game Host decides on 1 try per week. Dividing 40 days by 7 days rounds up to 6 tries. The difficulty for "anyone could try" is 10, and 5 tries would mean a Challenge target of (10×6=) 60.

Walking that far, with only occasional hitched rides, would be a severe undertaking. The Game Host rules that each loss will be a setback that involves either starvation or a dangerous encounter.

The Game Host tells Kartefour's player that, to walk from Des Moines to Orlando will require rolls of 2d6+Con+Int vs. Challenge 60, 6 tries, with 1 try per week, and bad things happen on any roll that scores less than 10. (At least, which scores less than 10 *before* the unlimited bonus from previous rolls.)

Kartefour is skilled in Endurance and in Survival. Her Con is +2 but her Int is only 0. While she could take 10 on her roll, she decides she wants to get through this trial much faster, so she will roll 4d6+2, which is pretty good odds. If Kartefour can pass the test, in a few weeks she'll rendezvous with the rest of her crew in Orlando.

Kartefour rolls 16 on her first test, and 17 on her second. She's making great progress, with 33 out of 60 already done. Since she's using Con and Int, the advantages are that she's traveling more hours per day and that she's getting better intel. Kartefour walks for hours on end , listening to podcasts and satellite radio and learning a lot about I–64 and the locals.

On the third try, however, Kartefour only scores a 9. Since that roll scored less than 10, the Game Host rules that there's been a minor setback. While the host could rule that Kartefour gets lost or gets sick, the host decides instead to change the venue. There are now road blocks and spontaneous searches of vehicles, as the police have been tipped off to a fugitive from the Russian mob – this raises the Challenge by 10, to 70. The Host also rules that Kartefour will have to use her ken of human social interactions – that's Charisma, and Kartefour has a Cha of –2.

Since the game has changed, Kartefour says she'll be far more sneaky now, and asks to use Dexterity instead of Constitution. With a Dex of +3, Kartefour is now rolling (4d6+3–2=) 4d6+1. Kartefour has three more tries, she has 42 out of 70, and she averages a 15 per roll, so her odds are good... but anything is possible.

Drugs, Drunkenness and Intoxication

In the present or in the future, many people like to party, and they like to party to excess. Alcohol, marijuana, and other *intoxicants* can impair users.

Drugs vary wildly in their delivery methods. Many drugs are *ingested,* in drink or in pill form. Others are *inhaled,* as smoke or vapor. Most notoriously, some drugs are *intravenously injected,* using a needle inserted directly into the bloodstream.

Characters who are Artificial Intelligences with a Cyber-Body do not have a metabolism. They cannot ingest, inhale, or inject drugs.

In the cybernetic age, *wire-heading* is the ultimate high – an electrical stimulation directly into the brain's pleasure center. Even Artificial Intelligences and Cyber-Brains can be affected by wire-heading.

Each person is different, and they will be affected by different drugs in different ways. Recreational drugs can simply cause euphoria – or, in game terms, *confusion.* Other drugs may cause *attribute loss,* such as lethargy (Str damage), loss of coordination (Dex damage), nausea (Con damage), impaired memory (Int damage), hallucinations (Wis damage), and loss of inhibitions (Cha damage). A character whose attribute loss pushed an attribute below –5 has overdosed – they become incapacitated and they risk death.

Falling and Gravity

A character who falls more than 2m suffers Damage equal to ×3 the fallen distance, in meters. For example, a character who falls 8 meters suffers Damage 24. A character can use acrobatics to try to roll with the fall. If the character can pass a test of 2d6+Dex+Con vs. 10, the falling damage is only distance×2, but the character becomes *stunned.*

Falling damage is *Piercing*: don't roll bonus dice from Armor, but keep any flat bonuses.

When falling long distances, the air will push back against the character, which is called *terminal velocity*. In game terms, the maximum Damage from a fall is 50 points. Characters with a wingsuit or a parachute have a much lower terminal velocity – the maximum Damage is 10.

If the character survives the fall, they must roll 2d6+Str+Dex vs. a DC equal to the falling Damage. If they pass, they land in a standing position. Otherwise, they are knocked down.

Last Ditch Grab

A character who is pushed, shoved, or thrown over an edge may make a last ditch grab. (They must drop any objects held in their hands!) The character becomes *stunned,* and they must roll 2d6+Str+Dex vs. 10. On a success, they are now clinging to the edge. The game host may adjust this DC for easier or harder ledges.

Free-Fall

Characters in space, or who are skydiving, are in *free-fall*. During end-of-round maintenance, a character who is free-falling must roll 2d6+Dex+Con vs. 10. If they fail, they become *stunned.*

On Earth, people fall at a maximum speed of about 200kph (about 333 meters per game round). If you want to have any dramatic fights after falling off a skyscraper, that's a descent of 110 stories per round. If your characters fall out of a plane at 4,000 meters, they will hit the ground at the end of the 12th round. Characters with a parachute fall more slowly: 40kph (about 66 meters per game round).

Food and Water

A typical human needs 3 liters of water and 2,000 calories of food to survive.

A character who goes one day without water suffers attribute loss: –1 to Str, –1 to Dex, and –2 to Con. The character takes this damage again after the second day, the third day, etc. If any attribute drops to zero, the character becomes incapacitated, and they are at risk of death.

A character who goes without food for three days suffers attribute loss: –2 to Str, –1 to Dex, and –1 to Con. Every three days without food, the character suffers this damage again. If any attribute drops to zero, the character becomes incapacitated, and they are at risk of death.

In addition, a character who is deprived of food or water cannot adequately rest. They cannot recharge any 1/Day talents until they finally get food and water.

A character with a Cyber Body, but who is not an Artificial Intelligence, still has an organic brain that needs sustenance. However, it only requires one third as much, and then they only suffer at one-third the normal rate. (That is, they only need 1 liter or 666 calories, and they don't suffer any attribute loss until three days without water or nine days without food.)

Jumping

As part of any dash, scramble, or run, a character can jump over a single 1m gap. If the character has to run some strange obstacle course with many 1m jumps, the Game Host may call for rolls of 2d6+Str+Dex vs. 10 or worse. Failure means the character is knocked down, or worse.

To jump more than 1m, the moving character becomes *stunned,* and they must roll 2d6+Str+Dex. For every full 3 points they score, they clear 1m of distance. (For example, if you score 11, that's three groups of 3 points, so that's a 3m long jump.) Characters can sacrifice 2m of long distance for 1m of vertical distance. (For example, instead of 3m long, you could jump 1.5m high.)

Characters who fail to clear a gap, but who only fall 1m or 2m short of the edge, can attempt to grab onto the far edge. See "Last Ditch Grab", page 125.

Poison and Pollution

Poisons such as chemicals, radiation, and disease can affect a character. Deregulation has allowed corporations to pollute the environment, and people are forced to drink poisoned water and to breathe toxic air. In far too many places, weak anti-pollution laws encourage industry to ignore controls or to pay paltry fines, and then to go with business as usual. Nuclear technology has introduced toxic *radiation*, a poison that builds up in the eco-system and takes hundreds of years to decay.

Characters with Artificial Intelligences, Cyber Bodies, or Cyber Brains will be affected differently by poisons and pollution. In general, stuff that affects humans and animals probably won't work at all on the cybernetic set ... but other things might wear down insulation or impede electrical functions.

Just like drugs, poisons usually impair abilities, causing attribute loss. Poisons can cause paralysis (Str damage), motor loss (Dex damage), long-term health effects (Con damage), brain damage (Int damage), visual and audial disability (Wis damage) and ugly burns and sores (Cha damage). A character whose attribute loss pushes an attribute below –5 is at risk of death.

Property Damage

When an explosion happens, all inanimate objects can be damaged in the area of effect can be damaged.

Inanimate, unattended objects are helpless, so all attackers may claim the "surprise" bonus of 1d6 to attack them. Hitting an inanimate object is DC 5.

Inanimate objects have a soak roll just like people do. The table below lists appropriate soak rolls for objects of a given material. Exceptionally large or small objects should get appropriate bonuses for size, per the Size section below.

Object	Soak
Cloth	2d6–5
Wood	2d6+2
Plastic	2d6
Steel	2d6+10
Concrete	2d6+5
Stone	2d6+5

- If an object fails its first soak roll, instead of being *panicked*, it is knocked about, scuffed up, and in disarray, but nothing serious has happened to it.
- If an object fails its second soak roll, instead of being *incapacitated*, it is *broken*. It won't function until it's repaired, but at least it can be repaired.
- If an object fails its third soak roll, it is *destroyed*. It's wrecked completely and can't be repaired – at best it can be used for spare parts.

Characters can attack each other's items

Apply an attack penalty of at least –2 for carried items, and possibly –5 or –10 for especially small items. The character that carries items that are being attacked may defend those items using a counter or dodge.

Size

Over the course of a game, the player characters might get in to scraps with stray dogs, cyborg rats, an Infantry Fighting Vehicle, and an armored elephant. Unusually large or small characters will have appropriate bonuses or penalties to their brute power and fine control.

Size	Description	Space	Str Mod	Dex Mod	Con Mod
+4	Colossal (blue whale)	32m	+8	–8	+8
+3	Gargantuan (gray whale)	16m	+4	–4	+4
+2	Huge (elephant)	8m	+2	–2	+2
+1	Large (lion)	4m	+1	–1	+1
Zero	Medium-size (human)	2m	No mod	No mod	No mod
–1	Small (German shepherd)	1m	–1	+1	–1
–2	Tiny (housecat)	0.5m	–2	+2	–2
–3	Diminutive (rat)	0.2m	–4	+4	–4
–4	Fine (horsefly)	0.1m	–8	+8	–8

Sleep

A normal character must sleep once every 24 hours. If they do not sleep, they cannot recharge any tapped 1/Day talents.

A character that has been awake for 24 hours straight becomes *confused*. Longer periods of sleep-deprivation can lead to long-term mental disorders, permanent physical damage, or even death. The details are left up to the Game Host.

Normal characters must sleep 8 hours a day. Even characters with the Cyber-Brain talent must still sleep. Sleep is a psychological need, not a biological one.

Artificial Intelligences do not sleep. For simplicity, their 1/Day gifts can recharge when everyone else sleeps. If the AI is independent, simply record the story-context time when the 1/Day gift was used, and it recharges exactly 24 hours later.

Status Effects

Characters may have standing conditions that increase (buff) or decrease (de-buff) their ability. Here are some of the common statuses.

Attribute Loss

Characters who are poisoned, injured, or infected may lose attribute points. For example, a character who is normally Str +2 might lose 3 points of strength and drop to Str –1.

Unless otherwise specified, a character regains a single lost attribute point once per day, of the character's choice. For example, if a character has lost 3 Strength and 2 Dexterity, then the next day, the character may regain one Str or one Dex point.

If an attribute is drained to below –5, the character becomes *incapacitated* due to paralysis, coma, or fugue.

Berserk

A berserk character cannot tell friend from foe.

A berserk character must take the "attack" action every round, if they can take actions. They will always attack the closest target, whether it's a friend or a foe. If there are no targets (friends or foes), they will attack a nearby inanimate object.

Berserk characters may not take the "aid another" action or the "ready" action.

A berserk state usually ends after about five minutes when there's no one else to attack.

Blinded

Characters who cannot see are *blinded*. Anyone attacking a blinded character may claim surprise, which grants them a bonus 1d6 to their attack

Everything has total concealment to a blinded character, so they cannot counter-attack, and they suffer a –5 penalty to all their attacks.

Blinded characters cannot take the Dash action or the Run stunt – they can only Scramble.

Unless otherwise specified, blindness is temporary and only lasts for the scene (about five minutes).

Burdened

A burdened character suffers a –2 penalty to all rolls that use Str, Dex, or Con. Their Dash is halved (typically to 5m instead of 10m).

The burden ends if the character drops all burdening items.

Burning

A character who is *burning* is on fire. A burning character is a light source. A burning character is also *disoriented* (–2 to all rolls that use Int, Wis, or Cha).

During the end-of-round maintenance, a burning character suffers Damage 20. If the Soak test rolls any criticals (doubles, triples, etc.) the burning ends.

Unless otherwise specified, the burning also ends when the scene ends (about five minutes).

Confused

Less-than-lethal weapons such as tasers or photic drivers can cause *confusion*. A confused character takes the Guard action as their first action every round. Anyone attacking a Confused character may claim surprise, meaning they receive a bonus 1d6 to their attack.

Unless otherwise specified, confusion is temporary and only lasts for the scene (about five minutes).

Dazed

A *dazed* character takes a single Guard action every round of combat, and that is the only action they get.

Unless otherwise specified, dazzling lasts only one round (six seconds) and the character may act normally next round.

Deafened

A character that cannot hear is *deafened*. Deafened characters cannot benefit from the Aid Another action – any attempt to aid them automatically fails.

Unless otherwise specified, deafness is temporary and only lasts for the scene (about five minutes).

Disoriented

A character who is disoriented suffers a –2 penalty to any roll that uses Int, Wis, or Cha.

Unless otherwise specified, disorientation ends after one day.

Down

A character that is prone, lying across the floor, or crawling is *down*. A down character has their cover improved by one step. (So no cover becomes partial cover for +2 dodge, and partial cover becomes total cover for +5 dodge.) The only way *down* characters can cover ground is to use the Crawl stunt (moving at 5m/round and becoming *stunned*).

A down character can Stand Up as an action.

Enraged

An *enraged* character must take the Attack action every round, if they can take actions. They can choose their target. If they cannot find an unfriendly target, they may choose to attack inanimate objects (instead of, say, friends) … but they *must attack*.

Enraged characters may not take the Aid Another action or the Ready action.

An enraged state usually ends after about five minutes.

Enraged negates Panicked and vice versa

If a character is ever simultaneously *panicked* and *enraged*, the two statuses cancel out and go away. In other words, you can get rid of the *enraged* status by inflicting the *panicked* status, and you can get rid of the *panicked* status by inflicting the *enraged* status.

Entangled

Characters who are tied up, trapped in nets, or covered in riot foam are *entangled*. An entangled character suffers a –2 penalty to any roll that uses Str, Dex, or Con. They cannot take the Dash action or the Run stunt, but they may still Scramble.

Unless otherwise specified, the character can free themselves from the *entangle* as a Stunt by rolling 2d6+Str+Dex vs. 15, but only three attempts are allowed. If the character fails those three attempts, then they can free themselves at the end of the scene (about five minutes) but they automatically become *fatigued*.

Fatigued

A character who is fatigued suffers a –2 penalty to any roll that uses Str, Dex, or Con.

Unless otherwise specified, fatigue ends after one day.

Grappled

A *grappled* character cannot move. (They cannot dash, scramble, run, etc.) They may perform other actions normally.

Grappled characters are normally grappled *by* someone who hit them with an attack, such as Grab, which inflicts the *grappled* condition. Some attacks, such as Suplex or Throw, can only be performed on a target by someone who is already grappling them.

Ending a grapple usually requires a Break Free attack, or any other attack that includes the Escape effect.

Helpless

A *helpless* target – such as someone who is asleep, or a shooting gallery target – has no defenses. They cannot counter or dodge. The DC to hit them is 5. Attackers may claim surprise (bonus 1d6).

Inanimate objects not under anyone's control are helpless. For example, if you shoot a door, your attack dice must score 5 or more. Attended objects (such as a weapon in someone's hand) or controlled objects (such as a motorcycle that someone's driving) may dodge using the attendant's or controller's abilities, and they are not considered helpless.

Hidden

A *hidden* character has their cover and their concealment each improved by one step. To successfully hide, a character must perform a Hide stunt, which is a roll of Dex+Wis vs. 10. (Since hiding is a stunt, the character will become stunned, so choose your hiding spots carefully.)

Incapacitated

A character that has suffered a great injury or a knockout is *incapacitated*.

Incapacitated characters take no actions. All attacks against them may claim surprise, meaning the attacker may claim a bonus +1d6 to hit.

Incapacitated characters cannot take actions. They are also *helpless*, as described earlier, meaning the DC to hit them is 5 and they may take no other defenses.

Incapacitated characters are also likely to be *down* (with their cover improved by one step).

Incapacitation is covered in the combat rules.

Over-Burdened

An over-burdened character suffers –5 to all rolls that use Str, Dex, or Con. They can no longer use the Dash action, but they may still Scramble.

The over-burden ends if the character drops all over-burdening items.

Panicked

A *panicked* character cannot take the Attack action or the Aid Another action. They may take other actions normally, and they may use Counter-attacks to defend themselves.

Panic ends if the character can get out of line-of-sight of all hostiles, or if the character can successfully hide.

Quickened

A quickened character may take *three* actions, instead of two. The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same turn" still applies.

The quickened state ends at the end of your turn.

Stunned

If a character becomes *stunned* in the middle of their turn, their turn immediately ends. A character can become stunned in the middle of their turn if they are hit by an attack or a counter-attack.

Anyone attacking a *stunned* character may claim surprise for a +1d6 bonus to their attack.

Stunned characters may not take Stunt actions or the Aid Another action.

The Stunned status ends after five minutes, or after the character takes a Guard action.

Terrified

Worse than panic, a *terrified* character takes the same two actions every round: first, a Guard action, and second, a Run stunt to get as far away from the source of terror as possible. The character takes no other actions.

Unless otherwise specified, the terror ends only after the source of the terror can no longer be perceived, and even then the terror doesn't end until the scene ends (five minutes later).

Suffocation and Vacuum

A character that is fighting normally can hold their breath for one minute (ten rounds). After ten rounds, during the end-of-round maintenance, the character must pass a test of 2d6+Con+Wis vs. 10. If they fail, they become fatigued. If they were already fatigued, they become incapacitated.

Characters who fail to get oxygen for five minutes will suffer brain death. Characters with the Artificial Intelligence origin will not actually *die* ... but if they don't have a Cyber Body, their body will, and they'll need to be transplanted to a new one. That isn't easy.

Characters exposed to vacuum are suffocating (as above) and they suffer attribute loss: –1 to Con at the end of every round. If their Con drops below –5, they are incapacitated and risk death.

Surrender

Very rarely does anyone fight to the death. As a rule, if half of a group of Minor Characters are incapacitated, the other half will flee the scene if they can, or they will surrender if they can't.

Swimming

As a *stunt* action, a character may swim. Roll 2d6+Str+Con. For every full 2 points scored, the character may swim 1m. (For example, if you rolled a 7, you may swim 3m.)

Characters in rough waters may have to make rolls of 2d6+Str+Con vs. 10 or worse, or start drowning. A drowning character is suffocating (see above). Each round, as a stunt, they may try the swim roll again to stop floundering and start swimming.

Terrain

Any large environment provides cover. If you're not using a map, here's a handy guide to what sort of cover that combatants should have, at certain distances.

Environment	No Cover	Partial Cover	Full Cover
City Streets	10m	20m	21m+
Underground	10m	--	11m+
Indoor Office	5m	10m	11m+
Junkyard	5m	20m	21m+
Factory	10m	20m	21m+
Forest	5m	20m	21m+
Desert	100m	101m+	--
Dance Club	5m	20m	21m+

Sometimes, terrain might have *bad footing*. Rough ground, mud, garbage, etc. can reduce movement to ½ normal.

Some terrain might be *impassible*. Characters will have to go around. They may be able to climb over it, or swim through it, using a *stunt* that can leave them exposed.

Travel

Characters may have to travel for long periods, either by walking or by driving.

Type of Travel	Speed	2d6+Str+Con Fatigue Check
Walking	5 kph	After 4 hours, DC 10 After 8 hours, DC 15 After 10 hours, DC 20 After 12 hours, DC 25
Hustling	10 kph	After 4 hours, DC 15 After 8 hours, DC 20 After 10 hours, DC 25
Running	15 kph	After 1 minute, DC 10 After 2 mins, DC 15 After 5 mins, DC 20 After 10 mins, DC 25
Horseback Riding	10 kph	After 4 hours, DC 10 After 8 hours, DC 15 After 10 hours, DC 20 After 12 hours, DC 25
Driving	75 kph	After 4 hours, DC 10 After 8 hours, DC 15 After 10 hours, DC 20 After 12 hours, DC 25

When a character fails the fatigue check, they become *fatigued*. (Fatigued characters suffer –2 on all rolls that use Str, Dex, and Con). An already-fatigued character who fails a fatigue check passes out and won't wake up until an hour has passed.

Bad roads may reduce speed to ½ or even ¼.

Vehicle Movement and Combat

For simply traveling from point to point, the vehicle used is largely a matter of personal style and finances. Skill rolls are only required in extraordinary circumstances, but player characters getting in to adventures find those all too frequently.

These rules are focused on enabling short chase scenes and fights with lightly armored ground vehicles. You *can* use them with boats, aircraft, and heavy military vehicles, but they'll sometimes produce some strange results.

Characters in Vehicles

A character in a vehicle fills one of several possible roles which determine what the character can do.

Driver

The driver of the vehicle controls its movement. Most vehicles have only one position from where the vehicle can be driven, so the person seated there is the driver. Driving a vehicle requires one Control action each turn. There can be only one driver in a vehicle at one time.

The vehicle's driver is responsible for rolling maneuver rolls, such as attempts to swerve around obstacles, ram other vehicles off the road, or other defensive (or offensive) driving techniques.

Copilot

A copilot can help the driver with the Aid Another action. The copilot must be seated in a location where he or she can see the road and advise the driver. (In a car, this generally means the front passenger seat).

A vehicle can have only one copilot at a time. If there is a second set of controls at the copilot's seat – common for aircraft, unusual for ground vehicles – the copilot can take over for the driver if they are unable to perform their duties.

Gunner

Some vehicles have built-in weapons. If such a weapon is controlled from a location other than the driver's position, a character can man that position and become the gunner. A vehicle can have as many gunners as it has gunner positions.

Passenger

All other personnel aboard the vehicle are considered passengers. Passengers have no specific role in the vehicle's operation, but may be able to fire weapons from the vehicle or take other actions.

Vehicle Speed

The current speed of a vehicle is abstracted in to one of five categories: stopped, alley speed, street speed, highway speed, and all-out. These speed categories represents a range of *actual* speeds, per the table below. Each round, a vehicle moves according to its current speed category.

Category	Distance per turn	Bonus to dodge	Modifier to stunt
Stopped	Zero	+0	+2
Alley speed	1 - 50m	+0	No Mod
Street speed	51 - 100m	+2	-0
Highway speed	101 - 300m	+5	–5
All-out	More than 300m	+10	–10

Distance per turn

This is how much distance a typical vehicle – a car – will cover in a six-second turn while moving in this speed category. It's a range, not a set distance, because the categories have some wiggle room.

Some types of vehicles, such as aircraft, will have significantly higher distance per turn for each category. Others, such as mopeds, will be slower.

Fast cars are hard to hit and hard to drive.

Characters controlling vehicles moving at a high speed suffer a penalty to their rolls to perform Stunts with their vehicle, per the table above. They also receive a bonus to Dodge rolls, per the table above.



Normal Driving

If you drive safely, controlling your vehicle requires a Control action each turn. You can use your other action to do whatever you like – Guard against attack, make your own Attack, use a radio headset to Aid Another, or anything else you can do with a single action. If you *can't* make a Control action for whatever reason, or if you are driving and you become *incapacitated*, the vehicle goes out of control as described on page 132.

Adjust your speed one category at a time

Each turn you're driving your vehicle, you can bump your speed up one category, or down one category. Accelerating faster or decelerating faster than that is unsafe, and a stunt – see below.

Self-driving cars drive themselves

Not all vehicles need to be under your control – many vehicles are *autonomous*, meaning they are self-driving and aware of their environment. These vehicles will take their own actions to keep themselves under control and can serve as a copilot to the driver.

Autonomous vehicles always drive safely. Sophontic vehicles may be… more reckless.

Police and national authorities may have codes to take control of autonomous vehicles. Hostile hackers may have acquired those codes to take control for their own purposes, authorized or not. Be prepared for network attacks on vehicles.

"Never the same action twice" still applies

You can't take two Control actions to control your vehicle *and* something else.

Entering a vehicle is usually an Equip action

Particularly clunky vehicles, such as armored cars or an F1 racecar, might require a Stunt to enter. Control actions are used to start, control, and stop a vehicle.

When am I 'driving safely'?

You can drive safely in an unsafe situation – even if someone is shooting at you! What's important is whether you're pushing *your vehicle* past what it's supposed to be doing.

Stunt Driving

You are Stunt driving if the answer to any of these questions is yes:

- Are you driving against traffic, through a crowded warehouse, or anywhere else where one wrong move could wreck your vehicle?
- Are you using a ramp to jump a pit?
- Are you slowing down or speeding up more than one category in a turn?
- Are you taking a sharp turn without slowing down?
- Are you doing anything else with your vehicle that puts you at risk of losing control?

If you are Stunt driving, then controlling your vehicle is not just a Control action. It is also a Stunt, meaning it ends your turn and *stuns* you. Serious driving consumes all your attention.

The Basics

Most vehicle Stunts work the same way; the driver rolls vs. a target number set by the Game Host, based on the difficulty of the stunt. (Guidelines for the Game Host on selecting target numbers are on page 121) If they pass the roll, they complete the stunt and keep control of their vehicle. If they fail the test, they lose control of the vehicle, per pg. 132.

This rule covers most situations. Whether you're driving against traffic to shake pursuers, hitting a ramp to jump a ravine in your muscle car, or taking a hairpin turn at eighty miles an hour by drifting your sports car, a simple test-to-keep-control model will work.

Vehicle stunts are most useful in Evading Pursuit (pg. 131), or for getting your vehicle to places it can't safely go.

Some special cases of these rules are discussed below.

Evading Pursuit

A driver can attempt to lose a pursuer in heavy traffic, or to misdirect a pursuer before turning onto an off-ramp or side street, or by driving through dangerous terrain.

…through misdirection

Losing a pursuer by cunning, evasion, or misdirection isn't always possible. It can only be done when there are places for a vehicle to hide from pursuers, such as heavy traffic or a side street. It plays out as a Contest (as per pg. 9) with a minimum target number.

First, the evader uses Stunt driving versus a low DC, usually using their Charisma and/or Intelligence as modifiers, to pull quickly out of view or to bluff their pursuers in to thinking they'll go one way before juking another way. As usual, if they fail to beat the DC of the stunt driving, they'll lose control of their vehicle.

Next, the pursuer uses Stunt driving versus the same low DC, usually using their Dexterity and/or Wisdom as modifiers, to thwart the attempt at evasion. If they fail to beat the Stunt driving DC, they lose control of their vehicle; if they fail to beat the evading driver's Stunt driving roll, then the evading driver successfully evades pursuit.

...through fancy driving

Losing a pursuer through daring means performing an extremely dangerous stunt which your pursuer must match in order to keep up. It works precisely as evading through cunning, *except* that it is not a Contest.

First, the evading party rolls to attempt the Stunt. If they succeed, each of their pursuers must attempt the same Stunt or drop out of the pursuit. These are not opposed rolls, but any driver which fails the Stunt will lose control of their vehicle, either dropping out of the pursuit or failing to continue evading.

Speeding up and slowing down

As described on pg. 131, a driver can normally move up or down one speed category in a turn. As part of stunt driving, you can change your speed faster: you can *increase* your speed by up to two categories or *decrease* your speed by up to three categories.

If all you're doing is changing speed quickly, the difficulty class for the stunt shouldn't be much higher than 10. *Skilled* drivers should be able to succeed by taking 10.

Losing, and Regaining, Control

A driver who fails an attempt at Stunt driving, or who loses control of their vehicle after it takes damage, will lose control of their vehicle with the following consequences:

- If you're in a car chase, boat chase, or the like, then you get knocked out of the running. If you were fleeing, you get caught; if you were pursuing, your quarry gets away.
- If there's anything for you to crash in to at your current trajectory, you're about to crash in to it. If you're going fast enough, then you might flip and roll, effectively crashing in to the ground, even if there's no obstacles.
- If there's nothing nearby for you to crash in to, you spin out of control and grind to a halt. (Aircraft don't grind to a halt, but they do begin to topple from the sky.)

However, a *skilled* driver or co-pilot can stop this from becoming a catastrophe. After losing control, roll Drive, and don't worry about the total. If the driver was incapacitated, the co-pilot will have to make this roll instead.

Did you get a double? In other words, did you roll the same number twice? If you did, you and your passengers are guaranteed to survive the resulting accident without being *incapacitated* or killed. Your vehicle is not so fortunate, and may be wrecked or destroyed.

> **"I'm bad with bows and arrows, I'm not so good at guns. Poison seems old fashioned, and hired help's no fun... But I do know how to drive a car faster than a man can run."**
> – Caroline Polachek, "Sidewalk Safari"

Fighting With & Against Vehicles

Whether they're getting in to a gunfight on the freeway or have to hack an autonomous combat drone before it kills them, player characters are going to get in to fights involving vehicles.

Actions during combat are handled the same whether vehicles are involved or not.

Damaging Vehicles

Vehicles will typically have Armor 1d6 and Soak 2d6 + the Con modifier for their size (per pg. 134.)

If a vehicle fails to soak, it can become *broken.* All maneuver DCs increase by 5, and roll a second soak test. If the vehicle can't pass a second soak, it becomes disabled.

A vehicle that is disabled while moving drops one speed category each round until it comes to a stop.

Damaged vehicles may go out of control

If a vehicle is struck by an attack, the driver must roll 2d6+Dex+Wis vs. the damage of the attack to retain control.

Injured drivers may lose control of the vehicle

If a driver is struck by an attack, they must roll 2d6+Con+Wis vs. the damage of the attack to retain control of the vehicle. Their co-pilot may assist, or roll for them. If they fail, they lose control of the vehicle.

If a driver is incapacitated or killed by an attack and there is no co-pilot, the vehicle immediately goes out of control.

Vehicles can provide cover & concealment

Most car doors will only slow down bullets enough to offer soft cover, but armored vehicles can give fair cover. Enclosed vehicles like tanks or APCs can provide total cover.

Tinted windows can provide *obscuration*, but only a windowless van or APC will provide *concealment*.

Ramming with a vehicle is an attack action

You'll need to make a Control action to drive the car in to the target of the ram before you take the Attack action to roll to hit.

Roll 2d6+Dex+Wis versus their defense. If you meet their defense, you hit the target with your vehicle – both you and your target take damage per the Collision rules (page 133).

It is hard to stop a ram attack with a Counter defense. A ram attack may be Countered by attacking the vehicle or by attacking the driver. Either way, a driver whose vehicle is being rammed may not Counter with a ram of their own.

Furthermore, unless the Counter sends the ramming vehicle out of control (per pg. 132), the ram attack is still successful.

Sideswiping

If two vehicles are driving next to each other, one can steer in to the other to perform a *sideswipe* ram. This is just like normal ramming in all respects save two: it does less damage than any other type, and the driver of the other vehicle may Counter with their own sideswipe.

Collisions

A collision occurs when a vehicle strikes another vehicle, a solid object, or an unfortunate pedestrian.

Resolving Collisions

The base damage of a vehicle collision depends on the speed and size of the objects involved. Use the *highest* speed and the *smallest* size of the two colliding objects and refer to the table below to determine the base damage:

Effect	Damage
Highest speed is Alley speed	15
Highest speed is Street speed	20
Highest speed is Highway speed	25
Highest speed is All-out	30
Smallest object is Colossal (ship)	+25
Smallest object is Gargantuan (tank, helicopter)	+20
Smallest object is Huge (Off-road truck)	+15
Smallest object is Large (Sedan)	+10
Smallest object is Medium-size (a person)	+5
Smallest object is Small	Zero
Smallest object is Tiny	–5
Smallest object is Smaller than Tiny	–10

After finding the base damage, determine the collision's damage multiplier based on how the colliding vehicle struck the other vehicle or object. (For vehicles moving in reverse, consider the back end to be the vehicle's "front" for determining the collision multiplier.) Consult Table: Collision Direction for a multiplier.

Colliding Vehicle's Target	Mod
A stationary object	None
A moving vehicle, striking head-on or 45 degrees from head-on	+10
A moving vehicle, striking perpendicular	0
A moving vehicle, striking from the rear or 45 degrees from the rear	–5
A vehicle being sideswiped (see Sideswipe)	–10
Vehicle Roll	–5

Once the damage has been determined, Apply it to both vehicles (or objects or creatures) involved in the collision. Both vehicles reduce their speed by two speed categories. If the colliding vehicle moved the minimum number of squares for its new speed category before the collision, it ends its movement immediately. If not, it pushes the other vehicle or object aside, if possible, and continues until it has moved the minimum number of squares for its new speed category.

The driver of the vehicle that caused the collision must immediately make a Drive roll (DC 15) or lose control of the vehicle (see Losing Control, below). The driver of the other vehicle must succeed on a Drive roll (DC 15) at the beginning of his or her next action or lose control of his or her vehicle.

Damage to Vehicle Occupants

When a vehicle takes damage from a collision, its occupants may take damage as well. The base amount of damage depends on the cover offered by the vehicle.

Cover	Damage
None	Same as vehicle
Soft cover	Same as vehicle –5
Good cover	Same as vehicle –10
Total cover	Same as vehicle –15
Buckled up for safety	Bonus 3d6 Soak

Damage from a collision is *Piercing*. (Don't roll any d6s granted by armor, but the other bonuses still apply.)

Vehicle Traits

Typical Vehicle	Size	Crew	Skill mod	Soak	Cost
Prop plane	+3	1	–2	3d6+4	Extravagant
Passenger jet	+4	2	+0	3d6+8	Extravagant, Proscribed
Sedan	+1	1	+1	3d6+2	Premium
Luxury car	+2	1	+2	3d6+2	Premium
Sports car	+1	1	+3	3d6+1	Premium
Motorcycle	0	1	+4	3d6	Standard
Pickup truck	+2	1	+0	3d6+2	Standard
Jet Ski	0	1	+0	3d6	Premium
Speedboat	+2	1	+2	3d6+4	Premium
Cargo boat	+4	1	–2	3d6+8	Extravagant
10-wheel truck	+2	1	–1	3d6+2	Premium
Limousine	+3	1	0	3d6+4	Extravagant
18-wheeler	+3	1	–2	3d6+4	Premium, Proscribed
Helicopter	+2	1	–2	4d6+6	Extravagant, Proscribed
Fighter jet	+3	1	–4	4d6+4	Extravagant, Proscribed
APC	+2	1	0	4d6+10	Extravagant, Proscribed
Tank	+3	2	0	4d6+16	Extravagant, Proscribed

Vehicle Sizes

Vehicles use the same size categories as characters and creatures, as shown in the table below. The vehicle's size modifier applies to maneuvers and Dodge defenses by its driver.

Vehicle Size	Size Mod	Examples
Colossal	–8	Yacht, semi with trailer
Gargantuan	–4	Tank, limousine
Huge	–2	Luxury car, SUV, armored car
Large	–1	Economy car, Harley
Medium-size	+0	Racing bike, dirt bike

Visibility

In cities, with their constant light pollution and anti-crime street-lights, lighting won't be an issue. In remote places or underground, lighting might be a bigger problem.

Source of Light	Illumination
Burning Torch	Full up to 5m, Partial up to 10m
Candle	Partial up to 2m
Cave	None
City	Full on the streets, Partial in alleys
Daylight	Full in open air, Partial in shade
Dusk	Full in open air (shade has none)
Flashlight	Full on one target up to 20m away
Night	Partial in open air only
Phone's Display	Full on one target up to 5m away
Sensory Enhancement	Full at all ranges; ignore cover
Streetlight	Full up to 5m, Partial up to 10m
Underground	Full in doorways, Partial in sides

Light enhancement "night-vision" gear requires some lighting to enhance. Infrared (IR) or ultraviolet (UV) sighting generate their own light sources, which are invisible without special equipment. However other users of IR gear can spot IR lighting; people using UV gear can spot each other, as well.

Sensory-Enhancement software neutralizes any penalties due to lack of light. In addition, infrade lighting, sound telemetry, remote-viewing, etc. will allow an enhanced character to ignore obscurement due to simple opaque barriers. Loud noises, jamming equipment, and other hindrances may block Sensory Enhancement software. The Game Host will have to ue their best judgement.

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."
– Alan Kay

Future History

We've designed the *Bleeding Edge* role-playing game to work with any modern or near-modern setting. You may want to use these rules with your own campaign set in the world of today, or tomorrow, or next year. This section is devoted to our own conjecture, which we call "The Permanent Emergency". Set in the year 2047, this campaign setting details a world ravaged by international cyber-warfare and by oligarchical indifference, where life is cheap and death is free.

In this world, the players are presumed to be highly-skilled, expendable mercenaries. Their unusual skills and abilities will give them access to forbidden areas. Their lack of allegiance means they can hired by almost anyone, to do almost anything. The rewards will be great, but if our heroes get in trouble, their employers will deny all knowledge.

TL;DR

The Permanent Emergency is our world after thirty years of entropy. The economy is bigger, but you're poorer. The wars are smaller, but louder. The Internet is faster, and uglier. Gas is expensive; weed is cheap. Gadgets are smarter, the weather is hotter, and the music is (just like always) worse than it's ever been.

On January 19, 2038, the Unix epoch ended. It should have been as boring as Y2K. Instead, security software heuristics misinterpreted the minor, simultaneous glitches as attacks by foreign powers. Their reactions created a feedback loop that escalated, in less than a second, to fully automated global cyberwar. Telecoms, fuel pipelines, water systems, electrical transformers - anything attached to the internet that could go wrong did go wrong, creating shortages of food, medicine, and clean water. These, in turn, caused riots.

The state of emergency began the day after Mad Tuesday. It has lasted nine years so far.

You have lived the last nine years of your life in a world dragging itself back from the brink of anarchy, rebuilding its infrastructure, and leaving the weak and needy to die in the chaos. You are accustomed to a world where the law exists for the convenience of the wealthy and treats everyone else as the enemy. You are accustomed to a world where panopticon surveillance cannot stop spree-killings from being broadcast live on the internet.

That is all that you need to know. Go play!

The Great Recession and the Age of Austerity

The 21st century started on a low note. Ongoing, world-wide financial deregulation fueled regular financial crises, In these crises, the financial system would treat some unreliable investment, such as bundles of subprime mortgages, as a sure-fire winner, then build their business around it until questioning the value of the investment was borderline heretical. When the investment collapsed, the entire global financial system would go with it... unless governments poured billions or trillions of dollars of money in to propping up the damaged system of global commerce. Governments, convinced that the alternative to bailing out the finance sector was societal collapse, ponied up the cash... again, and again, and again.

After each crisis, the economy sank in to recession. Unemployment rose sharply as the GDP fell. Decreased demand drove companies to downsize, and improved technology allowed businesses to do more with less. In these jobless recoveries, employees were replaced with automatons and the lowest bidders in the world labor market. The lower and middle classes became poorer, but the upper classes and plutocratic elites leveraged the recessions to concentrate money in their hands.

The 2007 crisis on the U.S. housing market was only the first of many. In later years, the U.S. student loan bubble burst, the Chinese commercial bond market collapsed, and the sovereign wealth funds of Norway and Saudi Arabia went bankrupt. Elites leveraged each crisis for more influence over government policy, swearing that only they had the expertise to solve the problem. Tax evasion became obsolete as well-financed corporations captured regulatory agencies and prevented their governments from effectively taxing them.

Governments found their revenue streams dwindling, and tightened their belts with austerity programs. Over the decades leading to 2038, the social welfare systems of the American and European governments ceased to function as anything but figureheads. Everyone knew that governments were supposed to provide security for the poor and ill, and everyone knew that they didn't. It wasn't until the Ring of Fire disasters began that it was made clear just how impotent the governments had become.

The Ring of Fire

The rim of the Pacific Ocean is one of the most tectonically active regions on the planet. There is a long chain of volcanoes, active and quiet, extending in a long loop all the way from New Zealand to Alaska and back down to the tip of South America. Between 1981 and 2000, there were 31 Richter 7+ earthquakes on the Ring of Fire; 7 of those were Richter 8. Between 2029 and 2047, there were 83 Richter 7+ earthquakes on the Ring, and 32 of those were Richter 8 *or higher*.

On April 4th, 2029, the San Andreas Fault lit up the Ring with the long-prophesied Big One and shook San Francisco to the ground with a Richter 8. One year later, to the day, Tokyo suffered a shindo 7 earthquake – strong enough to do billions of dollars in damage.

No one was prepared for the surge in tectonic activity on the Ring of Fire in the '30s, for the tsunamis that drowned the coasts, for the earthquakes that shook cities to rubble.The austerity measures of the Great Recessions had left few nations with proper disaster relief programs. People and organizations whose assets were destroyed in tsunamis discovered that their insurers were out of money or fraudulent.Without money, entire cities went bankrupt, and were left for the sea to consume.Alaska, California, Chile, Indonesia, Japan, and New Zealand suffered catastrophic loss of life and property.

Shattered cities meant refugees in their millions, but they had nowhere to go. Governments didn't have the funds to relocate them or rebuild their homes, and for the most part, they were left to get along as best they could in the ruin of the cities they lived in. Broken cities became slums en masse.

Many of the people who once lived on the coasts abandoned the governments that had abandoned them, going off the grid out of necessity or anger. Furious young people vanished in to the wilderness or the sewers, forming small communities of opt-outs. They numbered in the dozens or hundreds, but inspired millions with the idea of their freedom, ugly and painful as it was, from the escalating panopticon of urban life.

There was a word for vanishing off the grid, in the wake of those disasters on the fourth day of the fourth month. "Going 404." Person not found. The joke had legs, and the name stuck around. Today, someone who has successfully gone off the grid and shed their documented identity is known as 'a member of the 404 Crew'.

Mad Tuesday

Tuesday, January 19, 2038, was a momentous day.That date has many nicknames, such as "Mad Tuesday", "Black Tuesday,""the aPOSIXlypse", "Y2K38", "Y2K: The Revenge", and "Eternal January".

Between 2015 and 2038, infrastructure across the world was upgraded to 'smart' systems, capable of being controlled and monitored by authorized users from anywhere on the internet. It wasn't intended that anyone would be able to use these systems to do permanent damage. They were built with safeties to prevent it. These safeties were so often designed by lowest bidders, and they could be bypassed.

Software became more complicated, buggier, and more prone to security flaws. It is possible in theory to create flawless software. Early in the history of computer science, software bugs were considered unacceptable defects instead of a routine hazard. As time went on, and the programs being created became exponentially more complex, it became virtually impossible even for the greatest programmers in the world to create bug-free code.

Quite by accident, we created a world where billions of dollars of infrastructure could conceivably be destroyed by cyber-warfare, yet it was impossible to reliably protect them.

Between 2015 and 2038, the great nations and corporations of the world discovered themselves in a new world, where any enemy could, conceivably, penetrate their systems and wreak havoc, from anywhere. There is an existing doctrine for a world where your enemy can do tremendous, unavoidable damage at will, and it is called Mutually Assured Destruction.

The big geopolitical players secretly developed specialized software weapons, known as *MADware*. These polymorphic viruses were built to penetrate target networks, lurk there, and do nothing but monitor them, waiting for signs of impending attack. Upon detecting signs of mischief, they would activate and wreak havoc.

The existence of madware was not common knowledge, but it was not a secret. All the great powers knew their networks were infected with it, and they kept rooting it out, developing more, infiltrating with layer after layer of madware. Above all else, in order to maintain mutually assured destruction, they protected their second-strike capability.

All of this madware was as vulnerable to software bugs as any other program. There was a possibility it would fail to activate, or activate prematurely.

Between 2015 and 2038, an integer will increment, once a second, in every UNIX computer in the world, as it counts the seconds from the first day of 1970. On Tuesday, January 19, 2038, at 3:14:07 AM, that number will become 2 to the 31st power. At that moment, every UNIX system that has not yet been upgraded to 64 bit logic will think it is 1901. Many that were thought to be safe will prove otherwise, as 32-bit legacy code hidden here and there within them abruptly misbehaves.

In this moment there will be a thousand petty, negligible glitches, but they will all be simultaneous. Immediately the madware will weigh the odds and estimate whether this is a sign of an attack. Some madware will be aware of the UNIX epoch problem and discount these errors. Others will rightly assume a negligible glitch. But at least one madware program – and it would only take one – will misinterpret these glitches as a sign of an attack, and it will begin wreaking havoc. This will provoke other madware in to triggering reprisals, and some of these reprisals will hit the wrong targets.

Between 3:14:07 AM and 3:14:08 AM, a war is declared, and no human is asked permission. Humans are slow, and software is fast, and any madware which relied on human authorization would be worthless.

Between 3:14:08 AM and 3:14:10 AM, systems began to fail. Power plants backfired on themselves, power transformers oscillated and liquefied themselves on their own current. Water mains were commanded to flow backwards, blowing out pumps or merging clean water with sewage.

Between 3:14:10 AM and 3:14:20 AM, the madware began burning bridges behind it, as winners chased losers and losers cut ground behind them. Routers at ISPs worldwide were bricked as zero-day exploits long-hidden were deployed in scorched earth tactics. Assets that only existed digitally – films, financial records, literature – vanished like soap bubbles.

After that, it was all over but the weeping.

There is one bright side. When you play Bleeding Edge, you're usually playing either a criminal or someone who is about to become a criminal. Before Mad Tuesday, major cities were digital panopticons of HDCCTVs with automatic facial recognition. Now they aren't, and crime is once again a viable career. You're welcome.



The Permanent Emergency

The damage from Mad Tuesday was tremendous and pervasive, but finite, and the only immediate fatalities were those unfortunate enough to be on life support when the power cut out. Many major cities were still mostly intact, and were able to serve as nerve centers to organize recovery efforts.

Some cities and regions, especially those already ravaged by the Ring of Fire quakes, completely ceased to function. Without functioning pipes to bring food, water, medicine, and news *in* and send shit and cries for help *out*, fragile societies began to crumble. Some, with admirable fortitude and enviable character, endured ongoing shortages for weeks, yielding their civility inch by inch if at all, and stepped out from the disaster scarred but whole. Others fell in to anarchy within a day, creating 'high intensity zones' that still haven't been restored to order. People are unpredictable like that.

In the wake of Mad Tuesday, great powers worldwide declared a state of emergency, and claimed emergency powers until the crisis was over. Those nations that had been renowned for their rule of law and tolerance for dissidence tabled their principles in their desperation to *fix this now*, and found that the power to jail and silence at will was addictive.

The developing world lacked the sort of modern infrastructure that was vulnerable to madware, and now stands neck and neck with the first world. Advanced just-in-time manufacturing systems are leveling the military playing field by closing the gadget-gap. The world labors in the shadow of Mad Tuesday, but open warfare between great powers remains taboo.

"The definition of the cyberpunk genre is that it centers upon the relationship of humanity to technology; its significance is that cyberpunk writers create anticipatory fictions which are based upon existing and upcoming technologies."
– Lauraine LeBlanc, "Razor girls: Genre and Gender in Cyberpunk Fiction"

The World of 2047

- ***Economic stratification*** is up. The 1% are richer than ever, and the 0.01% more so. Everyone else is much poorer. The gap between rich and poor *countries* is down. Mad Tuesday knocked the great powers back and gave developing nations space to grow. *Inflation* has cut the value of the international reserve currency to a fifth of its former value. One 2015 dollar is worth five 2047 dollars. *The global reserve currency* is still the U.S. dollar ($), but the Japanese yen (¥) and E.U. euro (€) are close competitors. *Food* is more expensive, especially meat, even counting for inflation. Vegetarian meals are common. Malnutrition is down, but hunger is up. *Water* is more expensive, and often privatized, or stolen.
- ***The Internet*** is faster, but less reliable. Network weather or ordinary software glitches can cut bandwidth from gigabits to kilobits without warning. *Computers* are in every way *better*. Bargain smartphones can reliably interpret speech and gestures, store terabytes of data, and probably won't break if you drop them. Proper desktop workstations can render immersive, photo-realistic virtual reality in real time. *Mind-machine interfaces* can be trained read desires directly from the brain, or to fake it by picking up subconscious movements in the face, hands, and eyes. *Software*, however, is no better than it's ever been. Your smartphone will still glitch over time, your operating system will still crash, and your systems will have more security holes than a firing range target. *Artificial intelligences* argue that they have become as smart as humans, but who believes them?
- ***Multimedia*** is everywhere. Music, movies, television, and books still exist. The ongoing three-way argument between people who create art, people who distribute and finance art, and people who consume art about who gets *paid* for these and how *much* hasn't slowed down, and still shapes how media is distributed. *Digital rights management* is prevalent, rigorously enforced, and continues to drive media piracy. *Sound systems* are not much better or worse than they are today, but *flatscreens* for television and computers are just *better* – cheaper, brighter, crisper, better colors, all while consuming less power. *3V* displays can display three-dimensional images like windows to another world, but these are still expensive novelties for enthusiasts and the wealthy.
- ***Medical care*** can do more but not as easily. *Single-payer health care* is a memory; medical care has been privatized everywhere outside the Netherlands. Expect to pay out the nose, go bankrupt, and perhaps die a preventable death. *Antibiotics* are no longer reliable, as too many strains of bacteria are now resistant to multiple drugs, but *phages* – bacteria-killing viruses – are picking up some of the slack. *Cancer* is more survivable and treatable, which is good, because cancer is also more common. *Cochlear and retinal implants* have restored sight and sound to the blind and deaf, but still don't offer super-senses. *Prosthetic limbs* are as effective as what they replaced, but need to be regularly recharged and offer only a dim sense of touch. *Retroviral engineering* can eliminate genetic diseases, and transform people beyond human.

Nations

In the world of 2047, the largest and most successful international corporations are like tigers – apex predators, unchallenged. The governments of the world, however, are the jungle. They are expansive, they have enormous assets, and yet they are entangled and at odds with themselves.

North Africa & the Arabian Peninsula

The Sahara shaped Africa by separating the northern from the south as an ocean might. North Africa has more to do with the Arabian Peninsula both culturally and economically than it does with its southern counterpart.

In the 21st century, the fossil fuel reserves that made this region so critical to world politics dried up, leaving it to stand instead on its reserves of cash and its cultural values.

The North African Arab States

At the beginning of the 21st century, the nations of North Africa were, largely, corrupt and authoritarian states with *profound* wealth gaps between elites and masses. Their wealth came mainly from exporting natural resources – often, oil.

In the 2010's, during the *Arab Spring*, widespread revolutions overthrew major governments, including Egypt and Libya. Some were replaced with nascent democratic institutions, others with open civil wars, but after three decades, all of them have stabilized. These new democracies are far from calm, but they are no longer in danger of collapsing in to violence.

After oil production began tapering off in the '20s, the North African petro-states began reorienting toward agricultural production, tourism, and heavy industry. Unfortunately, several of the hydroponic systems that enabled them to farm in the Sahara failed during Mad Tuesday. The resultant cash-crop shortfalls led to severe recessions, which continue today.

While these nations are democracies and they are not corrupt, they are also not secular. Many of their laws allow the government great authority over the private lives of citizens. Religious minorities are in continual danger of persecution or violence, without legal recourse. After their national wireless networking utilities were launched in the early '30s, they evolved in to a *sousveillance* society - where every citizen has a phone with a camera, and the moral right to report wrongdoing in real time, in public and in private.

The State of Israel and its Neighbors

Since the early 20s, Israel has been experiencing an ongoing demographic crisis in which immigration and family planning combined to drop the Jewish proportion of Israel to a minority, outnumbered by an ethnically non-Jewish population. Israel had no easy solutions that allowed it to retain its core identity, and until Mad Tuesday they were the biggest employer of PMC border guards in the world. However, Mad Tuesday and the subsequent failures of American society to weather the crisis triggered mass immigration of American Jews to Israel, putting off the demographic crisis for the foreseeable future.

The American military still backs Israel, but it's an open question how much that promise is worth. Thus far, no other nation has tested it, but the Israeli territory of Palestine is becoming increasingly difficult to govern, despite advances in riot control weapons.

Neighboring Arab states have continued to use Israel as a convenient scapegoat for national displeasure, and this has led to violence in the past. Mad Tuesday mistakenly inspired a brief war between the Hezbollah and Israel, which ended with Lebanon in control of the Nahal Betset nature reserve but otherwise in a stalemate. Today, Israeli intelligence and Hezbollah are engaged in continual small-scale electronic warfare. Each seeks to locate (or manufacture) evidence of atrocities by the other.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is rich with history and natural resources, but it has suffered centuries of colonial exploitation and misrule. The 21st century has been kinder to it, and the contemporary African is a global citizen as much as any European.

The region is also rich in people, both quality and quantity. Over the last hundred years, the population of Africa has ballooned from two hundred million to two billion. Most of the locals have never known a world without omnipresent cellular telephones. Old images of southern Africa as backwards or reactionary ceased to apply long ago.

The Economic Community of West African States

Since 1975, the Economic Community of West African States, or *ECOWAS*, has served to unite Nigeria and its northwestern neighbors in to a single trading bloc. This community has become both more cohesive and more prosperous over the second quarter of the 21st century, and is culturally and economically influential throughout the globe. (Nigerian clothing is *particularly* in.)

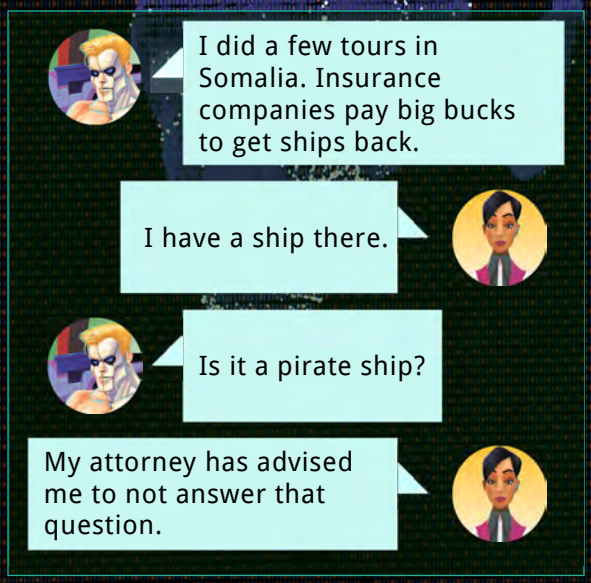
The populous port city of *Lagos* – the largest city in Nigeria, and all of Africa - has the largest international stock exchange in the world, the LPSE. Nigerian money has financed major highways and railroads throughout the ECOWAS, and so they have an interest in its continued prosperity. Countries throughout the ECOWAS have built up their infrastructure to the point that modern conveniences and broadband are expectations, and not luxuries. ECOWAS consultants made significant money in the aftermath of Mad Tuesday, as their expertise in building out and repairing isolated infrastructure was in great demand.

At present, the ECOWAS is going through the same cultural struggles that western states were thirty years ago. LGBT Nigerians, as well as artificial intelligences and genetically engineered human-like organisms who self-identify as Nigerians, are engaged in an aggressive protest campaign to secure the legal and social right to exist. Other nations in ECOWAS which have been marginalized by Nigeria's dominance, such as Ghana and Senegal, are likewise demanding greater representation and say in internal politics.

The Federal Republic of Somalia

In 2034, the anarchic region of *Somalia* was successfully re-unified by the charismatic pirate cum politician Ali al-Hassan. (After he was shot, stabbed, and thrown overboard by U.S. Navy SEALS, and washed up (inexplicably alive) on the Zeila coast, he is sometimes called "the Rasputin of Mogadishu.")

Under the rule of al-Hassan's administration, Somalian ports have become a nexus of trade both legal and illegal, and the tradition of Somali piracy continues in a more civil fashion. The Somali coast guard now issues letters of marque recognized by the United Nations, as well as modern weaponry, to its naval militia.



The Federal Republic of Somalia is still only a loose coalition of independent states. Its population is primarily rural and nomadic, and relies on leased Nigerian communication satellites for network access. Mogadishu is currently bidding to host the Summer Olympics in 2052.

Southern African Development Community

The Southern African Development Community has not leapt to First World status as the ECOWAS has. Regardless, it has advanced slowly but steadily to a higher standard of living for even its poorest inhabitants. Most of its population still dwells in isolated rural areas that lack urban amenities, but they do so with modern tools and satellite networking. The standard of living in urbanized areas has risen to First World, pre-Mad-Tuesday standards.

South Africa contains some of the largest manufactories for retroviral and bacteriophage medicines in the world, partly because of liberal government grants and partly due to a very large population of HIV-infected people in the early twentieth century. After it became possible to permanently cure HIV and other chronic viral infections, these facilities and their expertise were bought out by AllenMorrisRey, and used as research centers for new retroviral treatments.

Asia

Asia has plenty of opportunities for the enterprising young criminal. It is both the richest and the poorest continent on earth. On the bleeding edge between those two societies, a rogue might make their fortune.

The People's Republic of China

At the turn of the century, the People's Republic of China (or *PRC*) experienced double-digit growth in their gross domestic product, foreshadowing their rise to global power. The PRC doesn't have the global military dominance which the USA briefly enjoyed after the fall of the Soviet Union, but its' economic and culture influence is comparable.

China is an *authoritarian technocracy*, where authority is concentrated in the hands of administrators and (at least in theory) qualified specialists. It solves problems from the center, and so modern China is marked by big, central projects, such as the Three Gorges Dam and the Qomolangma Laser Broom.

Standards of living in urban China grew steadily throughout the 21st century, but the rural population was largely left out. China is, in many ways, two nations – the wealthy core and the rural periphery – and they do not regard each other fondly. The human cost of the PRC's landscape-shaping projects tends to fall on the rural population.

The PRC does not *consider* itself to have been weakened by the events of Mad Tuesday, but it was weakened far more than it will ever admit. China has traditions of strong central rule, but also traditions of resistance to that rule. When the PRC was forced to devote so much of its attention to rebuilding and repairing, its ability to police its citizenry suffered, and they took advantage.

Today, the PRC often finds itself at odds with its wealthiest citizens. Major corporations are wealthy enough to have large private military forces acting as 'security', and their executives consider themselves above the law, like warlords of old. The PRC cannot afford direct confrontations with these individuals, as the cost to both their coffers and the national economy would be too high. Their People's Emergency Court will instead kidnap powerful corporate criminals, so that they can be tried in secret.

Friendship Power Plant and Qomolangma Laser Broom

In 2020, citing the growing problem of space debris impacting into satellites, the PRC announced the construction of a *laser broom* system. A ground-based laser, powered by a capacitance array, would be constructed to destroy orbital micro-debris or nudge it out of orbit. This would make space safe for satellites by preventing *kepler syndrome* – a runaway chain of collisions destroying all satellites.

Immediately, the international community opposed the project. Weapons that could reach into space were banned by international law. The announced location was *Qomolangma* – better known around the world as Mount Everest – which lies on the China-Nepal border, is not clearly within China's jurisdiction. Almost immediately, militant Nepalese opposition began sabotaging the operation. China accused the US and Russia of financing and supplying the insurgents, but whether these accusations were true or not, it didn't stop the Nepalese from bringing construction to a grinding halt.

Construction on Qomolangma Laser Base stagnated for many years, and the project looked doomed to failure... until the Ring of Fire disasters in the 2030s turned the American gaze inward. Shortly thereafter, China placated Nepal by formally agreeing that the power-plant for the laser-base would be expanded to serve electricity along the border to the Nepalese people. The *Friendship Power Plant* serves nuclear-generated electricity to Qomolangma Laser Base, as well as Shanghai, Zangmu, Shigatse, and Kathmandu.

In the wake of Mad Tuesday, the security at Qomolangma was drastically increased. The punishment for smuggling in unauthorized computers or storage systems, whether thumb drive or floppy disk, is summary execution.

The Republic of India

In the early 21st century, the Indian economy expanded rapidly, but unevenly. By the middle 2030s, this wealth gap expanded to swallow the nation, and the government of India had become a de facto plutocracy. The laws as written had no relationship to the laws as enforced.

The disasters of Mad Tuesday caused enormous damage to India's infrastructure, but the funds allocated for repairs were misappropriated and used to construct private electrical and network infrastructure with exorbitant fees. In one stroke, the 21st century's improvements in basic utilities for the rural poor were wiped out. Even in 2047, nine years later, the repairs for public infrastructure are still grinding forward, underfunded and de-prioritized by the plutocratic deep state.

While the democracy of India remains intact, it is increasingly impotent. Ballot boxes are compromised or miscounted at the behest of the rich, and bureaucrats in the pockets of plutocrats fail to enforce undesirable laws and regulations. Even the Indian military frequently diverts both funds and manpower to the personal projects of the plutocracy under the guise of 'training exercises'.

Despite its dysfunctional government, India is one of the richest nations on earth, in total and per capita, standing just behind China.

The State of Japan

In another world, where the Ring of Fire had merely burned instead of blazing, Japan might have gone on to be one of the great powers of the 21st century. It could have recovered from the deflationary spiral of the first two decades and enjoyed vibrant economic expansion. Instead, it has endured two decades of improbable earthquakes and tsunamis turning its people in to refugees in their own homes.

The Japanese east coast was entirely destroyed and rebuilt over the course of the last two decades. Everything on the eastern shore is built to either endure the most catastrophic disasters conceivable, or to be cheaply replaced after the sea devours it. Other coastal towns, flooded and abandoned, are under the control of squatters or used as Yakuza safehouses. Tokyo itself is a fortress against the sea, its quake-resistant skyscrapers protected by dikes and floodwalls.

Despite the ongoing domestic crisis brought on by the Ring of Fire's ignition, Japan remains a major manufacturer and exporter of heavy machinery and electronics. However, most of the successful Japanese corporations of the early 21st century have since become multinationals, and have lost their "uniquely Japanese character."

It is common to encounter surveillance robots in Japanese cities. Even the back-alleys and sewers might be patrolled by locally manufactured quad-copters with infrared vision and facial recognition. These robots provide assistance to citizens in distress, report crimes, and ferret out squatting refugees from devastated coastal regions.

The Russian Federation

From the early 10s to the early 30s, the Russian Federation expanded in to the territory of neighboring states, reclaiming parts of the former Soviet Union. It took in Belarus, eastern Ukraine, and the north half of Kazakhstan after internal pro-Russian elements disrupted their governments with protests or violent uprisings. Allegations that it encouraged and equipped these revolutionaries, or sent Russian special forces to train them, have never been confirmed.

On Mad Tuesday, the Russian communication network entirely collapsed. Russia closed its borders and deported foreign nationals for the duration of the emergency. If Mad Tuesday hadn't already drastically disrupted world trade, this would have caused intolerable financial losses and global alarm… but every other nation had their own crises to deal with.

Russia then spent eight months building entirely new, state of the art network infrastructure before they re-opened their borders. This new infrastructure is believed to be entirely under the control of the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, or FSB. Amnesty International, the Kallistians, and other international NGOs were unable to re-establish contact with their Russian contacts after the borders were re-opened in '40. They speculate that Russian activists were intentionally disappeared.

In 2047, Russia wages a cold war against itself. Its media is state-owned, and its purpose is to shape culture towards a stoic acceptance of state control and endorsement of conservative, patriarchal values. The Russian people, in turn, conspire with NGOs and criminals to get un-monitored access to global networks, if only because they want better media.

Life in Russia is prosperous if and only if you tow the party line and live a life of state-approved values. Counter-cultural elements – LGBTs, immigrants, or those who are not Russian Orthodox – cannot expect police protection of any sort. They *can* expect to be targeted for random harassment or abuse by not only the cops, but by random citizens.

Europe

The Pax Europa sits at uneasy peace with itself in 2047, fretting over lost glories and anticipating a bleak future.

The European Union

The economic crises of the 21st century cut the European Union to the quick. To reduce the impact of the recessions, the EU turned to *austerity policies*, aggressively cutting government services and costs. These failed to fix unemployment or stimulate the economy, and if anything they were counterproductive, but the paymasters of the EU were ideologically committed to austerity regardless. EU states were unable to regulate their own currency, as they were now dependent on the Euro, and slumped deeper in to debt at increasingly punitive interest rates until 2038.

Over the 10s and 20s, several members of the Union – including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, and Switzerland – elected right-wing nationalist political parties to office. The ongoing recessions and high unemployment had left people angry and looking for someone to blame… Parties like Golden Dawn and National Front offered plenty of scapegoats. As more European countries shifted to a nationalist, isolationist stance, refugees and immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East found themselves unwelcome, and began looking elsewhere for their futures.

Mad Tuesday devastated European utilities and telecoms, and it took years for them to be fully restored. The governments of Europe called off elections for the duration of the crisis, and many of them – especially those on the far right – refuse to admit the crisis has passed, lest they be called to account for their failures during the catastrophe. Protest movements demanding new elections are a regular sight on the streets, but the advanced non-lethal weaponry of the modern age has allowed states to violently disperse these movements without loss of life.

Today, Europe is still plagued by high unemployment and the aftershocks of a rocky transition to a more privatized economy. Greece and Italy have both defaulted on their sovereign debt, and as a result have had their voting rights in the European Council suspended indefinitely. The new private medical finance industry is oriented towards the needs of the wealthy elite rather than the increasingly impoverished masses. Most Europeans rely on automated expert systems for diagnosis and care; the steep cost of actual doctors puts them outside the reach of the common man except in emergencies.

The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER)

Since 2006, the goal of the ITER project has been to build an energy-positive fusion power plant in southern France. The project soldiered on through the recessions of the early '10s and the political turmoil of the '20s and '30s, despite losing funding from the USA in '29 and from Japan in '32. In 2034, the ITER reactor became fully operational, and began supplying both electrical power and valuable research data to the European Union. Everything was in place to begin the next reactor, DEMO, which would have been able to provide power to most of Western Europe.

Unfortunately, ITER and its associated research facilities were sacked by the madware attacks of Mad Tuesday in 2038. The reactor itself was destroyed when its magnetic coils directed fusing plasma through the cryostats. More critically, all the on-site research data was erased. Without the data, it will be impossible to design and construct DEMO.

After Mad Tuesday, the Syzygy Group bought up the remains of ITER for pennies on the dollar. They reported that they were, despite a zealous search, unable to find any remaining off-site backups of the ITER research data. Per the press release, all of it had been destroyed by madware. Syzygy keeps ITER staffed by a skeleton crew of underpaid grad students who research the disaster that destroyed it. Occasionally, rumors float through the criminal underworld that there still exists a copy of the lost ITER data, but so far, no one knows who has it, or whether it exists at all...

The Nordic Council

The Nordic Council (NC) includes Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, plus three lesser territories. (Denmark, Sweden, and Finland are also members of the European Union.) At the beginning of the 21st century, these states were united by their economic equality. All five had some of the lowest *GINI coefficients* on the planet, meaning their wealth was very evenly distributed among their population. While wealth was being concentrated in to the hands of smaller and smaller elites, the Nordic Council nations stood apart, thanks to aggressive taxation and wealth redistribution policies.

During the '20s and '30s, the NC's relationship with the rest of the EU was strained by the increasingly reactionary politics of mainland Europe. Despite increasing populist antipathy towards immigrants, the NC nations maintained release-and-hear policies for refugee claimants and allowed immigration to continue. Meanwhile, the detain-and-hear policies of continental European states combined with their increasingly stringent immigration policies diverted larger streams of refugees toward the Nordic Council. This influx of immigrants rallied the NC's anti-immigrant parties and put an increasing strain on the NC nations' welfare budgets.

In 2038, Mad Tuesday took this unstable state of affairs and kicked it over. The madware exchange effectively burned the records that were so vital to managing the national welfare rolls of the NC states. Without any of the records, it was impossible to distinguish legitimate requisitions from fraudulent, forcing the welfare agencies to rely on the honor system and clumsy paper documentation. When difficulties with paper accounting led to budget shortfalls, immigrant and refugee population took the brunt of it, becoming a new underclass in a traditionally classless society.

The coasts of the Nordic states are increasingly waterlogged by rising sea levels, driving speculation in how they'll adapt to the new ecology. Many of their economies are fueled by natural resources, such as off-sea petroleum reserves or fisheries, which are either dwindling or damaged. The Nordic states have been shaped by expectations of prosperity, and these expectations are crumbling.

Today, the Nordic Council nations are increasingly turning a cold shoulder to the immigrants they once welcomed, as their prosperity becomes increasingly delicate. While the Nordic welfare states are clumsier and more uneven than they've been in a century, they're still the strongest on the planet, if only because everyone else crumbled even faster. Resource export and high-tech manufacturing dominate the Nordic economies.

The United Kingdom

The financial crises of 2008 and onwards were especially damaging to the UK, in part because of the importance of the financial sector to the UK economy. Unemployment rose quickly, and the GDP remained static for decades. Between 2015 and 2023, the NHS was gradually privatized and eventually dismantled completely in favor a compulsory private insurance scheme modeled after the USA, further increasing the cost of living. All these combined to ravage the UK's middle and lower class, creating an unprecedented surge of homelessness, debt evasion, and petty crime as law-abiding citizens were squeezed out of the legitimate economy.

Left-wing parties briefly reclaimed parliament and pushed through new entitlements in 2024, which were repealed when the Conservatives took power again in 2028. These rapid shifts in policy disrupted the UK's bureaucratic systems as they struggled to build out new automation to implement the rapidly changing law.

As a result of these fragile and untested homebrew tools, government IT was exceptionally vulnerable to madware attack. Mad Tuesday led to a total purge of the UK government databases and their backups. The government is dependent on cooperation from the very citizenry it had been failing for the last decade in order to rebuild their records, so easily half the population is undocumented.

The UK's legitimate economy is composed of global financial service elites and their amenities, with a small periphery in local manufacturing, but most of the economy is undocumented, untaxed, and illegal. The main exports are financial services catering to wealthy elites and major corporations, counterfeit brand-name goods, illegal immigrants and human trafficking, and black market crypto-currency financial services catering to criminals and the undocumented.

North America

When Mad Tuesday hit, the USA fell hard, and it dragged all of its North American client states down with it. North America may still be the wealthiest continent on earth, but most of it is entangled in organized crime, failures of governance, and general mayhem.

The United States of America

Mad Tuesday disabled the internet and water and electrical utilities across the US for days or weeks, depending. That would have been bad enough, but it was just the beginning. Various domestic terrorists – religious extremists, white supremacists, and radical misogynists – took advantage of the chaos to raise hell. Local police or militia thwarted most, but some were able to seize control of their local communities by force of arms and terror.

The hope of these insurgents was that they could seize power before order was restored, and force the feds to negotiate with them. However, many of them were never challenged at all. In the wake of Mad Tuesday, the government lacked the spare resources, or the will, to disperse them. The feds simply withdrew to focus on protecting and repairing vital infrastructure, and allowed peripheral communities to drift away.

The president inexplicably died in the aftermath of Mad Tuesday; though it was never confirmed, the popular wisdom holds that he committed suicide.

Large portions of the US are listed as "high crime" or "with travel advisory" – code phrases for the possibility of kidnapping or robbery by insurgents. Isolated regions of Northwestern and Midwestern states are often without water or electricity, the victims of rolling blackouts or corrupt privatization. Due to the rising costs of fossil fuels and falling incomes, traveling across the United States by air is too expensive for most Americans, and traveling by car is impossible without passing through high intensity areas, so travel from sea to shining sea is mostly by train.

The US had its most hotly contested election in 2044, with no fewer than 17 parties listed on each state ballot. The winner of the election was Reverend Young Bradshaw, a minister of the Triclavian Church of America. Just one year later, a terrorist attack in the US capitol destroyed several buildings, including the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund. In keeping with an anti-globalization policy, the IMF has not been invited back.

California, the Sunshine State

On April 4th, 2029, a Richter–8 earthquake shattered the San Francisco bay area. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) struggled to evacuate and house more than a hundred thousand refugees in the aftermath. The major tech companies whose headquarters were in the area began buying up the ruined land, with the intent of rebuilding their compounds into walled communities for their employees.

In 2031, FEMA ran out of money and began quietly turning the "4/04" refugees out on their own recognizance. This wave of poor and desperate Americans did little to pacify the beleaguered west coast. With many counties declaring "intense criminal activity" zones, the #NXS hashtag began trending shortly after, as Californians began publicizing crimes by these refugees on social media, hoping to spur more government intervention. It backfired spectacularly when the criminal element began using it to publicize their extravagant crimes.

The state of California is a case study in disaster capitalism. The Big One swept San Francisco and Los Angeles clean and left them open for redevelopment. Unfortunately for most of the locals, that redevelopment was not for their benefit. The corporations of Silicon Valley bought up the real estate up for themselves.

Most of California is no-mans-land, where the closest you get to the rule of law are bounty hunters. Not to say it's a hellhole – the locals have plenty of expertise in throwing communities together – but it owes nothing to the state government or the feds. The hills and valleys of that great state are controlled by local communities of anarchists or refugees, or seized by strongmen looking for a refuge from the law. Power, water, and internet are all jury-rigged together out of old materials and 3d-printed parts by talented amateurs or out-of-work professionals.

The corporate enclaves of the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles regions are another story entirely. These campuses are gated communities, factories, and office space all in one. They were all constructed after the Big One, so everything there is state of the art and built to endure cataclysmic earthquakes. Only corporate employees and shareholders are permitted to reside on campus, so contract workers must either commute from no-mans-land or find a hidden squat.

Thanks to a series of curious ballot initiatives in the late 30s, the senators of California are the Ash Company and the California branch of Marharban LLC, and their votes determined by their board of directors. California's main exports are marijuana, agricultural goods, and extreme bleeding edge technological R&D.

The American Midwest

The Keystone XL oil pipeline was a great economic victory of the early 20th century. The Supervisory, Control, And Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems reduced the permanent staff for the entire pipeline to a mere 35 persons, monitoring the whole pipe from one central facility. But for the parties at either end - the Athabasca Tar Sands mining operations, and the Gulf Coast refinery complexes - the Keystone was just the beginning of a very fruitful partnership.

By 2038, there were a total of six such pipelines snaking across the American Midwest along various routes. Initial caution over the planned routes relaxed with each successive construction, owing in part to the immaculate safety record of the SCADA systems. When Mad Tuesday crashed the global computer networks, the whole system failed as aggressively as possible: hundreds of leaks in each pipeline, with no way to locate them except physically walking the entire pipeline.

It took until 2040 to reinstate a closed-network SCADA system over the entire pipeline, and another year to get the last of the leaks patched up. The damage was done, however; enough bituminous effluent had escaped the pipelines and entered the Ogallala Aquifer to render it unsuitable for irrigation.

Ogallala Tar-Water kills anything that tries to drink it for extended periods. There's not enough oil per gallon to subsidize high-energy distillation, and solar distillation is too slow for industrial agriculture. Life in the Midwest in 2047 is provisioned mainly from surface water, with rainwater cisterns and solar stills for backup. Communities are smaller and poorer; many of the former Midwestern trade hubs have suffered extensive "Detroitification", surrounded by rings of economically unsustainable suburban ruins.

This new reality has slashed the volume of U.S. agricultural production, jeopardizing the former global superpower's political dominance.

The Northeast Corridor

The Northeast Corridor is a term for the metropolitan areas of Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, which are all linked by a single railway system spanning hundreds of miles. In 2047, these five cities are the only places left where the U.S. federal government has a strong presence, and they're more tightly connected than ever.

In 2011, the *Occupy Wall Street* protest movement briefly seized the zeitgeist as well as New York's Zuccotti Park, but was dispersed after a few months of clashes with the police. Thanks to a resurgent economy and effective policing of radicals, no similar protest movements arose for the remainder of the decade.

However, by 2024, a new recession spurred by the student loan bubble bursting had created enough desperate youth for a new protest movement, *OccupaRe*, to form. These angry youth seized public spaces across the Boston/Washington D.C. Corridor and intended to remain so until such time as their demands for financial and regulatory reform were met. Within a week, private security from Freedom Contracting Services stormed the protests and dispersed them with a violence that would have been unimaginable a decade prior. The bodies of the dying and the dead were dragged off the flagstones of Zuccotti Park on live television

Despite public outrage from every level of society, from the inner city streets to the House of Congress, Freedom Contractive Services successfully stonewalled investigations into their crimes, destroying evidence and blocking regulators. They were fined so badly that they declared bankruptcy, dissolved the company, and reformed the company under a different name a year later with a fresh IPO. Investigations concluded that the raid on OccupaRe been approved and managed by a low level FCS executive operating under his own recognizance. This evil-doer was jailed, and so justice was done.

In the years since this event, the Northeast Corridor has become a hotbed of radical class warfare sentiment, despite ongoing investments in amenities for the poor, such as homeless shelters, food kitchens, and less-than-lethal weapons for police armories. The rising cost of housing and travel, as well as stagnant wages, meant that these amenities saw heavy use.

On Mad Tuesday, the lights went out across the Northeast Corridor, and stayed out for weeks. The madware attack had knocked out critical junctions in the smartgrid, and more importantly, it had knocked out the tools to diagnose the problem. It would be weeks before heroic engineers discovered and repaired the broken junction, and in that time, the night was a great equalizer. In the first week, an angry mob threw the Mayor of New York from his penthouse window. After that, a few hurried calls to the Marharban PLC from the richest men on Wall Street arranged the first wholesale police privatization on the planet, followed by a curfew enforced by state of the art hunter-seeker drones.

In the nine years since Mad Tuesday, Freedom Security Services have served as the police of the cities of the Northeast Corridor, with the exception of Washington, which is patrolled by the Secret Service. The governments of these cities are nanny states with Munchausen's-by-proxy, spending just enough on social services to keep the desperate and vastly redundant lower classes from tearing the infrastructure of America's financial services apart in a fit of nihilist rage.

The main exports of the Northeast Corridor area are financial services, research and development, fish, lumber, and art.

The Alaskan Emergency Management Commission

Alaska depends on a functioning trade network to export fossil fuels and import food, and Mad Tuesday shut that down for months in the middle of winter. Food shortages reached famine levels in days, followed by riots and looting across Alaskan fisheries. The arctic winter pushed things to the edge of collapse faster and harder than farther south.

The United Utilities Services Group, the major subcontractor of government services in Alaska, took advantage of the situation. They cashed in their remaining political capital to push an outrageous proposal through the reeling U.S. Congress: *privatize the state*. In exchange for handling the crisis in Alaska and a tidy sum of cash, the Alaskan government handed over all responsibility for policing, taxing, and regulating the territory to the UUSG's Alaskan Emergency Management Commission. The UUSG strained their finances and repurposed their fleet of fuel tankers to ship food, medicine, and supplies north and ship refugees south for the duration of the emergency. Those who remained did so under condition of accepting AEMC employment.

Today, the AEMC controls who can live in Alaska, who can do business there, who can travel there, and who can leave. Their goal is simply to continue to exploit Alaska's abundant natural resources for profit, per their charter from the United States government. In pursuing this goal they are happy to micromanage the lives of their employees, which include everyone living in the federally outsourced territory of Alaska.

The AEMC is a suitable employer of last resort for the impoverished or criminal who lack better options or need a place to vanish. Their work camps are spartan and demanding, and life on their corporate campuses is regimented and Orwellian. Their wages barely clear room and board after they finish selling you the food and electricity you need to live. They've still yet to run out of applicants willing to sign over control of their lives in exchange for something like job security.

The Dominion of Canada

In the 2020s, the Dominion of Canada became the largest exporter of oil and gas to both the United States and the People's Republic of China. A succession of weak minority governments and failed budgets in the 2020s led to an increased reliance on the United States in order to pay for private sector police and security forces. When the American crisis escalated to the point that they were no longer able to support Canadian security, the Syzygy Group covertly organized a separatist movement aimed at seizing and privatizing Canada's fossil fuel resources. Within a few years, they had driven Canada into civil war.

In 2039, Prime Minister Janet Oda formally surrendered the oil-rich prairies of Alberta and Saskatchewan to a provisional government backed by the Syzygy Group. The weakened Dominion has steadily shrunk in prominence, and the plentiful availability of 3D-printed weapons has contributed to mounting instability even now that the so-called Pipeline Rebellion has ended. Decaying, old-world style cities are overcrowded with western refugees.

Today, the outlook is bleak. A new referendum on Quebec independence is scheduled for 2048, and the success of a China-backed breakaway Confederation of tribal councils on the western coast has emboldened enemies of the embattled government. Federal elections have been suspended since 2038.

The Palliser Republic

The Syzygy Group is infamous for cynically forming short-lived corporate bodies in order to dodge litigation and regulation. Critics and commentators have suggested that the Palliser Republic is an attempt to bring this strategy into international politics and warfare. The Palliser Republic began as a loose alliance of anti-government agitators and terrorists in the former Canadian oil sands, who were forged into a nation by focus groups and canny media manipulation as much as war.

The Palliser Republic is a nominally democratic state, but they have yet to hold their first round of post-war elections. Its constitution explicitly bans most forms of taxation, with corporate largesse and oil royalties paying for the few services that the government provides. Nicknamed "Cowboy Country" by its neighbors, the Republic is reputably lawless outside of the deadly and obsessive vigor with which it protects energy and international banking interests.

The Confederation of Free Nations

Spanning much of North America's northwest coast, the Confederation of Free Nations was formed in 2041 as the Free Nations. Envisioned then as a temporary alliance between Haida militias and the Carrier Sekani Council, the Confederation officially incorporated two years later. Thanks to aggressive funding and arms from the People's Republic of China, the Confederation grew rapidly in the face of the weakened Canadian Government's complacency. They now control much of what was formerly British Columbia, the Yukon Territory, and the America State of Alaska.

Ruled by an assembly drawn from various tribe and band councils, this breakaway nation state has thrived in the short time since it gained its independence. The Confederation's capital, Vancouver, is a major trans-pacific shipping hub, which the Palliser Republic relies on to export fuel to China and Japan. The vast quantity of consumer goods flowing in and out make ships attractive targets for criminals, and the port an attractive destination for smugglers.

The United Mexican States

The United Mexican States began the 21st century by striding out of the shadow of a recession and voting the Institutional Revolutionary Party out of the presidency for the first time since 1929. Mexico was rife with corruption, more so than Russia, and drug-smuggling cartels held enough power that police often faced the choice between accepting a bribe and accepting a bullet.

Mexico was unevenly developed at the start of the century and remains so now. Much of the Mexican countryside has essentially no infrastructure – no running water, electrical power, or networking. Most of what was built out before Mad Tuesday was destroyed or disabled and is only slowly being repaired. Local, off-the-grid systems are more common.

The Mexican urban core, however, is immense and well developed, and remains so despite being shaken by the Ring of Fire and blasted by Mad Tuesday. Much of Mexico's government was too technologically backward to be much affected by Mad Tuesday; even the most fiendish madware has a hard time burning paper records. Mexico's oil reserves have not yet run out, and a steady flow of petrochemical exports financed heavy repairs and modernization projects in the wake of the disaster.

Today, Mexico's wealthy colonize its poor as a source of cheap labor. The Mexican countryside is a schizophrenic mix of state-of-the-art residences and industrial complexes right next to decaying cities and squalid *favelas*, with only a wall topped by an electric fence between them. Mexico's main exports are petroleum, finished electronics, and grain.

The Mexican Cartels

The drug cartels of Mexico were deep states within the state. Many of them were ex-soldiers, well equipped and technologically savvy, and comfortable being at war against the world. In northern Mexico's undeveloped countryside, there were great expanses where entire townships belonged to one cartel or another, ruling over them like feudal princes. There were no police, no government, except what the cartels allowed.

Mexico also served as one of the largest sources of cheap labor in the western hemisphere. Several major electronics manufacturers set up shop in northern Mexico in the late 2010s, building tremendous industrial complexes to take advantage of the local labor force.

The cartels were set back when the USA legalized marijuana sales in the early 20s. Two decades of pressure from the Mexican federal government had already put them on their back foot, and the sudden cut in revenue left them staggering. However, they were too entrenched to destroy completely, and even as more and more of their territory was lost to the Mexican government proper, their organization endured.

The Ring of Fire quakes of the 2020s and onward steadily shook Mexico City apart, ravaging the eastern coastline. More importantly, the cartels stepped in to take advantage of the chaotic, ruined cities, creating new smuggling routes and hydroponic farms for cocaine and heroin in the ruins. They secured these routes by sabotaging cleanup efforts by the Mexican government, ensuring the eastern coast of Mexico remained a chaotic no-man's land.

Mad Tuesday hit Mexico like a ton of bricks, crippling its fragile electrical and network infrastructure, but the cartels barely noticed. Their own infrastructure was entirely internally built, with their own pirate satellites and phone network off the radar of any madware. For several weeks, they were the only people in Mexico with proper telecoms, and they took advantage of this to coordinate hits on many of the government officials who had been managing the war on the cartels.

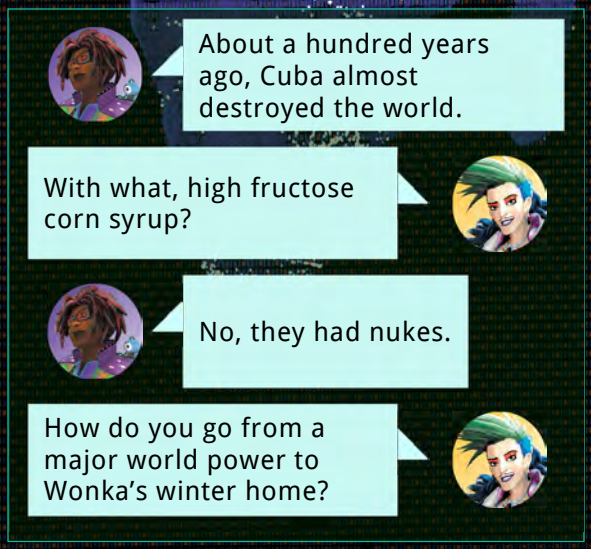
In the aftermath of Mad Tuesday, the cartels are as strong as they've ever been. There are still several of them – Los Zetas and the Knights Templar have both survived the early 21st century. They are all ferocious rivals, and their wars with each other kill thousands each year. American law enforcement has been so weakened by Mad Tuesday that smuggling drugs is more profitable than ever, even with fewer buyers.

The Republic of Cuba

In the early 20th century, Cuba was a port-of-call for honest merchant marines and for dishonest smugglers. After a communist revolution, Cuba was an ally with the USSR. Its close proximity to the US fueled fears of a missile attack, which led the US to develop the technology that would become the modern Internet. By the start of the 21st century, relations had cooled off, and Cuba and the US had become thriving trading partners.

Cuba's entire economy was transformed by the collapse of the USSR in 1989. It abruptly lost access to Russia's tremendous supply of fossil fuels and agricultural surplus, forcing it to redesign its entire economy to adjust to the lack. This tremendous disruption – the *Special Period* – was very useful experience for the Cuban government, especially in the wake of Mad Tuesday, when the entire global economy fell in to a seizure.

The Cuban economy is poor in consumer goods and most foods, and their human rights record is spotty at best, and their educational system is rife with corruption, but their medical services are some of the best in the world. Increased international trade has allowed them to relax their sustainability policies. As a result, contemporary Cuba is beginning to face serious ecological concerns, as over-farming of sugar plantations is eroding the landscape and polluting the local waters. However, exports of sugar, and the bio-fuels created with it, are extremely profitable.



South America

The South American states have developed in to strong nations, albeit lopsided ones, over the 21st century.

The Federative Republic of Brazil

Brazil has risen tremendously in wealth, prestige, and influence over the 21st century, effectively leveraging its natural resources for stronger international relations and an expanding economy. Unfortunately, only a very narrow slice of Brazil has benefitted. The Brazilian government is so corrupt, and its wealth gaps are so profound, that a mere ten to twenty people effectively control the entire nation.

Modern Brazil consists of four social classes. The ruling clade number a mere handful and control over half the wealth of the nation. The administrative classes are the wealthiest percent, and the police class the wealthiest fifth. The remaining eighty percent of Brazil consists of disenfranchised labor kept under heel by the top twenty percent. Unlike most of the globe, there is no meaningful entrepreneurial activity in the Brazilian economy; its economy consists of resource extraction and wage labor at the behest of one of the national megacorps.

Brazil maintains an independent tech sector of locally manufactured electronics, as well as the second largest blue-water navy on the planet. Their main exports are natural resources, finished goods, and luxury services.

The Amazon Rainforest

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Amazon rainforest covered almost a third of South America. Today, in 2047, it covers about a fifth. Perennial droughts brought on by shifting weather patterns as well as aggressive clear-cutting for pasture and lumber tore at the edges and the center alike throughout the century.

Unlike Columbia, the Brazilian rainforest has not been extracted, virtualized, and reduced companies greenhouse land. This is widely credited to the intervention of Nuraco, who spun off subsidiaries to purchase the rainforest land wholesale from the Brazilian government. The Nuraco protectorates harvest fruit and timber in an allegedly sustainable fashion and act to prevent the forest from further decline.

However, Nuraco's output of fruit and timber has been steadily increasing since late 2041, more than doubling. Shepard's Greens and other environmentalist groups believe this is evidence that Nuraco has begun genetically modifying the rainforest, or (more likely) clearcutting it and replacing it with plantation farmland, while Nuraco claims they've merely developed improved harvesting techniques.

The Republic of Colombia

Colombia began the 21st century by winding down a half-decade of violent rural unrest by leftist guerillas and pulling its economy out of a severe recession with a three-year loan from the IMF. It followed that up with two solid decades of economic growth, although the man on the street didn't see much of it.

Colombia was long ranked as a *mega-diverse* country, like Brazil, but unlike Brazil, its biological diversity is all in the past. Between 2020 and 2045, all but a tenth of Colombia's rainforest was consumed by expanding urban and agricultural footprints. This irreplaceable resource was not simply discarded, but consumed; the Colombian government and Pfluger Genetics co-own the patents on the genetics and epigenetics of the entirety of what was formerly the Colombian ecosystem. (Industry rumors insinuate that this data was erased or encrypted by madware in 2038, but Pfluger continues to release new products supposedly based on it.)

The Contemporary Colombian economy is built around hydroponically farming exotic plants, genetic therapy, cheap labor, and exporting cut flowers. Nine in ten Colombians live in the cities, and many of those who live in what were formerly rural areas are now contract labor for various closed-campus factory farms. The remaining Colombian wilderness is forbidden ground unless you have permission from the government to be there; as a result, the remaining indigenous people of Colombia have been forced out of their homelands in to government tenements, bringing with them wild stories of half-human monsters stalking the jungle.

Space

In 2047, the human race is just beginning to move out into outer space. Despite government cut-backs and corporate profiteering, exploration into the final frontier continues.

OPSEK Space Station

The Orbital Piloted Assembly and Experiment Complex (OPSEK) is a third-generation space station orbiting the earth. After the International Space Station was de-orbited in the 2020s, OPSEK was created as a joint operation between China, India, Russia, and South Korea. While several of OPSEK's systems failed during Mad Tuesday in 2038, the quick action of the astronauts prevented any loss of life or property.

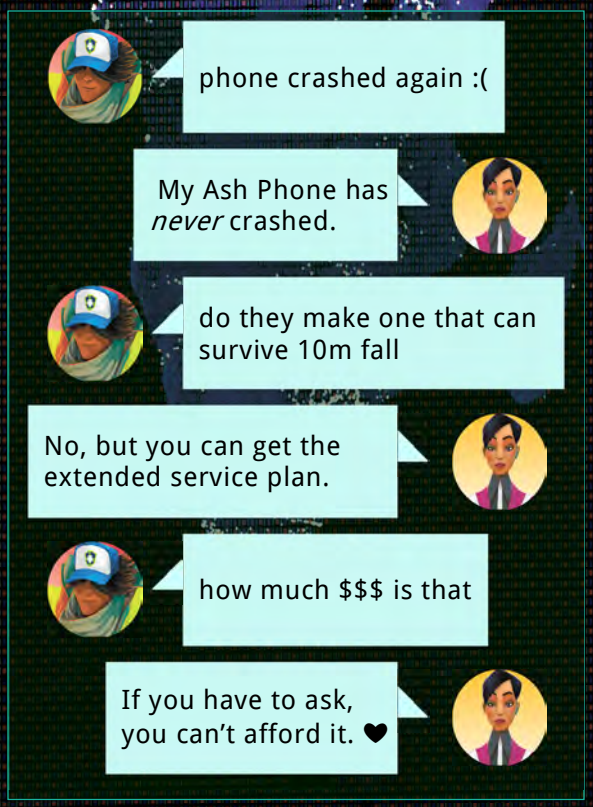
While the United States was invited to participate, that country's existing laws prohibit the US from working with China on joint space programs. Since the 2044 election, the US declared that OPSEK is in violation of international law because of its *laser broom array*, a Chinese-manufactured laser system used for defending the station against space debris. Theoretically, these lasers could be used to destroy US satellites.

Chang-é Moon Base

The most ambitious space project yet, the *Chang-é Moon Base* began construction by robots sometime in the early 2030s.(Exact dates are difficult to find due to obscurity or due to misinformation deliberately created to the public.)Chang-é Base maintained full operations through Mad Tuesday, but the satellite networks they used had gone dark for several hours. At present, Chang-é is an operation completely governed by the China National Space Administration. While the United States and Russia have announced their own moon bases "by 2060", China is far ahead of anyone else.

Mars-Grunt Initiative

The planet Mars has fascinated the nations of the world, but there are major obstacles to sending a manned mission. The travel time, in excess of a year, would have devastating health consequences upon a human. The logistics of maintaining air, water, and food supplies would require a spacecraft with unfeasibly large cargo. Russia's Research has developed the "Mars Grunt" class robots, some of the smartest and most compact in artificial intelligences, to date. Since the dawn of the 21st century, Russia's goal is to send a probe to Mars and then return it safely to the earth. Millions are being spent to ensure this operation happens by 2050.



Multinational Corporations

The latter half of the 20th century was the beginning of *globalization.* Rather than produce goods domestically, a country could import items from a country that made them more cheaply. These lower prices usually came from labor practices that violated human rights, from unsustainable industrialization and pollution, from cheap transportation costs from low fuel prices, and from just-in-time telecommunication. As money flowed across borders, businesses extended their reach. The *multinational corporations* were the biggest and the richest.

As stock prices rose, the multinationals grew in influence. They lobbied governments for greater and greater incentives. They hired private military companies to take assets by force. They bought news outlets for propaganda. The multinationals were like countries unto themselves, without borders or capitals.

The first half of the 21st century didn't so much burst the bubble as slowly deflate it. Peak oil and coal reserves dwindled until they were no longer cost-effective. Global poverty meant less consumer demand, which meant lower sales. Multiple disasters, both geographic and electronic, crippled the networks.

In 2047, the multinational corporations continue to be key players in the world scheme …. But many CEOs are nervous. When so many people have nothing left to lose, can a revolution be too far away? Or is the next threat something that can't be bought off, such as a super-virus or a robot uprising?

In some future settings, corporations become laws unto themselves, but in the Permanent Emergency, they remain subject to the laws of sovereign nations – in theory. You are also subject to these laws, of course, and doesn't seem to stop you, so don't expect it to stop them…

Agaruma Technologies

As medical technology advanced, there were more survivors of violent altercation. While people could survive debilitating injuries on a physical level, the disfigurement and disability could be more than most souls could endure. *Agaruma Technologies* from Japan is recognized as the world leader in bionic reconstruction.

Teruteru Kabushiki-gaisha, one of Agaruma's holding companies, is a private company that makes "Simulees", or android robots designed to simulate humans. Teruteru's work does not come cheap, but their models are amazingly lifelike. In 2043, UNESCO made a demand to make a human-rights inquiry into Teruteru's facilities, but the company declined.

AllenMorrisRey (AMR)

AllenMorrisRey is a multi-national company that specializes in medicine, such as consumer healthcare products, pharmaceuticals, and vaccines. AMR is notorious among the medical community for pursuing profits over ethics. In the past century, AMR employees have been found guilty of falsifying safety data, of replacing ingredients in their medicines with cheaper and less-effective alternatives, and of bribing doctors to promote their medicines.

AMR is an important partner with UNESCO in promoting world-wide health. In the wake of the Ring of Fire disasters, AMR worked together with UNESCO to vaccinate many people in disaster-ridden areas.

In 2040, AMR executives created the Welvar Corporation. This new company had the rights to all genetic-engineering research, patents, and products. Apparently, this move was made to avoid the negative political connotations of being involved with such things, so that AMR could continue to work with UNESCO to promote world-wide health.

Today, AMR is the leading research against *multi-drug resistant (MDR) diseases.* In the last century, many common diseases were treated using antibiotics. After many generations, new "super bugs" have evolved to resist the conventional drugs. AllenMorrisRey both works to prevent a "new Black Plague" ... while also advertising heavily that AMR might be the only company that can save the world from such a plague.

Ash Company

The US-based Ashbury Computer Company was an early maker of computer kits and parts. In the early 21st century, the company re-branded itself simply the "Ash Company", where they specialized in higher-end, premium products. As early as 2018, Ash was anticipating the growing interest in human augmentation. Their earliest implementation, nicknamed "Payne", made headlines in 2030, but plans to make an invasive, elective-surgery augmented reality system failed to materialize.

Because Ash computer products were already using 64-bit implementations, in both software and hardware, their computers survived Mad Tuesday with few issues. A growing interest in portable computing led to the first AR system in 2039, the "Cadet" system. It was later followed by "Talc", "Gunmetal", and "Quartz" systems. None of Ash's systems are backward compatible with each other, nor do their software or accessories work with competitors'.

Bellevue Project

Every few years, new computers were being introduced, with greater processing power and capability, while older ones were being discarded. In the late 20th Century, a growing number of programmers were asserting that computing software was a service, not a product, and that "information wants to be free." If software development was kept secret and proprietary, then only the moneyed elite would be able to reap the benefits. The *open-source movement* was born.

There are hundreds of different open-source operating systems, based on a dozen or so *kernels,* the central program that manages the software and the hardware. In 2047, the most popular of the open-source operating systems is the *Bellevue distribution,* which runs on almost all computers and phones. Bellevue is maintained by volunteers who work together in an international non-government organization. Bellevue-based operating systems run on TML's n-bit architecture, Ash's 64-bit and 128-bit systems, and a variety of obscure computers dating all the way back to the 1980s.

Bellevue software is notoriously difficult to use. Bellevue fans argue that when everything is done "correctly", nothing runs better... but they are also very quick to excuse faults and "operator error". Since Bellevue software is open-source, it is technically free to copy and to use... but getting the software to work may take several hours of labor that only a skilled programmer can provide.

Clearcast Corporation

The Information Age was a strange time for journalism. In the United States, regulations that used to restrict ownership of radio, television, and newspapers were removed. Sometimes, all the stations would become owned by a single company. And more often than not, that company was *Clearcast Corporation.*

By the 2020s, Clearcast was the leader in social media, newsfeed aggregators, and cable news networks, in English-speaking countries. The Clearcast News channel (CCN) broadcasts 24 hours a day, using the slogan "free and clear". Clearcast is also a major Internet Service Provider in the Americas, Europe, and Australia.

Clearcast is a target of criticism of many social-justice groups, who claim that Clearcast's reporting is biased in favor of wealthy, plutocratic influences. For example, after Mad Tuesday, independent investigations into Clearcast's traffic turned up several anomalies, which indicated that Clearcast may have been storing people's information on their servers, well past any reasonable time period. Was Clearcast using this information to spy on its customers? Or was Clearcast turning this information over to government agencies?

Despite all the criticism and the controversy, Clearcast remains a monopoly in many cities across the globe.

Elage

In the early 21st century, India was a major growth center for media and technology. The "Bollywood" film industry was larger than ever. Many countries were eager to out-source their information technology needs to India, where labor was much cheaper. Rising investment brought new money. In the 2030s, a flurry of investment brought new companies buying other companies. The Indian corporate sector was a mess of de-regulation and get-rich quick schemes, until 2038, when Mad Tuesday led to a nation-wide systems crash, followed by massive government investigation. When the dust finally settled, one conglomerate came out on top – the *Elage* Company.

Elage is a small business empire unto itself. It subsidiaries include media studios, Internet Service providers, technology manufacturers, and computer software. After their fiscal year report in 2046, Elage is the largest company in India. For the second half of the 21st century, Elage is preparing for rapid expansion into the depressed markets of the United States and Africa.

EZ-Maker Company

The turn of the century saw the first commercially-available *three-dimensional printers.* First, a model would be prepared using a computer program. This data was then shared with the 3D-printer, which would use a robotic armature to build layers of resin or plastic.

The Toronto-based EZ-maker took this technology one step further, by developing their line of 3-d fabricator, nicknamed *"fabbers"*. These devices come in a variety of models, from simple resin printers, to more advanced models equipped with lasers for wood-burning or sculpting, all the way to top-of-the-line, room-sized models that work with a variety of advanced materials. Fabbers and their materials are extremely popular among self-reliant communities in the United States, so the exporting of these machines over the border is a slow and complex exercise.

Freedom Contracting Services / Marharban PLC

In the late 20th century, many of the United States' law-makers adopted a "three strikes" policy, where repeat offenders were immediately sent to jail. To meet the rising demand for incarceration facilities, prisons were privatized – corporations could build prisons for money. *Freedom Contracting Services* was one of many construction companies who met the demand. In 2020, the investor group *Marharban PLC*, headquartered in Dubai, bought out the entire Freedom company and expanded their operations worldwide. After the Mazuku Ring of Fire disasters, Freedom Contracting was extremely busy rebuilding much of US infrastructure. With governments strapped for cash, many local governments privatized their construction, then later they privatized their emergency services.

In 2020, the investor group *Marharban PLC*, headquartered in Dubai, bought out Freedom to expand their US holdings. The "Marharban" brand is used internationally for private military contracting. In the United States, the "Freedom" brand is used, instead. Marharban is a frequent target from US isolationists who oppose foreign influence. However, Marharban's PR department has been remarkably successful at shielding the "Freedom" brand from US criticism.

"Freedom Fighters" are a common sight as private security in much of the United States. Notorious for their budget cuts, their low standards in personnel, and their corruption, Freedom Construction Services is still competitive for one of two reasons – either it's because they work cheap, or it's because they are already there and they do anything to refuse to budge. Freedom's employees are an uncomfortable blend of government services and capitalist opportunity, as they hunt bounties, they capture bail-jumpers, and they guard prisons.

Khorunzhyi Koncern Technologia (KhKT)

After Mad Tuesday, many European and Asian businesses were hobbled by their old computer systems. A Polish computer company specializing in upgrading legacy machines, Khorunzhyi Koncern Technologia *(KhKT)* seized the business opportunity, quickly becoming a leader.

KhKT has installed the infrastructure of almost all post–2038 computer-infrastructure, so most computers will use net-services on their backbone. KhKT systems are notorious for being extremely finicky, with slow response times … but also for having high security against madware and other virus attacks.

LPA (Liriene-Paperino Alliance)

Rising costs of fossil fuels meant a rising demand in alternative transportation. Headquartered in France, *Liriene Automotive* was an early-adopter of smart-car technology. Their tiny, electric cars became a grudging staple all throughout Europe for people who needed a car but couldn't afford much better. Over in Italy, *Paperino S.A.* was making motorcycles and scooters with a special capacitor-driven battery, to give their small vehicles an acceleration that rivaled the traditional internal-combustion engine. When Paperino tried to market their scooters outside of Italy, Liriene accused Paperino of stealing their technology. Paperino engineers denied the claims, and launched their own litigation against Liriene for stealing *their* designs. Several years and millions in legal fees later, the two companies eventually settled on joint-ownership of the technologies. Today, the *Liriene-Paperino Alliance* makes a variety of cars, vans, and motorcycles for the European, American, and African markets.

Before 2038, LPA licensed its automotive technology out to a number of imitators. Many of those companies didn't follow the specifications, and on Mad Tuesday, many of the off-brand cars stopped working. In a notorious viral video, one off-brand motorcycle's braking system failed, killing the driver. In another video, an off-brand car burst into flame. Thousands of vehicles were abandoned. Even though LPA wasn't to blame for these failures, the bad publicity was enough for LPA to cut back on their licensing programs.Pre–2038 LPA-licensed cars are now the target of collectors, because with the right know-how, the computerized engines can be hacked so they will work again, and parts are easy to come by.

Minaret Security Group (formerly Minaret Insurance Group)

Before 2030, the Minaret Insurance Group was a multi-national company slowly recovering from the Great Recession that began the century. After the Ring of Fire disasters, it was discovered that many of Minaret's policy holders were over-insured and that the company didn't have nearly enough assets to finance a recovery. A quick bankruptcy filing followed. Minaret dumped all of their insurance policies, which proved to be a wise move. Because in 2038, on Mad Tuesday, a massive wave of computer-failures and madware attacks devastated the Internet.

Today, Minaret enjoys a new position in the post-disaster, neo-liberal, plutocrat-friendly economic climate as a leading provider of insurance … but only to the select few who can pay their high prices. Reformed as the *Minaret Security Group,* the company now maintains their own private military contractors. Minaret employees are known to have top-of-the-line gear and very good backup support … but whether an individual is the best gun that money can buy, or just an over-paid mercenary, can vary from place to place. The Minaret managers care about profits first, which sometimes means over-charging for under-performing services.

Neos

Kaze Kaishite Wado Gōdō-Gaisha, better known as *Neos,* is a large Japanese multimedia conglomerate. From cell phones to multimedia entertainment centers, Neos has been a provider of consumer electronics for over seven decades. (Neos is currently gearing up for their 75th Diamond Anniversary celebration in 2049.)

In the 2020s, Neos used its considerable marketing power to establish the "MNX" standard for building computer devices. Short for "Matu / Neos / eXchange", these computers used off-the-shelf components for low-cost, high-volume sales. In 2038, on Mad Tuesday, every MNX computer crashed – even those with no connection to the internet – thanks to a serious programming error that left them vulnerable to the Unix Epoch bug. All of the MNX-type computers had to be replaced. Neos suffered a serious public relations backlash, first for refusing to replace computers lost on Mad Tuesday, then by responding in ways that confused both consumers and sales staff.

Neos owns several movie and television studios. The corporation successfully won the standard for three-dimensional video, called *3V*.Neos offers both hologram-projectors and flat-screens with anamorphic depth perception. Neos has patented an advanced 3V conversion algorithm that they've applied to many motion pictures, with mixed results. In 2045, Neos made headlines when tech-journalists revealed that the conglomerate had filed patents for a new brain-to-computer interface, one that didn't break the skin or require surgical installation. Current prototypes are too cumbersome and power-hungry for commercial sale, but every year they cut the size and power requirements in half.

New Vistas Media

With the rise of 3V (three-dimensional television) and augmented-reality shows (ATV), the mid–21st century had large growth markets for new experiences. The European and Asian markets were especially popular. A small Polish studio, Katowice Filmow, got its beginnings first by re-releasing old movies onto new technology, providing foreign-language dubs, etc. In 2018, the company aggressively sought out venture capital, rebranded itself *New Vistas Media*, and began producing a dozen films a year. Most of these films were "mock-busters" – rip-offs of other, more popular movies, made on the cheap. The strategy paid off, and as the 21st Century soldered on, the New Vistas executives continued to be profitable. Today, New Vistas has offices all over the world, and is a major producer of film, television, and games.

Nuraco Company

At the dawn of the 20th Century, the "Nura-Cola Beverage Company" sold a soft-drink marketed as a digestive aid. In the booming economy years following World War II, Nura Cola became a multinational brand. In 1984, after numerous acquisitions, the company renamed itself *Nuraco.* In the modern age, Nuraco is the leader in the agricultural and food business.

In the early 21st century, Nuraco capitalized on the neo-liberal policies of privatization that were popular in Latin America and Africa. Nuraco's shell companies bought exclusive water rights, then bottled and exported the water for sale. As the price of water rose, so did unrest and violence. Corruption is rampant among water-sellers, and extortion and black markets keep many people in poverty, today.

After the Mazuku Disasters, Nuraco purchased numerous construction companies, in an attempt to capitalize on what was perceived to be a construction boon. After the insurance collapse, Nuraco's contractors lacked the financing to rebuild. Through a series of sweet-heart contracts with locals, the contractors agreed to rebuild for long-term ownership of the land and its resources. These new communities featured the latest modern conveniences, such as *smart homes* with central computers, and a privatized police force. Built all along the Ring of Fire, these *"Ringtowns"* became infamous for their rich, gentrified residents and their oppressive security firms.

Today, the Nuraco Company is the world's single-largest producer of food and water, with a wealth that rivals most nations. Nuraco is a prime target of the Kallistians, an anti-corporate sect of religious zealots.

Orisha Media and OgunTech

What began as a capitalist venture in the 2000s to help produce video for the Internet, *Orisha Media* rapidly expanded to include the growing "Nollywood" long-form motion pictures being shot on digital media throughout Nigeria and the surrounding countries. At first, most movies were made by guerilla filmmakers in their own neighborhoods, but later, Orisha sponsored its own content. Orisha has famously refused to sell out to larger media companies such as Clearcast and Neos.

As the century pressed on, demand rose for higher definition, better sound quality, and three-dimensional pictures. Since most of this technology was too expensive for the casual film-maker, Orisha started marketing cameras under the umbrella company Ogun Technology, later shortened to *OgunTech.* OgunTech-brand cameras are well known for being cheap and reliable, and they are often found mounted inside the drones built by hobbyists or by small entrepreneurs… which has given rise to the slang term "ogler" for any small, cheap, surveillance robot.

Pfluger Genetics

Shortly after the discovery of DNA in the late 20th century, many companies were already finding ways to capitalize on genetic engineering. Founded in Texas in the United States, and reincorporating in Colombia, the *Pfluger Genetics* company was an early pioneer in DNA testing.

In 2022, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued a formal demand to send investigators to twenty-three research facilities all over the globe. Each facility was owned by Pfluger Genetics directly or indirectly. The UNESCO demand accused Pfluger's labs of being in violation of Article 11 of the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights, which begins: "Practices which are contrary to human dignity, such as reproductive cloning of human beings, shall not be permitted."

In short, UNESCO was accusing Pfluger Genetics of cloning humans. Pfluger executives refused to submit their labs to UN inspections. Political unrest in the US led was clearly leading up to an investigation, but Pfluger closed all their US research facilities, moving exclusively to Africa and South America.

In this modern age, Pfluger Genetics holds the patents on almost all processes of *therapeutic cloning,* the process of cloning human cells for medicine. They are most famous for their *pluripotent grafts,* custom-designed tissues based on the genetic blueprints of the patient, which they can grow at a greatly accelerated pace. Pfluger Genetics also has a variety of anti-aging medicines (*anagathics*), which can extend life by ten or twenty healthy, active years.

In countercultural circles, there is a growing consensus that Pfluger has been providing the elite with clones. The technology exists, and so does the demand, so it's hardly a stretch. Clones might be carefully planted look-alikes to fool assassins, for example, or harvested for replacement organs, or even entire bodies. (The first successful brain transplant was only six years ago, but who knows how much easier it's become?)

Pfluger Genetics remains active all over the world, but their cloning technology remains illegal in the United States. Pfluger's chief rival in genetic research is the Welvar Corporation, another company that also pursues science condemned by international sanctions.(It's hard to say if Pfluger are a rival to AllenMorrisRey, as both companies jointly hold many patents, together… and it's also hard to say where AMR ends and Welvar begins.)

Syzygy Group

Founded in North America, the *Syzygy Group* is a business-to-business partnership of a variety of energy companies. The Syzygy Group is notorious for quickly creating a new company, then using this company to exploit some natural resource in a dangerous manner (such as hydraulic fracking in the United States, or strip-mining the Canadian oil sands)… while violating standards of health, safety, and the environment. Once the operation has proven profitable, Syzygy dissolves the company, with expert litigation to avoid liability for the lingering damage.

The Syzygy Group is a common target of the *Shepherd's Greens*, an ecology-minded political movement. Shepherd agents have managed to blow the whistle on many of Syzygy's involvements, which have often resulted in costly fines or taxes.

Telementar

Grupo de los Comunicaciones Aumentada S.A. de C.V., better known as *Telementar*, is both the single-largest Internet services provider and the largest media-content provider in Latin America. From disposable cell phones to sophisticated augmented reality systems, from radio stations to Internet-content providers. Telementar had numerous gains after the Ring of Fire disasters, first by building new wireless networks, then by buying up broadcast systems being sold off by neoliberal governments.

Their 24-hour news site, *Noticias Telementar (NTM),* was famous for still being operational for the first few hours Mad Tuesday, with intermittent down-times due to the heavy volume of traffic from around the world. Around the start of the 2040s, NTM's broadcasting content became more anti-Chinese, often condemning Chinese-owned businesses or the policies of the Chinese government. By extension, NTM's coverage isn't very favorable to governments of the United States or Brazil, both perceived allies of China.

Transverse Micro-Logic (TML)

Headquartered in Japan, Transverse Micro-Logic (TML) was a computer company with many chip designs, very much a small player in the early 21st century. TML's core patents were for the *n-bit addressing processor*. Using a unique design of field-programmable gate arrays, TML's processors can use an arbitrary number of set bits, such as 32, 64, or 128, and pipeline complex algorithms on the fly for on-chip parallelism. TML computers were harder to program, and more expensive, and the company was on the verge of bankruptcy … until Mad Tuesday. TML chip-sets were too niche, and their software too complex, for any madware to bother targeting them, so TML-backed databases and infrastructure survived the catastrophe still functioning. With their public reputation bolstered by their success, TML became the new industry leader in industrial and commercial chipsets.

TML computers and phones use operating software marketed under the "Matu" brand name. Matu-OS is the most popular proprietary operating system in the world. Detractors of Matu accuse TML of extorting license fees out of both their customers and developers for Matu software.

The Matu Augmented Reality system, "Matu-AR", has existed in many versions. All of the commercially available versions use the patents of Ash Company, though the software isn't cross-compatible. Matu systems are famously cross-compatible and backward compatible with each other, and with their competitors', through polymorphic chipsets.

United Utilities Services Group (UUSG) and United PMC

After the Mazuku disasters, much of the United States' infrastructure of water and power was destroyed. In the rush to restore services, *United Utilities Services Group (UUSG)* bought up many of the ruined gas, electric, and water services. Concentrating on profits, United Utilities squeezed people for as much money as they could get, with their extortionist prices. Today, United USG has a monopoly on water and power prices in much of the United States.

UUSG has their own private military contract company – United Security – and their quality varies wildly. Always looking for a profit, United PMC is sometimes active in the Western Hemisphere. In the 2030s, United became notorious for using strong-arm tactics to suppress riots in the United States and Mexico with "asymmetrical force" – that is, with tear gas, with plastic bullets, and with sonic squawkers. A federal bill to break up the UUSG's monopoly, dubbed the "Stand United" bill by media sources, disappeared in 2038, after Mad Tuesday became a primary concern.

Welvar Corporation

Originally a division of the big-pharma giant AllenMorrisRey, *Welvar Corporation* is the top seller of genetically-modified (Host) seeds and fertilizers to African nations, and a major seller to Europe and Asia, with smaller market interest all over the world.

Shortly after their founding in 2040, Welvar Corporation came under censure by the United Nations for their research into genetically-modified organisms, sometimes called *"genies"*. Intelligence reports surfaced, with evidence that in remote regions of Asia and Africa, Welvar-owned compounds were raising humanoid creatures. UNESCO agents assert that Welvar is working on "genie slaves" as a labor pool… or possibly even as soldiers for private military companies. Welvar attorneys deny all such assertions.

Xianxingzhe Co. Ltd

Based in Beijing, China, the Xianxingzhe Company is the single largest maker of bionics, prosthetics, and robotics in the world. For years, Xianxingzhe's products have suffered from lack of quality control. One product will appear on the market, it will be so successful that it bolsters brand loyalty… and then second-generation models will be cheaply-made, poor quality imitations. Xianxingzhe creates or buys out many other companies, so it's not always obvious which brands are their own works.

Xo Services

The 21st Century saw a rise in the use of private military corporations (PMC).Governments liked to use mercenaries because their deaths didn't show up on official casualty lists, which could be politically embarrassing. Corporations didn't want to be accused of trafficking in illegal arms, and by hiring a third party, an organization could blame any human-rights violations on the PMC directly. Headquartered in South Africa, the Transvaal Worldwide Security Company became very popular. With the growing unrest in the United States and Asia due to the Ring of Fire disasters, many companies bolstered their security by hiring Transvaal's mercenaries. In 2030, Transvaal re-incorporated as Xo Services, a multi-national security company.

The shortage of trained medical personnel, and the rise in the quality of bionic technology, prompted Xo Services to incentivize "augmentations" among its personnel. In 2040, Xo Services paid large bonuses to employees who had "unique qualities", and the return on investment of bionic parts was too good for many mercenaries to ignore. Many Xo mercenaries have had elective implants and prosthetics. Some of these mercenaries were bad with money for one reason or the other, and thus they have found themselves in great debt to their Xo patron. "Xoborgs" are notorious for being made of experimental, untried technology … and for being desperate for money to pay it all off.

Zafiro Aerospace and Abeja Arms

Recognized as the world leader in aerospace manufacturing, the Mexico-based *Zafiro Company S.A.*, makes some of the best personal aircraft available. When Zafiro started making automated drones in the 2020s, the United States threatened sanctions. However, the US was the #1 consumer of Zafiro products by the early 2030s.

In 2042, Zafiro boldly acquired a variety of rocketry companies. They are expected to have a thriving space program by 2060.Also in 2042, several shareholders of Zafiro consolidated three failing arms manufacturers into Productos Abeja Asesina S.A. de C.V., more popularly known as *Abeja Arms*. Zafiro stock-holders used their connections to give Abeja Arms several sweet-heart deals, granting them access to rocketry patents. Abeja Arms is now the leading manufacturer of microjet weapons. Pundits in the US accuse Zafiro (and by extension, Mexico) of "equipping gangs with death rockets."

On Mad Tuesday in 2038, errors in antiquated flight-control systems resulted in a series of deadly plane crashes at Querétaro International Airport. Zafiro Aerospace organized a relief effort, donating billions of pesos and thousands of man-hours to help victims and survivors.

Religious Organizations

The shake-ups of the 21st century saw a rise in religious interests, especially in the United States. Details of all the world's religions are not possible here, due to space consideration. Faiths such as Bahá'í, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Mormonism, Sikhism, Daoism, and others continue to flourish and to enlighten.

Antimammonite Church (Needles) and Kallistians

During the great Austerity, a pro-Christian movement that is anti-capitalist, pro-socialist sprang up. The *Antimammonites* claim that religion has become too much of a tool for the rich to oppress the poor (or that it always was).The seeds of Antimammonism started with the writings of Dr. Shara Merrick and Reverend Benedict Ledbetter. The actual name "Antimammonite" didn't appear until 2028, when the book *I of the Needled* by Eloisa Crum was published. Previously a macro-economist, Dr. Crum became a staunch socialist, and she predicted the insurance collapse of the 2030s.

The needle iconography comes from the synoptic gospels, such as "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" [Matthew 19:24]. "Needles" became a slang term for Antimammonites specifically, or for any anti-capitalist in general. Quick to jump on the bandwagon, Needles often wear needles in their clothing or in body piercing. Some Needles will pin a heart to their sleeve, to show their sincerity.

Antimammonites are not to be confused with Mennonites. While the two religions are both active towards social justice issues, and both faiths are conscientious objectors, Antimammonites are much more lax in their lifestyle restrictions.

The non-government organization *Kallistia* has successfully been recognized by the EU as an Antimammonite Church … but the US and many multi-national corporations claim that the Kallistians are a terrorist network. Organized by a popular thread on a social media formed before Mad Tuesday, the Kallistians advocate all kinds of resistance against oligarchy, including monkey-wrenching, fraud, eco-terrorism, and outright violence. The Kallistians claim that any self-proclaimed Antimammonite should realize that there will be no compromise. Centrist Antimammonites wish they wouldn't get lumped in with the Kallistians.

The New Guanyin Sect

The New Guanyin Sect is a recent branch of Buddhism which holds that there is no ethical way to participate in the modern economy. Their position is simple: the economy of the middle 21st century is built on human suffering. Labor is extracted as much through threat of violence as the promise of reward, wealth is concentrated in to the hands of an elite few. That wealth, in turn, is not wielded to promote human flourishing but to build stronger engines of oppression: riot-control drones, less-lethal weaponry, mercenary armies, and professional strikebreakers.

Instead, the New Guanyin and their disciples opt out of the economy entirely. Their beggar-monasteries promote subsistence through guerilla gardening, dumpster diving, squatting, communes, and theft. Just as some branches of Buddhism permit monks to eat meat *so long as that meat was not slaughtered for them specifically*, the New Guanyin permits its adherents to claim the fruits of the modern economy *so long as they were not purchased*.

The New Guanyin are most famous, and most vilified, for their syncretic blend of parkour and traditional Chinese kung fu. Their freegan subsistence practices and political activism put them and their followers at odds with civil authorities, and they seek to train all of their adherents in how to escape capture and defend themselves from arrest.

Most of the New Guanyin's adherents are not initiated in to the Buddhist clergy. Indeed, most of their adherents are adherents in name only, offering lip service to the faith from within the corporate economy. However, even these lay brothers may offer alms to a monk in need. The New Guanyin are active throughout East and Southeast Asia and the North American coastal regions.

The Church of Nephelontououranouia (Nephelites)

In the early 21st Century, an author writing under the name "Mark James Anderson" published a series of books about *pre-millenialdispensationalism*, a religious philosophy inspired by The Book of Revelations. The best-selling Anderson book is *Sword of Fire*, which details a core belief translated from "suppressed deuterocanonical texts", which the author calls "Nephelontououranouia" … usually shortened to *Nephelon*. (Essays attributed to Anderson claim numerous sources from all throughout history… some of which have never been authenticated). The actual Mark James Anderson has never been conclusively identified.

In *Sword of Fire*, Anderson claims that the "end times" weren't just coming. The "Rapture" had *already happened*, and everyone who is still "on Earth" is living under the Anti-Christ. Today, the Nephelites have various cells in the Americas.

In devastated portions of the United States, where electricity and water services are very rare, militias of armed Nephelites have set themselves up as their own government. Some Nephelites are criminal thugs, exploiting a good gig while they have it. A frightening number of Nephelites are religious zealots who genuinely believe they are living in the End Times as warriors against "the AntiChrists." On December 27, 2045, the True Order of the Nephilim church took responsibility for a series of explosions in Washington DC, which successfully destroyed the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund.

Q-Source, QUBE, and the Singularitians

Each Abrahamic faith maintains a list of books that are considered *canon* for their Bible and their creed. This list of accepted books varies from faith to faith. With the rise of cryptography and lexigraphical analysis in the 21st century, some theologians debated that there may be a common source not just for the Bible, but of all languages. The Quellentziffert Source decoders, or *Q-Sourcers*, believe that there is an ur-language, or "Babel Code", that influences all human thought.

Some programmers will list "Q" as their faith. The Q-Source religion is recognized by the U.S.A., the European Union, and all private military contractors.

A division of the Q-Source faith, the *Loagaethans* are a for-profit enterprise who sell the popular *QUBE* series self-help books, music, and meditation courses. Promising to "unlock the source of power within", the Loagaethens promise that QUBE tap into "the divine spirit within all of us" to "conquer all of eternity and existence". The QUBE program is structured in levels, with more and more secrets "unlocked" as the student progresses.

Many dismiss QUBE as a scam. Some journalists have posted what they claim to be the internal documents of QUBE, which includes such outrageous claims as space aliens programming a "world simulator". QUBE lawyers are known for always being quick to sue and for never having a sense of humor.

Another sect of Q-Source are the *Singularitarians*, who preach that soon all minds will interface into a common "communication protocol" and join together for the next step in human evolution. The Singularitians made international headlines in 2045, when Reverend Alita Tapp of the Church of the Seventh Generation argued for the recognition of artificial intelligence as a "free-thinking, sentient being deserving of the same rights as any human". Reverend Tapp offered the testimony of "Jones", a military drone that Tapp and others claimed had become "self-aware". After a few months, both Jones and Tapp disappeared from the public eye, and both are presumed missing.

Thessalonians ("253" or "Glens")

The second half of the 20th century saw the rise in *eschatology*, the philosophy of the end times. First, the Atomic Age had the all-too-real possibility of nuclear weapons wiping out all life on Earth. Next, growing awareness of human impact on the environment brought fears of ecological collapse. Just before the turn of the century, many people lived in superstitious fear that the "Year 2000" would mean divine intervention to end the world. By the dawn of the 21st century, "evangelical" had become synonymous with a world-view that was preaching against globalist politics, against green conservationism, and for the impending end of the world.

With the rise of Internet communities, a growing number of Christians were unhappy with how their faith was being exploited for political purposes … especially for isolationism, for xenophobia, or sometimes for reactionary beliefs like racism or sexism. Sometime in the 2010s, a meme for "2:Thess:3" started, inspired by the King James Bible verse, urging the faithful to continue to live their lives in anticipation of the future. The *Thessalonians* movement started in the noösphere of the Internet, with many evangelists urging that "not all evangelicals" were young-earth creationists, xenophobic racists, or wasteful consumers hoping for the Rapture.

Thessalonians made the public awareness in 2041. Thousands had gathered to a shanty-town in Glen Canyon, Arizona, illegally trespassing on government land. What started as volunteer disaster-relief had become a functional commune. Under the guidance of Thessalonian elders, many of whom were skilled makers, the commune had working electricity (from wind and solar power), functional sanitation (thanks to mini-purification plants), and even working Internet services (from improvised satellite dishes).

Unfortunately, trespassing was still trespassing, and after multiple requests from the US Government to disperse, the Glen Canyon commune had shown no signs of shutting down any time soon. What happened next is still disputed, but it's clear that the Arizona National Guard was called in, that there was armed conflict between the military and the commune members, and that the commune is no more. Years later, the word "glen" can mean either a self-sufficient, socially-conscious, spiritual person … or a dirty, heretic, communist hippie.

Many Thessalonians are urban-explorers, and quite a few are squatters, living off the grid. The graffiti tag "253" is sometime used as a signpost for their paths and their hangouts.

Triclavian Church of America

In the late 18th Century, the United States of America had just gained its independence from Britain. As a rejection of the European Age of Enlightenment, many Protestant reformers sought to correct the evils of the world. This *Great Awakening* brought with it many new denominations. The Triclavian Church of America was one of these many pre-millennial faiths. After Mad Tuesday and the rise of *urban riots*, the Triclavian Church became much more politically active in the United States.

Their great triumph in this century is the election of Reverend Young Bradshaw, the only third-party candidate to be elected to the US Presidency, on a platform of reduced birth control, increased farm subsidies, and reinstated protective tariffs - "restoring America's greatness and bounty". President Bradshaw has come under scrutiny for muddying the separation of church and state, and has been accused of using the power of the US Executive Branch to unconstitutionally promote the Triclavian faith.

Unseemly media attention is occasionally directed toward the secret induction rites for the inner-innermost circle of the Triclavian Church's elite. They say you're only eligible if you build, out of your own pocket, a church that achieves 72,000 worshippers in a single Sunday mass - pre-millenial Superbowl numbers. What you get for that kind of investment is a well-kept secret, but rumors of the Cult of the 13 Blessings abound.

Non-Government Organizations

Thanks to the Internet, communities know no borders. These organizations know no borders, and they have no ties to a church or state.

DEADBEEF

One important cornerstone of the early Internet was net neutrality, the concept that all bits of information circulated in the global computer network would be treated the same. It didn't matter if those bits were someone's personal text message, or the streaming path of a movie, or some torrent of illegal pornography, or specs from some government installation. All packets were neutral. In the 21st century, net neutrality was often challenged. Service providers demanded fees from content-sources such as music sites and video sites. Governments wanted to block access to certain content, and to spy on other content. Networks became "walled gardens", where only those who were willing to pay extra could enjoy high-speeds and privacy. Everyone else could go jump.

Push the Internet, and the Internet pushes back. An underground of hackers, crackers, and other programmers developed specifically to get around the safe-guards and firewalls of these new obstacles. Since most networks were made on the cheap, with their software poorly-implemented, poorly-coded, and rarely updated, it wasn't too long before a community of cognoscenti emerged. These people knew how to get computers to do things that the authorities didn't want them to do. The community was nicknamed "DEADBEEF", from the hexadecimal expression "0xDEADBEEF", a nonsense pattern that can be found in the empty memory sections of old computers

Some of the best hackers in the world belong to the DEADBEEF community. DEADBEEF members are found all over the world. Most of them are in urban areas with high-speed Internet connections. A few of them are in remote places of the world, where they are administrations of servers that host pirated content.

Advocates of free speech, DEADBEEF will administrate illegal networks in oppressive countries. They will sometimes be politically active, and they will help with flash-protests, riots, or other civil disobedience.

The 404 Crew

This growing concern of a lack of privacy led some people to opt out. Living off the digital grid is not easy. You can't use credit cards or other banking systems, since shopping profiles are monitored. You can't use social media, such as texting or emails, for any period before a profile is built up around you.

Many modern amenities, such as water or power, can't be bought on a cash-only basis. These resources have to be done without, or they have to be stolen. In the 20th Century, rumors abound of large groups of people living underground, in the numerous abandoned tunnels. The existence of these mole people was highly disputed and very controversial.

The *404 Crew* refers to a loose community of people who specifically have no Internet presence. These people live "off the grid". By necessity, many are career criminals, having to steal to survive. Many 404s find work as day-laborers, being paid off the books for various odd jobs. A few might be outcasts, felons, or other persons of interest.

Some 404s are *Anarcho-Primitivists*. With a slogan of "specialization is for insects," the Anarcho-Primitivists reject the idea of social classes. They believe that all people should be equal, and that everyone should learn the same skills. Information technology is seen, not as a way of bringing people together, but of keeping them apart in separate "echo chambers". Inspired by people like Muir and Thoreau, Primitivists prefer simple living, either solitary or on communes, apart from the civilization they abhor.

Being anti-government, The 404 Crew are friends to anyone escaping debt. Private military contractors seeking escaped convicts or bond-jumpers can be extremely unfriendly to the 404.

The Intense (#NXS)

In the late 20th century, the United States government began its "war on drugs", a law-enforcement initiative to crack down on illegal drug trafficking. Many maps identified the "high-intensity drug trafficking areas" to focus efforts to eliminate the drug trade. The 21st century, with its Great Austerity forcing many people to a life of crime, and with its Ring of Fire disasters leaving many people destitute and desperate, pushed many communities into sheer lawlessness. The United States federal government used the phrase *high intensity areas* to describe areas of great need. In 2047, some counties are still effectively under martial law.

The Intense are a new breed of criminals – arrogant, proud, and violent. Some Intense are gang tied to local neighborhoods, but most people associate the Intense with roving motorcycle gangs. The Intense have their own sub-culture, such as the Fifteens (from Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi), the Ones (from California's Pacific Coast Highway), and the Seventy-Fives (from Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida).

In the past, criminals were careful to hide their activities. Not so with the Intense, who often brag about their activities on social media. The Intense post photos of their illegal weapons, they post messages bragging about how they will kill their rivals, and they record videos of their activities.

While often labeled as "organized crime", Intense gangs are far more fluid, volatile, and amorphous. Intense gangs operate as small groups, motivated by personal friendships or family ties, and united in their hate for police and for private-security contractors.

Intense music, with samples from riot-control squawk boxes and motorcycle engines, is very popular on the pop charts and in the club scenes. The hash-tag #NXS became a common slang term for Intense gang-activity after the debut of a pop-song of the same name.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

After World War II, the *International Monetary Fund* was created to help nations pay for the reconstruction of resources lost in the war. In this world after the long austerity, the Ring of Fire disasters, the insurance crisis, and Mad Tuesday, many nations are strapped for cash to even keep their basic services running, and they are running on deficit loans from the IMF. The financial aid from IMF comes with strings attached, often asking for government cutbacks and tax cuts for corporations. The IMF has been criticized for having a neo-liberal, pro-corporate agenda.

In the mid–21st century, anti-globalists want to reduce IMF involvement, or to abolish it all together. On December 27, 2045 – the 100th anniversary of the International Monetary Fund – an extremist group called the True Order of the Nephilim destroyed the IMF headquarters in Washington D.C., in the United States. In the last two years, the IMF have pointedly *not* been invited back.

Intelligence Rights Movement (Cellarians)

In 1863, a newspaper in New Zealand published a letter captioned "Darwin Among the Machines", signed by "Cellarius". The letter compared human evolution to machine evolution, with the possible result that humans might one day be superceded by machines. (Cellarius was originally the pen name of Samuel Butler, who wrote other books on the same subject, such as *Erewhon*, a novel where people avoid machines for fear that they might evolve.)

Mad Tuesday revealed the existence of extremely sophisticated polymorphic virus software, sometimes generically called *madware*. Greater investigation into computing technology turned up evidence of robots, computers, and programs of extremely-high intelligence levels. Since robots are often used for monotonous labor without compensation, it was only natural that people might question what it means to be "human."

Self-proclaimed members of the Intelligence Rights Movement assert that anything which can be proved to be able to think should have the same inalienable rights as any human. Supporters of this political movement have been nicknamed *Cellarians*, after the inventor of an early test for thinking intelligence. Cellarians are derisively referred to as "sophontic justice warriors."

The exact line of *sophontics*, or "self-awareness", still remains a debated point. Does a computer claim that it is a person because it was programmed to claim that it is a person? Does a computer have something intangible like a soul? At present, computer programs are still property, a good or a service to be bought and sold, and they are not considered any sort of "human being".

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Cellarians take the political motivation that thinking machines are a natural evolution, and thus deserve the rights of natural-born citizens. Cellarians also include artificial-intelligences who insist that they are people, not property. However, in 2047, artificial intelligences are still not recognized by any government or organization.

Most Cellarians prefer to distinguish themselves from the *Singularitarians*, the religious movement in favor of migrating human consciousness to computers.

Shepherd's Greens

Throughout the 2010s and 2020s, a variety of protesters opposed the mining of the Canadian oil sands. This region of Alberta was rich in a viscous form of petroleum. Growing demand for oil had made the oil sands an exploitable resource. However, the practice of extracting the oil created large toxic lakes, which the protestors saw as unsustainable, dangerous pollution.

Things came to a head in 2022, when a flash-mob of protesters at the Syzygy plant clashed with Canadian police. During the altercation, protest leader Eric Shepherd somehow fell into one of the trailing lakes. Taken to the hospital, he died a few days later. Various photos and video – some faked, some real, and some of dubious authenticity – flooded the Internet. Shepherd became a martyr for the green political movement.

Various "pro-green" organizations have named themselves with a variation of the word "Shepherd" in the title, such as "Shepherd Memorial", "Shepherd's Green", "Shepherd Foundation", etc. In 2047, it's common for someone who is extremely active in green politics to be called a *"shepherd"*, *"herder"*, *"greensheep"*, or "*greep*", whether they are part of the Shepherd's movement or not.

Skinners

The 20th Century saw a growing interest in *conservation*, protecting the Earth's natural resources from extinction or destruction. This movement later expanded into *environmentalism*, a call for sustainable management of the world's resources. Increase in the human population meant increased production; lack of pollution controls meant more environmental damage.

The Skinners got their nickname from a quote by Doctor Mariah Duckett-Sutherland, an earth-scientist who was a popular guest commentator on the ClearCast News channel. A viral-video clip captured the doctor saying, "the human populace can't see when they're being conditioned inside their own little Skinner boxes." (This quote references the operant-conditioning chamber used to perform psychological experiments on animals.) This quote was later auto-tuned and sampled in the song "(Fish Can't See The) Dirty Water" by a group calling itself Nature Justice Warriors. As with many bits of humor on the Internet, it's still not clear whether this song was intended to be humorous or not… but it wasn't long before some eco-terrorists were calling themselves "*Skinners*".

In 2047, there is a concerted network of anonymous eco-terrorists who target people and organizations that are perceived as "unfriendly to the environment." A global network of Skinners work together to provide transport, money, resources, and intel to their fellows.

There are a series of Skinner Manifestos that argue in favor of "Culling" – the theory being that if the most affluent 10% of the people on earth cause 90% of the pollution … then simply killing that 10% will solve the problem. The United States government takes this threat very seriously.

The United Nations, UNESCO, and WHO

The 20th Century experienced two *World Wars*, international conflicts involving many nations. Recognizing a need for global diplomacy, a great number of the post-war nations signed the charter of the *United Nations (UN)*.This organization would serve to promote international co-operation.

A few years later, a committee of the UN created the *United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*, whose purpose is to contribute to peace and security by promoting international co-operation through education, science, and culture. Today, UNESCO remains committed to eradicating hunger, to promoting gender equality, to combat worldwide disease, and to ensure environmental sustainability.

The United Nations is an *extra-territorial* organization, considered not to belong to any one country. In theory, this "world neutrality" exempts the UN from any one nation's political agenda. In practice, membership in the UN is strictly voluntary, and many UN resolutions are routinely ignored. The UN can only urge other nations to endorse its policies, but politics routinely take the day. In particular, the UN has proven almost wholly ineffective at reducing pollution, carbon-emissions, and other environmental issues.

In the United States of America, some anti-globalism political groups perceive the UN as a threat, the first step towards a "One-World Government".

In the 21st century, UNESCO is struggling to identify the basic nature of "what is human". Do genetically engineered life-forms count? Artificial Intelligences? UNESCO's current position is complete opposition to reproductive cloning, but that policy doesn't prevent such things from happening. Today, UNESCO members are exerting considerable political pressure on all nations to sanction Welvar Corporation, a company that is testing the viability of genetically-engineered non-humans as a labor resource.

A specialized agency of the United Nations, the World Health Organization (WHO) was created in the mid–20th century to promote public health across the globe. WHO played a pivotal role in the eradication of the smallpox disease. A recurring myth that "vaccinations cause autism" has led to organized protests against WHO involvement. In 2045, WHO released a report worried about the spread of super-bugs, the multi-drug resistant infections that have been evolving around the world. While WHO maintains that an outbreak of "pandemic plague" could happen at any time, most other nations are dismissing the fears as alarmism that is all too typical of WHO.

Worldwide Coalition of Journalists

Before 2038, many trade unions for journalists existed all over the world, but it was difficult being a member of the press. Post a story to a news site, and dozens of other sites might post the story too, without any credit. Consolidation of media outlets meant that many cities had only one or two sources for news … and if that source was owned by a corporation, then stories of profiteering and human-rights violations might get swept aside in favor of conservative establishmentarianism.

When Mad Tuesday hit, many journalists found themselves without a system of communication to use for their reporting. In the chaos that followed, the explosion of madware attacks revealed a staggering level of cooperation between governments and media outlets for controlling the flow of information. Many journalists felt that they couldn't depend on their news organizations to help them, in case they were detained, arrested, or worse.

In September of 2038, the Willing Coalition of Journalists was formed. (In 2039, they changed their name to the *Worldwide Coalition of Journalists.*)Members of this organization work together to assist journalists against persecution and censorship. The Coalition provides moral support, and sometimes provides financial aid.

The Coalition has been criticized for lax membership criteria – if you have written at least one web-log entry, and if your dues are paid up, then you can be a member of the Coalition. In practice, there's a lot of politics within the organization, and while there's a lot of moral support, there's not enough money or volunteers to help everyone who needs it. Nevertheless, the Coalition can be a valuable ally to a reporter in a foreign nation with no backup.

Yakuza

With their origins as far back as the dawn of the 17th century, the criminal syndicates called *Yakuza* (ヤクザ) have become the largest organized crime organization in the world. Their members prefer to call themselves "chivalrous organizations". The Japanese government prefers the term *boryokudan* ("violence group"), and they encourage the media to this term. The Yakuza are active in their local communities, in politics, and in media. They own many local businesses and some corporate stock.

Yakuza's primary income is from extortion – forcing people to pay money for protection. Yakuza are notorious for human trafficking, either for labor or for sex. (After North Korea collapsed in 2039, the Yakuza made a fortune in smuggling North Korean refugees to slave markets worldwide.) Yakuza are also expert smugglers, trading in weapons and other contraband.

Although Yakuza members are traditionally Japanese, their influence stretches all over the Pacific Rim and beyond. In the wake of the Ring of Fire disasters, many Yakuza groups worked quickly to establish influence on the Pacific Coasts of the Americas. In the wake of Mad Tuesday, the Yakuza set up a sophisticated network of messengers that persists off the grid, to this day. The Yakuza have enjoyed increased popularity among people who have grown dissatisfied with their broke governments and their indifferent corporations. For example, Yakuza sent hundreds of trucks of food and supplies to victims of the the Tōhoku earthquake in 2011 and the Ring of Fire earthquakes in the 2030s.

"Beware of bugs in the above code; I have only proved it correct, not tried it."
– Donald Ervin Knuth, in a letter to Peter van Emde Boas

Appendix A: Variant Rules

Not everyone plays the same way. The Basic Rules represent most of what you'll do. The Spot Rules are for the rare occasions when such things come up.

This section offers you and your fellow players *Variant Rules*. If you use these rules, they will change the fundamentals of how the game works. Making characters will become more complex. Combat will have more options and more variables. Campaigning will work differently. There's a reason these Variant Rules aren't standard. Many of them make the game more complicated than most players would like, just to add one or two minor details. These complications make the game slower to play, which many players don't enjoy. Some Variant Rules make the game radically more deadly, or much easier. Like all of these rules, use these variants only if you think they will make the game more fun.

Variant rules for Characters

The standard rules for making and developing characters are designed to be simple. Choose your attributes, choose some talents, and off you go. This section presents some other options that some Players may prefer, but which increase the complexity of the game. Use them with caution.

Different Power Levels

The starting set-up for *Bleeding Edge* assumes a character who has some life experience, but who is still early in their career.

With the *power levels* variant, you can start your character with more (or less) ability. These rules assume you will use the Snowflake build option for all your characters.

A Player who joins a group that already has experienced characters may be out-matched by their new peers. If all the Players and the Host agree, a new Player-Character may begin the game at a power level higher than Default.

Power Level	Attribute points	Starting Talents	Effective XP Bonus
Low	3	Job, 3 Skill, 2 Any	–30
Default	4	Archetype, Job, 3 Skill, 3 Any	Zero
High	5	Archetype, Job, 4 Skill, 4 Any	+30
Mega	7	Archetype, Job, 4 Skill, 5 Any	+60
Giga	8	Archetype, Job, 5 Skill, 8 Any	+120
Tera	15	Archetype, Job, 6 Skill, 12 Any	+240

Variant power levels are not recommended for all games. There's a big difference between someone who started at the default power level and then earned 60 experience through play… and someone who just started at the Mega power level.

Point Buy

In the present rules, each character starts with pre-allocated talents and attributes. This system ensures that every character is well-rounded. With the *point-buy* variant rule, characters have no limits on what they can be.

First, every character starts with –1 Str, –1 Dex, –1 Con, –1 Int, –1 Wis, and –1 Cha. No one starts with any talents.

Then, players get 180 XP to buy whatever they want. As usual, 10 XP buys either +1 attribute or one talent, so this comes out to 18 purchases.

(By the way, every Player-Character should buy the *Archetype* talent. It's +2 to one attribute and is clearly the best buy for your points.)

The point-buy system allows for ultimate flexibility when making characters. It also allows Players to build characters who make no sense, but who are optimized for only one thing, such as the character with Dex +17 and nothing else. Don't use a point-buy system unless all Players agree to use it, and don't say we didn't warn you.

Levels

By default, *Bleeding Edge* is a point-based game. Players earn experience and then buy talents or attributes to upgrade their characters.

Instead, all Players could agree to run a *level-based game*. In this version, players earn XP (experience) for dealing with *milestones*.

In this system, each Player-Character starts with zero experience (XP). After each adventure, the players total up the experience that they've earned. If they earn equal to the next level, they immediately gain the new bonus.

Level	Total XP	Effect
1	0	Starting character
2	1,000	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent
3	2,000	+1 to any attribute; swap 1 talent
4	3,000	Swap up to 3 talents or attributes
5	4,000	+1 to your *lowest* attribute
6	6,500	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent
7	10,000	+1 to any attribute; swap 1 talent
8	13,500	Swap up to 3 talents or attributes
9	20,000	+1 to your *lowest* attribute
10	33,500	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent
11	46,500	+1 to any attribute; swap 1 talent
12	66,500	Swap up to 3 talents or attributes
13	100,000	+1 to your *lowest* attribute
14	133,000	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent
15	233,000	+1 to any attribute; swap 1 talent
16	333,000	Swap up to 3 talents or attributes
17	500,000	+1 to your *lowest* attribute
18	733,000	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent
19	1,150,000	+1 to any attribute; swap 1 talent
20	1,650,000	Swap up to 3 talents or attributes
21	2,350,000	+1 to your *lowest* attribute
22	3,650,000	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent
23	5,650,000	+1 to any attribute; swap 1 talent
24	8,650,000	Swap up to 3 talents or attributes
25	12,650,000	+1 to your *lowest* attribute
26	18,650,000	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent
27	28,000,000	+1 to any attribute; swap 1 talent
28	42,000,000	Swap up to 3 talents or attributes
29	62,000,000	+1 to your *lowest* attribute
30	93,350,000	Gain 1 talent; swap 1 talent

Gain 1 talent means you can add an entirely new talent. This can be a basic talent, or one that you already meet the requirements for.

Swap 1 talent means that you can swap out one talent for a different one, if you want to.

+1 to any attribute means that you can pick any one attribute and increase it by 1.

+1 to your lowest attribute means that you add 1 to your lowest attribute. If two or more of your attributes are tied for lowest, you can pick which one to raise.

Swap up to 3 talents or attributes means that you could choose to change 3, 2, 1, or none of you talents for different ones. (The order you swap out your talents might matter, if they have requirements.) Instead of a talent-swap, you may do an *attribute-swap* – that is, lower one of your attributes by 1 to raise another by 1. (You can't drop an attribute below –1 this way.)

The *party tier* is the average level of the entire party. (That is, add up all levels, then divide by the number of players, and round up.) For example, if everyone is Level 2, then the party tier is level two. If the party has a Level 3, two level 5s, and one Level 8, then the party tier is (3+5+5+8)÷4 = 5.25, which rounds up to Tier 6.

Players earn experience points for accomplishing story awards and for meeting milestones.

Story Awards can be earned by:

- Using a skill to defuse a situation.
- Quick thinking or good role-play to advance the plot.
- Attending the de-briefing.
- Living up to your motto for the whole session.

Milestone Awards can be earned by:

- Defeating a combatant of the same level.
- Accomplishing a goal.

Tier	Story Award	Milestone Award
1	200	500
2	400	1,000
3	500	1,300
4	800	2,000
5	1,300	3,300
6	2,000	5,000
7	2,500	6,700
8	4,000	10,000
9	6,500	16,700
10	9,500	23,300
11	13,500	33,300
12	20,000	50,000
13	27,000	66,700
14	47,000	116,700
15	67,000	166,700

Tier	Story Award	Milestone Award
16	100,000	250,000
17	145,000	366,700
18	225,000	566,700
19	335,000	833,300
20	465,000	1,166,700
21	735,000	1,833,300
22	1,130,000	2,833,300
23	1,730,000	4,333,300
24	2,530,000	6,333,300
25	3,730,000	9,333,300
26	5,600,000	14,000,000
27	8,400,000	21,000,000
28	12,400,000	31,000,000
29	18,700,000	46,666,700
30	28,000,000	70,000,000

The Host could have some milestones at one tier, while others could be at a different tier. For example, the warehouse could be guarded by eight Level–11 mercenaries (which would be eight Tier–11 milestones), while the penthouse could have a Level–15 cyborg in it.

If multiple characters worked on an award, then divide up the award among the characters. For example, if four Player-Characters defeated the Level–15 cyborg together, then they each get ¼ of the Level–15 milestone award, which is 166,700÷4 = 41,675 XP.

A level-based game has the advantage that characters grow rapidly in power at the beginning, but then they plateau later on. Also, because the XP rewards get gradually larger, new characters will level up much faster, until they are peers with the older, experienced characters.

Level-based gaming requires keeping track of large experience-point totals, and it's more complex than the typical point-based system. You should only use level-based characters if all of your Players prefer this complexity.

Variant Talents

These talents aren't suited for most games, but we present them here, in case your game wants to have *very* unusual characters. These talents can greatly expand the capabilities of Players … which can overwhelm a novice Host. Use these talents only if you think they will enhance your game.

Computer Program

(Size, Unique, Variant)

You are a sentient computer program who exists only in computer networks. Your character is not tied down to any one body.

Subtract 2 from your Dexterity and subtract 2 from your Intelligence.

To exist, you must exert a presence inside a computer, which uses up 1 Software slot. Friendly computers will gladly give you one slot, but you will have to convince other computers to help you.

You have a singular method of interfacing with other computers to increase their processing power. For each additional slot in a computer that you use up, you gain +1 Dexterity and +1 Intelligence. (For example, if you use up three software slots total, that's two additional slots for +2 to your Dexterity and +2 to your Intelligence.)

Your character cannot interact with the physical world directly. Instead, your character must use Control actions to order other robots to do things for you. When ordering other robots around, add your own attributes to theirs. For example, if you have Strength –1, Dexterity +1, Constitution 0, and you control a Strength +4, Dexterity –2, Constitution +8 robot… the robot now has the attributes of Strength +3, Dexterity –1, Constitution +8.

You cannot be killed by conventional means. As long as there is at least one computer in the world that is friendly to you, you can be rebuilt.

① Unique: You may have only one "Size" talent.

You may not have any other talent with the "Size" descriptor.

⃠ You may not have any "1/heal" talents.

If you are a Computer Program, you can't have "1/heal" talents. You don't have any organs to heal!

Fate

(Major, Multiple, Plot, Variant)

In the standard *Bleeding Edge* rules, life is cheap and death is free. While player characters may be a cut above the usual suspects, anyone can still be killed in a single hit, done in by one bad roll. The *realism* that anyone could die at any moment might not be appropriate for all campaigns.

If you have this talent, your destiny is written in larger letters. This talent doesn't do anything… until something happens that would end your life. Did you fall off a building? Did you get shot by a fatal bullet? Did your plane crash?

The Fate talent saves you from certain death by replacing the death with an incapacitating but much less final fate. Maybe you fell into a garbage truck full of packing Styrofoam. Perhaps that bullet went clean through without hitting any vital organs. Or by some miracle, you survived the crash, bloody and bruised.

Once you have used the Fate talent, you must immediately re-train it. You gain 5 XP, as usual, but the Fate talent is gone forever.

Multiple: You may have the Fate talent multiple times.

Each Fate talent is one more daring escape from death's embrace.

The Fate talent is useful for campaigns that are more action-oriented and *romantic* in nature. Players will be encouraged to push their characters to more extreme acts of heroism and self-sacrifice. Other Players may not like how having a "get out of death free" cheapens the risk of a permanent demise, which can make the game less challenging and fun.

For best results, Players should not be allowed to buy the Fate talent with experience. Instead, the Game Host should give all Player Characters one free Fate talent to begin the game. Future Fate talents should be given out as major rewards, not simply bought with experience.

Honor (1/Special)

(Major, Plot, Variant)

Tap this talent, then declare a task you will perform. *Everyone else* suffers a –5 honorable penalty to stop you.

You will lose the benefits of this feat if you behave dishonorably. (Arguing about what dishonor is, is dishonorable.)

You can't recharge this talent until you accomplish the goal, or until the start of the next chapter, whichever comes first.

The Honor talent allows for dramatic role-playing. However, some characters may find it too confusing or unrealistic.

Language [of Choice]

(Multiple, Skill, Variant)

In the standard rules, spoken and written language aren't considered a serious issue. Social Media software translates most communication on the fly, and people with good social skills have an advanced understanding of the nuances and idioms of the various cultures.

With this variant rule, language is considered a skill. Each character should start with an extra talent – one starting Language of their choice, such as Mandarin, Spanish, English, or Hindi.

To communicate a simple idea, like "stop!" is a difficulty of 5. Casual conversation would be Difficulty 10. Complex ideas, word-play, or cultural abstractions could be Difficulty 15 or more. (Other Job and Skill talents could apply to jargon.) Raise the Difficulty by 5 if the target doesn't have the same Language Talent that you have.

Communicating a simple idea to someone is usually a roll of 2d6+Int+Cha. Following the rules for Skill Talents, a character who speaks a Language that his target knows could just take–10, scoring 10+Int+Cha. (Yes, characters with poor Intelligence and Charisma will often have problems making themselves understood.)

Manifold: You may learn multiple Languages

Each time you buy a new Language talent, you may choose fluency in another language.

The Language rules add a dimension of realism to the game, allowing for cultural misunderstandings, for the need to hire interpreters, and for other plot devices involving translation. However, not all players enjoy games where there are language barriers.

Large

(Size, Unique, Variant)

You are *Large.* You are anywhere from 3m to 5m in height, and you weigh 500 kg or more. You must be the result of some genetic modification, or maybe you have a cybernetic body that was designed to be imposing.

Increase your Strength and Constitution by 1. Decrease your Dexterity and Wisdom by 1.

Your carrying capacity increases by ×8.

All of your movement is ×2 normal. Double the range and Push distances of your Brawling attacks.

Outfits and gear must be custom-fitted to you, which costs ×5 as much as normal and makes them weigh ×8 as much as normal.

You may claim a +2 size bonus to rolls where being large is a benefit. You suffer a –2 size penalty (or worse) where being large isn't helpful.

Unique: You may have only one "Size" talent.

You may not have any other talent with the "Size" descriptor.

Small

(Size, Unique, Variant)

You are *Small.* You are anywhere from 0.5m to 1m in height, and you weigh 25kg or less. You may have a genetic condition, or you may have a cybernetic body that was designed to be compact.

Increase your Dexterity and Wisdom by 1. Decrease your Strength and Constitution by 1.

Your carrying capacity decreases to 12% of normal.

All of your movement is reduced to 50% of normal. Reduce the range and Push distances of your Brawling attacks to 50% of normal.

Outfits and gear must be custom-fitted to you, which costs ×5 as much as normal but makes them weigh only 12% of normal.

You may claim a +2 size bonus to rolls where being small is a benefit. You suffer a –2 size penalty (or worse) where being small isn't helpful.

Unique: You may have only one "Size" talent.

You may not have any other talent with the "Size" descriptor.

Variant Rules for Game Play

Using d20s instead of d6s

In the present rules, you only roll six-sided dice. With this variant, you only roll twenty-sided dice (d20s).

- A standard roll becomes d20 + two attributes (instead of 2d6 + two attributes).
- When the rules say to add one die, instead you roll two d20s and take the higher roll. For example, a skilled roll would be rolling two d20s, keeping the higher die, and then add your two attributes.
- When the rules say to lose one die, and you're already at a single d20, you now roll two d20s and take the lower roll.
- When the rules say to add a spare die, simply add +1, instead.
- Criticals happen if you roll a 5, 10, 15, or 20 on one or more of your dice.
- If the rules ask if one of your dice came up as 6, treat that as if one of your d20s came up showing 16, 17, 18, 19, or 20. If the rules ask if one of your dice came up as 5 or 6, treat that is if one your d20s came up showing 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, or 20.

Multiple d6s have a *bell-curve distribution* – the middle results are more likely than the extreme high or the extreme low. A d20 has a *flat distribution* – every result is equally likely. A game that uses d20s will have more random, extreme results. Greater randomness helps the non-player characters more, since they have the advantage of numbers (which gives them more tries to get it right) and they have lower attributes and skills (which means random spreads helps them win more often against player-characters who have higher numbers).

Assist Bonuses for the Three Questions

In the standard rules, a character created for *Bleeding Edge* simply has a short description for their concept. That concept should help both the Player and the Host understand what the character is all about, and what they like to do.

With the *assist bonuses for three questions* system, the Players may rely on each other's characters to gain bonuses to rolls, once per session.

Once per game session, the Player of that character may check off the "Myself" question to claim a +2 assist bonus to any one roll, provided that roll is for some task related to the answer. (You're just that kind of person to do this!)

Also once per game session, a different Player may ask you to check off the "Friends" question. That Player may then claim a +2 assist bonus to any one roll, provided that roll is related to some task related to the answer. (Knowing you has given them the power to persevere!)

And also once per game session, the Game Host may tell you to check off the "Enemies" question. The Host may then claim a +5 assist bonus to any one roll made against you, or they may raise a target DC by 5 (turning success into failure), provided that roll or check is related to the answer. (Your own character failings are your undoing!)

After the session ends, and the Players finish the debriefing, re-set the check marks.

These once-a-game assist bonuses can help get the Players to think in terms of what their characters *roles* are, instead of merely abstract concepts of attack abilities and skills. The "enemies" question gives the Game Host an incentive to make a failure in the game feel personal – instead of just failing due to luck, the character fails because of who they are.

Some players really like the idea that their characters' roles can influence play like this. Other players might find the three-questions-assist rule too "meta", too loosely-defined and too open to misinterpretation.

Plot Points

The default tone of *Bleeding Edge* is realistic. Coincidence is rare. Things happen because people make them happen. Luck can change entire fortunes, for good or for bad.

The variant rule of Plot Points gives the Players and the Host an extra tool to use against the whims of fate.

When using Plot Points, at the start of every session, each player gets 3 Plot Points. The Game Host gets 1 Plot Point per player, *plus the result of a secret 1d6 roll*. The Players don't know how many Plot Points the Host has!

After making any roll, a Player may spend 1 Plot point to claim a bonus 1d6 to their roll. (As with all claims, the Player can wait to see how the roll plays out before adding this bonus.) Players may spend no more than 1 Plot Point per roll.

After making any roll, the Game Host may spend 1 or more Plot Points to claim a bonus 1d6 to the roll. Unlike the Players, the Game Host has no limit to the number of Plot Points they may spend – they could spend 2, 3, 4, or more, up until they run out of Plot Points. (Yes, this means the Game Host can make a random, outclassed Minor Character suddenly get a "lucky shot".)

Plot Points recharge at the start of the next session. To make things even wilder, a Game Host can offer to recharge the player's Plot Points back up to 3... but the Game Host's total also recharges to 1d6 + 1 per Player.

Plot Points add a meta-element to the game. The Players will feel empowered to take greater risks. The Game Host will be able to gauge the challenge the game is presenting – if the Players aren't using up their Plot Points, then maybe things need to get tougher. However, some people may find that Plot Points make the experience too "gamery", with people thinking more about how to manipulate the system instead of focusing on story.

Variant Rules for Combat

Secret Profile and Heat

In the basic rule, the Game Host informs the players when their Profile and Watch Ratings change, and of what those numbers are. It's assumed that the character's Social Media programs constantly inform them of what's going on.

With this variant rule, the Game Host keeps track of all Profile ratings.

Profile ratings don't automatically decrease when a new chapter starts. Instead, the Game Host rolls one die for each Player Character. On a result of 1, increase the character's Profile by 1. On a result of 2, nothing happens. On a 3, 4 or 5, reduce the profile by 1. And on a 6, reduce the profile by 2 *and roll again.* Keep rolling until you stop rolling sixes. (This randomization should keep the Players guessing at what their true Profile ratings are.)

The Game Host also keeps any Heat dice a secret from the Player.

Other talents and abilities that affect Profile still affect it, as normal.

This rule can make the game more mysterious, but it also requires more book-keeping for the Game Host. This rule can also weaken the purpose of the Profile rule, which is to discourage the Players from engaging in too much reckless behavior.

Bullet Counting

In the present rules, bullets are handled abstractly. It's assumed that you fire several bullets at a target, hoping one or more make contact. Some players may want the option of keeping track of exactly how many bullets they fire.

With the *bullet-counting* variant rule, assume that *Ammo: High* weapons have 15 bullets, and that *Ammo: Low* weapons have 8. If the weapon has the "Rapid Fire" descriptor, double the number of bullets.

When shooting at a target, you automatically fire 5 bullets. Subtract one bullet for each 6 that you roll. (You always shoot a minimum of 1 at each target.)

If you can't (or don't) fire 5 bullets, you suffer a –2 penalty for each bullet that you're short. For example, if you only fire 2 bullets, you suffer a –6 penalty to your roll.

Naturally, this rule doesn't apply to weapons that already have a fixed count, such as *Ammo: 1* weapons.

This rule allows for precise counting of bullets. However, it requires much more extensive book-keeping, both for the Players and for the poor Host (who has all those enemies to keep track of.)

For added realism, you could look up real-world firearms, and then substitute the count of bullets in their magazines for the *Ammo: High* and *Ammo: Low*.

Long Rounds for Long Range

The typical combat rules assume a fight taking place in close quarters – 20 meters away or less. Realistically, many firefights will take place at distances of 100m or more. (Combat rifles, for example, are optimized for warfare at distances much greater than 100m.) However, fights on such a large scale can be daunting for players who only move 10m or more, or who only have short-range weapons. On large-scale encounters, Players can feel like it takes forever just to move into position!

With this variant rule, the Game Host may declare that any fight will use *long rounds.* Long rounds use the standard combat rules, with the following changes:

- Rounds are assumed to be ten times as long – that is, sixty seconds, instead of six seconds.
- All movement is ×10 as much. For example, a typical dash is 100m, not 10m; a scramble is 2d6×10m, etc. Weapon ranges are unaffected.
- Combatants can take three actions, instead of two. (Quickened combatants can take four actions.) The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same round" still applies.
- After all sides have taken all their turns, the Game Host may decide to keep using long rounds, or to switch to standard rounds. Generally, long rounds should only be used when all attack ranges are greater than 50m.

Long rounds can make for more interesting fights, where rifles and vehicles are more important than pistols and punches. Long rounds increase the complexity of the game, so don't use this rule if the Players aren't comfortable with it.

Super Criticals

In the present rules, rolling doubles or better is all you need for a critical hit. Triples, quadruples, etc. don't matter. Damage results stay fixed in a narrow range.

With the *super-criticals* variant rule, Damage can get much higher.

- No matches: standard Effect
- Doubles: Critical
- Triples: Critical with +5 Damage bonus
- Quadruples: Critical with +10 Damage bonus
- Quintuples: Critical with +15 Damage bonus

The super-criticals system makes the game a lot more deadly, and it greatly rewards characters who have multiple attack dice. Player-characters in a game that uses super-criticals are strongly advised to pick up talents to reduce damage.

The super-critical rule also makes the game more complex. As will all variant rules, the Game host should weigh the pros and cons before using this rule. Remember to ues the debriefing to ask your players how these variants are working for them!

Hit Points

In the present rules, combatants make abstract rolls to soak damage, trying to reduce to zero. There's no memory between hits – each soak roll is independent of each other soak roll. Some players would prefer that enemies could be worn down with each successive hit.

In the *hit point* variant rules system, combatants don't have soak rolls. Instead, each combatant has a Hit Point (HP) total of 10+Con. When the combatant is hit by damage, subtract the damage from their hit points. If the result is positive, the character is still standing. Once HP drops to zero, the character is incapacitated.

Armor bonuses from outfits also work differently. Replace every d6 with 2 points. For example, an armor outfit that formerly subtracted 2d6+4 from damage would now subtract 2+2+4 = 8 points of damage. (If you have the talent of Armor Proficiency, raise the bonus to 4 points per die. Our example outfit would subtract 4+4+4 = 12 points.)

Talents that can be tapped to subtract from damage work normally.

After each rest, a character heals 1d6+Con in Hit Points.

Using a Hit Point system means that targets *will* go down eventually, if you can keep hitting them. Hit Points also dramatically increase book-keeping, especially for the Host.

Variant Rules for Campaigning

Flaws

In the default *Bleeding Edge*, the rules only worry about the character's advantages, such as their talents. If the characters suffer from problems such as crippling disabilities, mental disorders, or social pressures, there's no formal mechanic for dealing with those.

With the *flaw* variant rule, each Player-Character can have zero, one, two, or three *flaws*. A flaw is a simple phrase describing a problem with the character. When the flaw prevents the Player-Character from doing something that they really needed to do, the character gains +1 experience point for the session. This "learning experience" is awarded during the debriefing session, where the Players should remind the host where they were hindered.

The maximum experience per flaw per session, is +1. For example, if your character's flaw is that they're blind, it doesn't matter how many times not being able to see comes up during play – if being blind hinders them once, twice, or a dozen times, it's still only worth +1 experience per session.

The flaw that doesn't hinder you is not a flaw. If the flaw never gets in your way this session, then there's no learning experience. For example, if a character is blind, but they sit at a computer terminal all day using augmented reality and robot-drones so that their physical blindness never stops them from doing anything, then they weren't hindered, so there's no experience reward.

Players can be very creative when making up their own flaws. Here are some examples:

- ***Disability***. The character is blind, or deaf, or suffering from some disease, or otherwise differently-abled. Maybe the character is a war veteran, or maybe they've suffered from a natural disaster. Perhaps they were mutated by drugs or pollution. Whatever the case, whenever the disability prevents them from doing something that a fully-abled person would be able to do, the character has a learning experience.

- ***Enemy***. The character is the target of some agency that wants to make life difficult for them. Maybe it's a rivalry with some peer who just likes to see the character fail. Maybe it's something more severe, where the enemy wants to see the character's finances ruined, or to put them in jail, or perhaps even to kill them. Whenever the enemy agents get in the way of the character doing something they need to do, that's a learning experience.
- ***Secret***. Our hero has some deep dark secret from their past. Perhaps they assassinated the president of some country, or maybe they faked their own death to escape some corporation, government, or organization that wants to kill them. When our character is prevented from doing something because they must keep their secret, that's a learning experience. If a secret becomes revealed, it may be replaced by an Enemy flaw.
- ***Stigma.*** The character is unfairly persecuted. Maybe the campaign world has prejudice against cyborgs, genies, or artificial intelligences, or the character could belong to some unpopular religion, organization, or social group. Whenever the stigma prevents the character from having an unhindered, ordinary life, that's a learning experience.

Players can add or subtract flaws from their characters during the debriefing session. For example, a paraplegic character might gain cybernetic legs that allow them to walk, which would remove the flaw, or a character might make a powerful enemy. Flaws only add experience when they come up, so there's no character-building cost to add or to remove them.

Some Players really like the role-playing challenge of having flawed characters. By writing down the flaws in advance, the Game Host has story hooks to work with. Other Players may find these flaws more trouble than they're worth, or they may not like imposing rules on role-play situations.

Framing Device

The default campaign in *Bleeding Edge* is where the player-characters are a motley crew of freelancers, assembled from all corners of the world. But that's hardly the only style of campaign. Before starting the campaign, the Host and the Players may all agree to have a *framing device*, such as....

- Our heroes all work for the same private military contractor, as *field commanders* (FCs). One of them is the *executive officer* (XO), who is in charge of all the field operations. The XO reports to the *commanding officer* (CO), who doesn't go out on the missions. The CO tells the XO what to do, and the XO tells the FCs how to make it happen. The first concern is profit. The second concern is public relations.
- Our heroes are all employees of the same company. They will have to deal with challenges such as hostile buyouts, sabotage of their stock, industrial espionage, and the occasional terrorist attack. This kind of campaign emphasizes social interaction and investigation far more than combat.
- Our heroes all have a tiny explosive in their blood vessels. If this explosive doesn't receive a coded broadcast signal at regular intervals, it will detonate, instantly killing the character. Our heroes are constantly under a time pressure to keep their masters happy.
- Our heroes are all members of the same criminal gang. The action is confined to a certain neighborhood, so politics will be important. Our heroes will have to earn the respect of the locals. They will have to enforce their order by any and all means. They will have to deal with under-paid police, corrupt government officials, corporate shills, and other gangs trying to muscle in on their turf.
- Our heroes are all clones from a lab. After each mission, their memories are recorded. The only penalty for dying on the mission is that no experience is gained, because the hero can be restored from a memory backup. For an even wilder campaign, the lab might swap the same mind between multiple bodies, letting characters swap genetic and cybernetic talents to customize their bodies for their missions.
- Our heroes are all genetically engineered to have *right-handed proteins* instead of left-handed ones. They can't eat regular food, only synthetic food made with the right kind of proteins. Since their livelihood depends on a regular source of nourishment unavailable in the world, they are slaves to their manipulative masters.
- Our heroes live in a much further future, as colonists on Mars, or Venus, or Titan. They have access to much better technology, but so do their enemies. "Regular people" will have a hard time competing with the genies and the cyborgs.

- Our heroes live in a post-apocalyptic wasteland, ravaged by pollution, disease, and fallout. Every day is a struggle to survive. This game would have no money – only credit or crafting can be used or can be bartered to get equipment or services.
- Our heroes live in a post-scarcity, trans-human future. Money is meaningless, and items are bought only with Credit Checks, with a +2, +5 or even greater bonus. Death is easily fixed with frequent backups. Adventure is found in the numerous romances, jealousies, feuds, and wars among the cultural elites.
- Our heroes live normal, separate lives by day … but at night, they all meet in the same virtual-reality massively-multiplayer game. Players have two character sheets – one for their "user", the other for their game's "avatar". Each sheet earns experience separately. Not only do our heroes have to go on raids to level up their characters, they also have to solve problems in the real world. They will have to pay bills, evade stalkers who have fallen in love with their avatars, recover lost items when their accounts get hacked, and maybe even solve the real-world murder of a user they used to "party" with.

…or make up one of your own. The advantage of a framing device is that all Player-Characters have a clear reason for working together. The disadvantage is that the characters will be much less diverse, and some Players may not enjoy playing with such constraints. Before starting such a campaign, the Host and the Players should discuss what sort of team they want.

Character Tree

In the *character tree campaign*, each Player gets not one character, but *three*. Each Player-Character has its own sheet, with its own write-up and its own experience. Each time a new adventure starts, the Player chooses one character to bring on the adventure. When a new Chapter starts, *all* characters earn 1 experience, whether that character was used in play or not. If one character is killed, the Player may write up a new one to replace the loss.

The character-tree campaign can work well if the game has a high lethality, because losing one character doesn't mean losing everything. It also adds flexibility to the game – when a mission calls for stealth, the Player can bring their stealthy character; when a mission calls for social engineering, the Player can bring their "face", etc. (Compare this to the usual scenario, where a Player brings the same character on every mission, whether it makes sense to bring that character or not.)

Some Players really don't like the idea of juggling multiple characters, and they will not like a character-tree campaign. This type of campaign may not be appropriate for all Players.

Troupe Style

In the *troupe style campaign*, the role of the Host rotates from Player to Player when a new Chapter starts. You might be the Host for this Chapter, and then someone else is the Host for the next Chapter. When someone is Hosting, their Player-Character earns the standard 1 experience for the new Chapter starting, but nothing else.

Troupe-style allows Players to experience different Hosts, which may result in different kinds of games. Being a Host is a lot of work, so sharing that work with multiple Players can reduce the overhead and can make the game more fun for everyone involved.

Some Players don't like the idea of being Host at all, and they will not like a troupe-style campaign. This type of campaign may not be appropriate for all Players.

"I'd like to build a way for people doing good work to connect, to learn from each other, protect each other, and then I want to get out of their way."
– Craig Newmark

Appendix B: Adventure Seeds

To give you and your Game Host some ideas for adventure, we've included this selection of plot hooks. If you're not planning to Host, don't read this section yet! It might spoil the surprise later.

North Africa & the Arabian Peninsula

-- Post #929e1949-90ed-48cc-b83f-48515b722e35 ----------
Location: **Egypt**
Subject: **FRAME JOB**

Trying to pin a crime on someone in the Egyptian sousveillance society is like trying to replace a bullet in flight with a forgery before it hits its target.

You'd need to not only synthesize false evidence, you'd need to insert it at every point in the sousveillance web, including the phone of your framejob victim. All that, and you'd still need to fake the real, physical evidence of the crime, without leaving evidence of your deceit. It's just as well that you're some of the best hackers in the world, because you're being paid an obscene amount of money to make this farm mogul's devout business partner eat a fifty year prison sentence for apostasy and atheism.

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-- Post #772045a2-b6e2-45cf-8a76-8da3fb884a87 ----------
Location: **ISRAEL**
Subject: **THE ARK OF THE DAMN COVENANT**

Okay, maybe not really, but there's a LOT of ancient artifacts in this area. There was a great deal of political agitation in the 19th century to have the priceless antiquities restored to their geographical home, but the violent revolutions of the 20th have tended to leave museums sacked and broken. Maybe the thing you're looking for has fallen into the hands of a popular regional warlord, or maybe it's sitting pretty in some prince's air-conditioned vault. Whatever it is, it'd be worth a fortune even if it wasn't made of 23k gold, and it's also made of 23k gold.

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Sub-Saharan Africa

-- Post #d81e1174-ad89-4ddd-b81c-979236eb27e0 ----------
Location: **Ecowas**
Subject: **CUT AND WEAR**

The Lagos fashion scene is a high-stakes business, with careers rising and falling on the bleeding edge of haute couture. Ụkọ Okoro's last show was a tremendous hit, but her studio's been robbed! Her beautiful garments have been stolen, and the next runway show is only a week away. Find out who did this to her and bring back what they stole, and while you're at it, go rob her rival's studio so he won't dominate the show either.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.



-- Post #8e6d37fc-5241-422f-a0a7-94e3ae7c5554 ----------
Location: **Somalia**
Subject: **YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE**

The CIA is a shadow of a former self, but it knows what it wants: the Rasputin of Mogadishu, dead, and this time, make it stick! Killing the chief of a sovereign nation is hard enough, but when the your target keeps popping up after you put a bullet through his damn head, someone's just cheating. If you're not killing Ali al-Hassan, then who are you killing? And why do they all have bar-codes on their feet?

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-- Post #fcd4868e-9613-41ee-ac57-9c20f7a6775d----------
Location: **Somalia**
Subject: **PEOPLE AREN'T CARGO, MATE**

The Rasputin of Mogadishu is planning a daring daylight raid on a shipping vessel passing through the Indian ocean, and needs the sort of exotic expertise the players bring to the table. The twist: The shipping vessel's cargo was supposed to be Welvar demihuman clone slaves bound for Dubai. Instead, it contains a Xe hit team hired by Welvar, who saw this whole thing coming. Where are the slaves now, and who tipped off Welvar?

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-- Post #35d591b8-4bb6-4e26-b1bd-05042d281ff9 ----------
Location: **SOMALIA**
Subject: **BARIUM BULLETS**

Why not pass through the Mogadishu markets and buy some fabulous new weapons? Well, whatever you just bought looks like it wasn't completely stripped of identifying marks after it was stolen, and apparently carrying these particular guns is strong evidence that you are associated with a particularly loathsome band of militant extremists.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #0d1906b9-02c7-4a28-a002-9b8a009eb6df ----------
Location: **SADC**
Subject: **PATENT WARS**

You remember all those miraculous retrovirals that were supposed to save the world? It turns out those are closely-guarded intellectual property, worth billions and billions of dollars to the sort of people who would charge for clean air by the gallon. The vaccines are supposed to be derived from blood serum of special GMO livestock hidden in rural South Africa, and "cattle rustling" via special-ops mercenary teams with C4 and black helicopters is just a part of the deeply corrupt business. Things take a strange turn, though, when you discover the "package" is a 12-year-old human being.

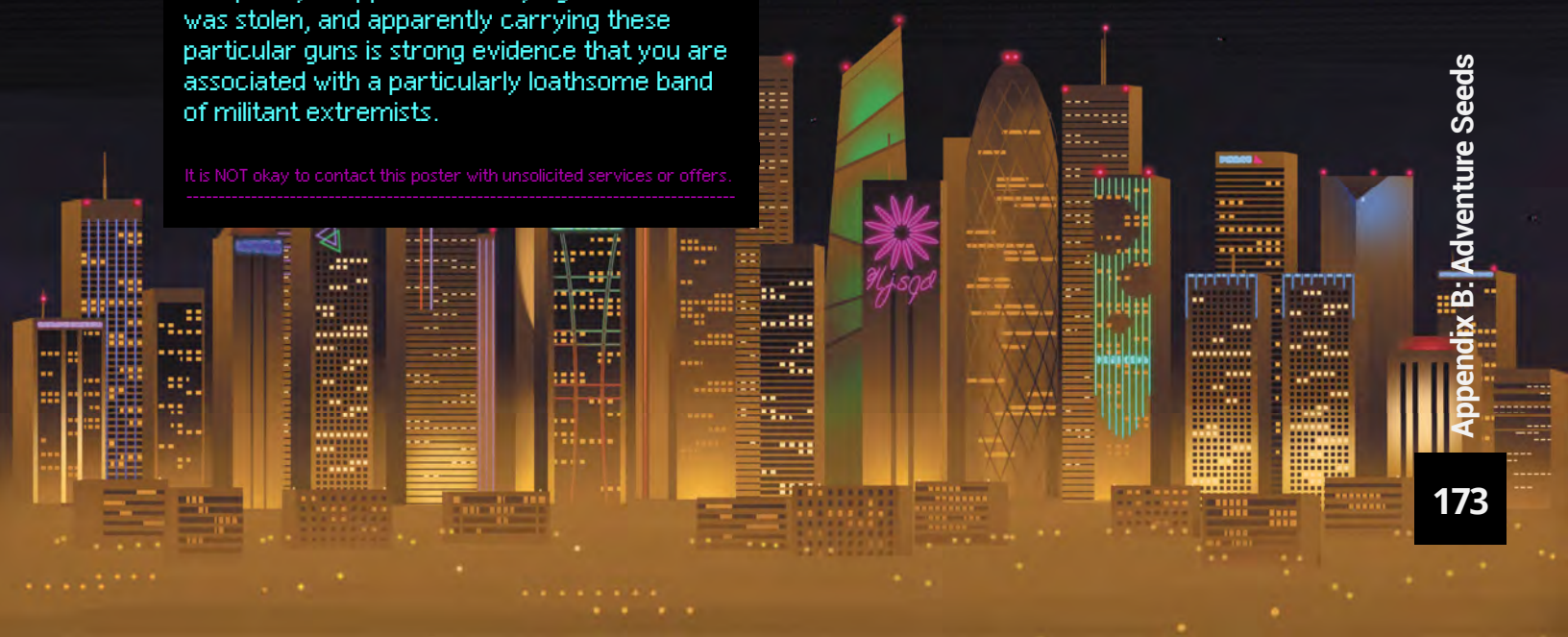
It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

Asia

-- Post #c71cfd0a-87ef-4184-a523-48538d9f95fa ----------
Location: **PRC**
Subject: **FINGER OF GOD**

The Nepalese Liberation Army offers you an extraordinary sum of money to infiltrate the Qomolangma Laser Broom. There, you'll insert a virus which make the QLB de-orbit several American commercial Clearcast communications satellites, in order to bring international pressure against the PLC. How did they get the money to pay you? These Nepalese militants are funded by Zafiro Aerospace, who can't exactly sell space weapons in a world where China owns the orbital belt...

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-- Post #40937473-89c9-4ae1-8149-4d1d653658ef ----------
Location: **PRC**
Subject: **WULIN JUSTICE**

A major chinese manufacturing company has been proven to be dumping chemical waste in to the Yellow River at the behest of a specific executive, who has also bought out most of the local police force. The chinese star chamber can't afford the political consequences of a direct confrontation between the PLA and the PAP in this circumstance, so they're hiring deniable experts (you) to do it for them. Get past his personal bodyguards, security systems, and bought-out PAP thugs, stuff him in a bag, and drag him to Beijing to face secret trial.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post *dedfd3a6-f5a5-4444-a577-1bc1a546be82 ----------
Location: **INDIA**
Subject: **BLOW UP THE NAXALS**

The Maoist guerillas known as the Naxalites have been a pain in India's ass since the 1970s. They're even worse now that capitalism has come to its oligarchical conclusion and they can smugly declare that they told you so. Their current project is to wreck the hyperloop servicing Mumbai's floating palace district while it's in service – a few dozen dead plutocrats can only do labor some good. Whether you're a techie, a people person, or a fast hand with a gun, they've got room for you in this plan.

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-- Post #e4fd0227-e5c8-4a8a-8738-beec4ee7391f ----------
Location: **INDIA**
Subject: **THE BALLOT BOX**

Alright, plain and simple – this contract is to steal an election, such that you'll be posing as armed guards and facilitating the swap of real ballot boxes for stuffed ones. It's just a local election, but you're still being paid to subvert democracy, and extinguish the last ray of hope shining between some corpulent aristocrat and his ungrateful successor. The curious thing is they've paid quite a bit up front, "To secure your loyalty." Are you going to get a counter-bid from their rivals? From some long-hidden populist revolutionary group? Are you just going to casually fail at your job because it's the right thing to do? Or are you actually going to go through with this, you monster?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #1664ef3d-5adf-46c4-9bea-4495e53e0095 ----------
Location: **JAPAN**
Subject: **GREENPIECE**

With the decline of the global whale population, their natural predators, the Japanese whaling fleets, have declined in turn. Now the greensheep pirates are getting desperate, and turning their attention toward the surimi trawlers – a form of floating factory that vacuums up feeder fish and returns to port with a hold full of pureed frozen protein. You've been hired to keep watch, and maybe reduce the pirate population a little in turn. The belowdecks are a flurry of automated gutting and flensing robots, and not safe for humans even in calm seas, but if the greensheep come aboard, they might head down there anyway.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.



-- Post #0ca1a148-4dc9-4856-87e0-01de5dbf64c8 ----------
Location: **RUSSIA**
Subject: **OPERATION CHARLIE BROWN**

The backstock of cheap AK-47s evaporated long ago, and the hard-working black market arms dealers moved up and on to harder stuff. Where do you think the New Jersey militia got their T-34s? There's never been anything MacGuffin-ier than a suitcase that can level Los Angeles a second time. There may not BE any right hands for this thing to fall into – maybe you'd better not sell it. Can you find someone clever enough to disarm it? Is there any place you can hide it that it won't eventually get found, and used?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #6151e08d-6ee0-4387-b4fa-3a7cbbf83a67 ----------
Location: **RUSSIA**
Subject: **CRIMINAL EVIDENCE**

While most of the Great Powers of the world long ago abandoned the cloak and dagger for the satellite and drone, certain old customs have died very hard in Russia. The problem with polonium poisoning is that there's only so many places in the world to GET polonium. Have you been hired to cover up some old-school Kremlin politicking? Do you dare take a contract from the Snowden Foundation to try and force a ray of sunlight into the Kremlin's mouldering vaults?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #62623e04-bdb6-422a-9af2-418fd07daad1 ----------
Location: **RUSSIA**
Subject: **INSURANCE FRAUD**

Omnipresent automotive surveillance cameras have slowly bled the life out of the once-burgeoning automotive insurance fraud industry. Do you realize how many other things have insurance policies? The Western approach was always to burn down your unprofitable business on the sly; here, it's just a matter of knowing how many stories you can fall and survive, and making double-triple sure there's no camera to disprove your tragic tale. The money's not great, but this kind of scam is the backbone of many political maneuvers.

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Europe

-- Post #48c26372-dba7-4c5f-88c1-09ad5e75cf76 ----------
Location: **EUROPEAN UNION**
Subject: **ROBIN HOOD**

Look, this line of work is generally going to leave you depressed and morally ambiguated at the end of a job. Who knew that the people who pay to have crimes committed are usually bad guys? The good guys usually don't have money to pay you with, because if they did, they might not be so motivated to be good. The good news is, there are still fascists in this world. Not Thatcher-esque crypto-fascists, I mean real ones with red-black flags and mystical interest in racial purity. They win elections sometimes, it's horrid. Now you've heard tell of a cadre of jack-booted authori-pukes who've come in to a significant windfall, and god knows they don't deserve it. Steal their shit, humiliate and discredit them publically, take them for a long car ride in the Black Forest – it's impossible to feel bad about anything you do to a Nazi. Go on and try.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #b7fc6675-c43d-421a-98b0-3a1ff03f452b ----------
Location: **NORWAY**
Subject: **SHADOW PLAY**

The Norway Minister of Industry, Siv Sanner, has been tracking the rate of decline for oceanic oil production and believes that the national oil company is being subverted from within by another agency – presumably the Syzygy Group. Unfortunately, the rest of the cabinet thinks she's paranoid and looking for excuses for the below-quota natural gas production, so don't expect national backing. Infiltrate the national oil service, Statoil, and determine whether they're being influenced and suborned. If they aren't, consider faking it – otherwise, where'll your next paycheck come from? If you stick with this long enough, you might even get a real offer from Syzygy, or arrange one...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #a4b8bb86-68d3-4341-b882-b689f005e553 ----------
Location: **UK**
Subject: **ACTUARIAL DEADPOOLS**

The transition to for-profit medical insurance has thrown thousands of UK citizens under the bus, leaving them to die preventable deaths for the profit of insurance executives. A small mob of elderly criminals facing unpleasant twilight years have pooled their retirement savings to hire you to get enough blackmail material on BritishHealth's board of directors to ensure that their insurance policies actually, properly pay out, instead of miring them in paperwork long enough for them to keel over.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

North America

-- Post #2b266054-1f9e-4c41-8e39-939f25e3e83b ----------
Location: **CALIFORNIA**
Subject: **PEN TESTING**

The startup culture that so thrived here in the last century still informs certain customs. When it comes time to test security measures, the results have to be *candid* – and that ethos might prevent them from, say, telling the security staff you'll be coming. Or swapping out their live ammunition for rubber bullets. While your death isn't the objective, the hazard pay on this contract gives you the impression you wouldn't be the first.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #e8e93839-db40-4d03-8d58-ff49d04826ee ----------
Location: **CALIFORNIA**
Subject: **DELIVERY SERVICE**

The high-sec urbclaves and burbclaves along the coast are not without their vices. It's not that narcotics are necessarily *illegal*, it's just that they're valuable, and the trip from Humboldt County to Marin involves a lot of lonely stretches of highway and more than one suspiciously-inquisitive gas station attendant with #NXS contacts on speed dial.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #e82ba01b-ece5-4e66-ae8b-74c985108a40 ----------
Location: **MIDWEST**
Subject: **WEST CENTRALIA BANK**

#NXS raids on trucks crossing the midwest need to stash their ill-gotten goods someplace secure. A coal fire deep under Wyoming has been burning non-stop since a 2025 mining accident, and the nearest town is abandoned thanks to the miasma of toxic smoke bubbling out of the ground. The Intense stash their kit and their booty here. You're going to that learn the hard way, after you come here looking for another, completely different abandoned treasure – a hard disk with enough bitcoins on it to buy your own yacht.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #4bbebc9e-5957-4b07-b716-88e803d704e1 ----------
Location: **MIDWEST**
Subject: **SUNDOWN TOWN**

The local sheriff has formed a proto-feudal fiefdom around his pre-collapse solar still. Local authority figures are all gradually revealed to be in his pocket/related to him by blood or marriage. His persecution of helpless outsiders wouldn't interest your jaded sense of morality if you didn't happen to be outsiders, and you stayed at his third cousin's motel for the night. Get your shit back. Fuck up the still? Fuck up the sheriff? Attempt to slide across the hood of your car in one go?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #b86b540d-1feb-41e7-87e2-bd67e6cd90ae ----------
Location: **NEW YORK**
Subject: **MTA CATACOMBS**

Mad Tuesday hit the world's financial capital brutally hard, and the ensuing chaos trampled many lives, some unaccounted for to this day. These troubling statistics go hand-in-hand with the urban legends of lost subway trains and forgotten tunnels. The New York subway system was a honeycomb of disused tracks on its best day, and this isn't its best day. One of your friends has a lead on a diamond courier who went missing during the digital big one, and the train he was on when the clocks all stopped – Did he die in the depths, or go off the grid? If he's dead, the diamonds are probably still on the body, and if he's alive, well, the law doesn't care if you roll a 404 for his stash of diamonds...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #3eb16ce7-3b84-495c-b8e0-8a32aedafc47 ----------
Location: **NORTHEAST CORRIDOR**
Subject: **ANOTHER CASTLE**

Charlie O'Reilly might look like just another teenager in private school... but they're better known as PaladinLeeroy, the internet-famous leader of MeherBaba, the most powerful guild in the popular MMO *Earthland Realms*. PaladinLeeroy's all-consuming passion keep their guild running is making them fail out of school, so Mr. and Mrs. O'Reilly have shipped Charlie to "Freedom Wild", a digital-addiction rehab center owned by Freedom Contracting Services. At Freedom Wild, children are subjected to hard labor, solitary confinement, and other extreme techniques to cure internet addiction. Desperate to get their leader back, the other members of MeherBaba Guild have liquidated their in-game assets to hire our heroes to get Charlie out of Freedom Wild. Timing is important — the next downloadable-content chapter of the Earthland Realms saga launches in two weeks, and if the MeherBaba Guild isn't ready to raid on day one, they will miss out on the high-value, exclusive drops.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #b3ae591f-b613-4641-a1a4-1e91c508fee7 ----------
Location: **WASHINGTON D.C.**
Subject: **POCKET ACES**

The first duty of a senator is to his constituents, and sometimes that means bending the law. The good senator Ron Overbough needs fixers working on his behalf to monitor his political rivals back home. Keep an eye on Ron's political rivels, garner blackmail, and, when you have time, assist Ron's constituents in getting the services they need from an underfunded and apathetic federal government.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #4d1fbfba-5cf5-44de-a7a0-0b5e6320d3c6 ----------
Location: **DOMINION OF CANADA**
Subject: **THE GRUBER**

Quebec separatism hasn't been a serious issue since the late 2010's, but it makes a decent cover – criminals like bank robbers sometimes pretend to be separatists in order to con the police into thinking they want something besides cold hard cash. In order for this to work, they need to be credibly associated with the anemic Quebecois separatist movement, so earn your paycheck and spoof a fake social media history for these heisters that'll fool the cops into thinking they've got some sort of political ideal.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #f15843ce-20a4-4315-931b-4cde2809a06e ----------
Location: **PALLISER REPUBLIC**
Subject: **NO COMPROMISE**

A conspicuously strange Thessalonian activist living in the wildnerness of Palliser, Pitor Zelinsky, offers you a large sum of money to bomb a Syzygy pipeline. But after the smoke clears, the real Pitor Zelinsky looks nothing like the man you met. Who's really hired you?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #4cf29cd9-4d9c-499d-8746-8f3526cfd399 ----------
Location: **PALLISER REPUBLIC**
Subject: **MY EVIL TWIN**

The Syzygy Group all but owns Palliser, but just who is and who isn't the Syzygy Group? They're such a mess of shell companies and subsidiaries that sometimes even they don't know. Case in point: there are two distinct companies in the Palliser countryside, both called Northeast Palliser Tar and Gas. One of them is a legitimate Syzygy Group subsidiary, and the other is a front operation for who knows who. Syzygy wants you to get in there, figure out which one is a front operation, figure out who they're a front operation for, and burn them to the ground.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.



-- Post #05e78a62-61ab-48a4-991b-99f84028e7cc ----------
Location: **CONFED. OF FREE NATIONS**
Subject: **MAN PLANS GOD LAUGHS**

A Confederate shipping firm subcontracts the players to stress test the Vancouver port's security measures by smuggling in a simulated WMD. Unfortunately, either the players were used or their employers were – while the players are making their 'attack', very real criminals are attempting to infiltrate a very real WMD in to the Confederation through the very same port, with intent to cause mass casualties in the civilian population.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #f9bba92c-ce20-44fb-8854-9239ef3b778d ----------
Location: **CONFED. OF FREE NATIONS**
Subject: **MARKET DAY**

The Granville Market is the heart of Vancouver's informal trade; local artisans, gunrunners, and regional farmers all shill their wares here. Today, a woman calling herself Kwekwaxa'we is selling a twenty year old hard drive which she says holds a bitcoin wallet with a hundred thousand SDR worth of crypto. She's selling it to two rival gangs at the same time – can you escape, or profit from, the resulting firefight and chaos?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #a7ea2de0-f1af-4dfa-a9bb-2ac5b3dfd889 ----------
Location: **NORTHERN MEXICO**
Subject: **BACK PAY**

An Ash Company chip manufacturer in rural mexico has been failing to pay its employees on time - all the employees except the security guards, that is. The workers' relatives have heard their cries for help and would like to employ you to repossess the factory foreman's private vaults, and steal back their stolen wages. They can't pay you well, but having about four hundred people considering you a closer personal friend is its own kind of paycheck.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #a063ec31-6953-4cd8-bfdf-c200a00d565f ----------
Location: **THE MEXICAN CARTELS**
Subject: **LEVERAGE**

Look, it's not like these guys don't have work for you. They need electronic files tampered with, sousveillance systems disabled or suborned, and violence distributed the same as any other gang. But nobody wants to work for these guys! Some of their chapters are literally *death cults*, though most are just disinterested in the idea of human decency. If any civilian found out who's paying you, they'd probably kill you, and they'd probably be right. So the real question isn't what you're doing for them, it's why. What do they have on you that you'd descend into their world and do their dirt? Do your party all have the same reasons, or different ones? Secret, or known? And how can you get out from under their thumbs?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #b7c01e29-08d8-4f50-aacb-095ee0640f30 ----------
Location: **THE MEXICAN CARTELS**
Subject: **LOS MARIACHIS**

The cartels have some pretty gnarly hitmen - the kind of guy who keeps his assault rifle in a guitar case, but still knows how to play guitar. Old school. One such man - a living legend, really - has had enough of the lies and the greed and the filth. He wants to take a stand with the citizens of this tragic one-horse town and remind the cartels that power has its limits. There's probably not much money in this, but I bet a referral from the man called Angel de la Muerte will get you any job you ask for...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #4bcdf180-f678-487c-bc5b-19b7ba40ef9c ----------
Location: **CUBA**
Subject: **SNUFF FILM**

An American CIA analyst has gone rogue with classified information, including (supposedly) video of the US president killing himself on Mad Tuesday. However, before she was able to secure a flight out of the country, she was put on the no-fly list. She was able to secure an exit to Cuba, despite an enormous price on her head. If you can bring her back alive to American soil, you could make hundreds of thousands of dollars - but the secrets in her head, if you could control them, might be worth millions.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

South America

-- Post #f766100f-7dc2-4ffa-b6eb-09e98cfad4fc ----------
Location: **BRAZIL**
Subject: **MANAUS**

A politically influential general has established a fiefdom over this trade hub, claiming blood relation to Hernan Cortes, though he spells it Kortez. This was okay for a while, but his demands are getting more eccentric and expensive. The multinational conglomerates and the Brazilian government want him out, and the steady flow of goods restored. See how it's in the middle of the rainforest? Clearcutters don't tend to build roads, so you're going up there the same way the goods come down - via the Rio Amazonas.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #c05ba14e-4b3c-47d3-aad0-de8dfb2723d0 ----------
Location: **COLOMBIA**
Subject: **WITNESS PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM**

Welvar believes that Pfluger's deal to buy out the jungles of Colombia was provably illegal. They have archival evidence from the era that indicates that one of the supreme court judges of Colombia was assassinated by a Pfluger agent to remove an obstacle to the buy-out. They want you to find more evidence. The twist: the main witness to the hit was retrovirally transformed into a genie laborer in the Colombian greenhouses, and needs to be manumitted and returned to normal human genetics before they can serve as a witness.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

Multinational Corporations

-- Post #5d6b7e9c-fed7-475b-8e74-2b719b8bbf84 ----------
Sender: **AGARUMA**
Subject: **SHELL GAME**

Agaruma is having a PR problem - their simulee products keep turning up as disposable assassins-for-hire in Tokyo, putting a disquietingly sharp edge on the local and regional politics there. This injures the reputation of the simulee product as 'perfectly safe'. Bait, bodyguard, or private investigator, you've been brought in to put an end to this shameful debacle. Sousveillance analytics indicate a human pilot, with key identifiable mannerisms, but the analytics are only a matter of probability...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #5d426b22-69a1-46e4-9d5c-00b441fe11ce ----------
Sender: **ALLENMORRISREY**
Subject: **THE SMOKING GUN**

AllenMorrisRay doesn't like to talk about the bad old days when "coffin nails" were just something you had with your morning coffee at the office. They especially don't like to talk about the dark, desperate times when anti-addiction drugs hit the mass market, and suddenly people really could quit whenever they wanted. Unfortunately, a grisly little microcosm of that era has gotten out in the world - a virus that causes nicotine addiction. Nevermind what would have to be wrong with you to make that, or to pay someone to make that - get it out of the wild, and don't let it get traced back to AMR.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.



-- Post #1040f132-c0e9-4c54-bec9-c76d7906476a ----------
Sender: **ASH COMPANY**
Subject: **SERVICE TO DIE FOR**

The Ash Company caters to those wealthy enough to buy high-end luxury computing products. In exchange for outrageously high prices, they provide the future we all dreamed of thirty years ago - computers that work for you, bright and shiny. Where their engineering skills fail, they turn to other means. Long story short, a high-society winder has misplaced her Ashcomm somewhere during her slum safari in west Brazil. An enterprising youth kept it from going to sleep, and from there it passed in to the hands of organized crime, where it's being mined for secrets and blackmail material. Ash would like you to go turn it off, along with everyone who's read its secrets.

-- Post #9b92f11c-eb64-42f3-9dfd-05c35310a5ca ----------
Sender: **BELLEVUE**
Subject: **POPPED KERNEL**

The market share of the Bellevue Distribution, and its children, is enough to make it a substantial attack vector for malfeasant actors of all kinds. It's possible some corporate or governmental spy agency is looking for a way in - rumors of Ash backdoors in Bellevue are popular discussion fodder in many places on the net - but it's perfectly possible that rather than being commissioned to make such a backdoor to-spec, you might try to make the backdoor and then find it a customer. Do you have the patience to make yourself a convincing contributor?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #86a0fd4e-4879-4e48-87b8-059ae266b7af ----------
Sender: **CLEARCAST**
Subject: **MAN IN THE MIDDLE**

Storing people's traffic is spooky, sure, but there's worse things you can do with that kind of access. Who do you think carries the traffic between, say, Wall Street brokerages and the massive electronic trading servers? You've been hired by an aspiring Quant who thinks the patterns he's observing are subtle replay attacks shaving pennies off the dollar of every brokerage house in the city. If he's right, it'll make his career...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #b563740f-e971-4d32-81dc-6a3ee668d77a ----------
Sender: **ELAGE**
Subject: **JACOB'S LADDER**

Dr. Takshila, reknowned neuroscientist and a great proponent of open-source medicine, is a cultural fixture in Mumbai. The towering skyscraper she privately owns is a monument to her unswerving dedication to the betterment of her, and all, people. She's also a substantial shareholder in Elage, whose C-level executives gravely resent her steadfast moral compass. Due to the frailty of advancing age, and increasing (correct) paranoia about powerful men out to get her, Dr. Takshila has only been available via telepresence for some time, attending shareholder meetings from the safety of her ultrasecure penthouse apartment. Lately her speech patterns seem unnatural - as though she's being reconstituted from recordings. The Elage executives need you to confirm or deny whether she's still alive, and if she isn't, who is trying to perpetuate her legacy.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #c325d37c-20df-45b6-9716-3687ac620df1 ----------
Sender: **EZMAKER**
Subject: **TURN IT OFF AND ON AGAIN**

The EZMaker is the guerilla's friend. Given power and instructions, it can suck in raw materials and spit out functional firearms. This presumes the fucking thing is working. Fortunately for the heavily armed hill people of the Middle East and Eastern Europe, EZMaker's warranties are multinational in scope, and as long as no one is shooting at you right then, they'll happily send a tech out to help you - even if they need to hire a team of mercenaries to provide protection to their tech. Get the EZMaker support specialist to his contact in the Chechen hills without anyone stealing his shit or killing him and you'll make a tidy penny.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #a9f18ccc-ecd7-4f6f-b4b8-9195c13210bd ----------
Sender: **FREEDOM CONTRACTING**
Subject: **BLUE FORCE**

It's not at all uncommon for Freedom's combat training subunit to hire Grey-Market Violence Professionals to give their trainees a taste of the real world, or at least teach them to shoot at exotic haircuts. You're room-and-boarded for two weeks at one of their facilities, having some of your criminal records "tidied up" in exchange for the wisdom that only experience can provide. Of course, some of that wisdom might involve letting the fox guard the henhouse. Just how real of a lesson do you want to make this? If you fuck it up, can you possibly convince your employers that it was just a drill?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #9a2117ee-5b5a-4dbe-be69-1de6abee2eee ----------
Sender: **KhKT**
Subject: **ONE LAST JOB**

KhKT wants you to extract a renowned, retired blackhat hacker from protective custody in Switzerland so they can compel her to decrypt a madware program she wrote but never released. KhKT believes that their own systems will survive the attack, they they'll come out looking stronger in the aftermath, but they are very wrong - the virus, if released, will cause billions of dollars in damage across the board, including their own systems.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #263c567c-a089-435e-8348-1560201080a3 ----------
Sender: **LIRIENE-PAPERINO**
Subject: **FIVE STAR**

An LPA facility in the rolling coastal hills of Tuscany is storing a one-of-a-kind historic prototype, to go with this one-of-a-kind security loophole you just happen to have access to. You've lined up a wealthy collector who's crazy and rich enough to set up naval transport directly out of the harbor. Steal the car, get it to the docks and onto the ship. Any damage to the vehicle is coming out of your paycheck, and remember that the car is worth twenty of your paychecks.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #6d043200-37f0-49d0-b7d6-df69c4062e24 ----------
Sender: **MINARET**
Subject: **THE SIEGE**

Remember that insurance fraud you helped us out with? Minaret's calling our bluff. We've gotten to the incriminating files ahead of them, but we need you to keep them out of the building until the evidence is safely tampered. You don't have to hold them off forever, but you should also make sure not to create a situation where they won't accept your peaceful surrender at the end. I mean, assuming you want to spend your paycheck. (Being hardcore enough to punch your way out of a Minaret siege has got to be good for the ol' rep, though.)

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #66630ec1-4731-4eff-8a22-57131f067755 ----------
Sender: **NEOS**
Subject: **BETTER THAN LIFE**

Neos is already planning on selling media for their mind-machine interfaces, and if they're going to be ahead of the curve, they need to start now, before the bugs get ironed out. Sometimes, though, when you project a fantasy of 16th century Japan directly into someone's brain with powerful electromagnets using systems you don't completely understand yet, things go awry. Long story short, one of Neos' test viewers is absolutely convinced that he is Oda Nobunaga cast into the future by an evil magician, and Neos needs you to fetch him off the street before he stabs someone and the project winds up in even deeper trouble. The last thing they need is an anachronistic warlord rallying the 404's of japan into a peasant levy militia.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #eb78fdfc-1494-47a9-a1fa-6b6594b9490c ----------
Sender: **NEW VISTAS MEDIA**
Subject: **STOCK FOOTAGE**

Almost any job you take would make a good 3V movie. If you're able to hook up with an agent, and if you can manage to bring the recording equipment with you regularly, you can probably make a healthy sideline filming explosive action blockbusters ripped bleeding from the headlines...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #5923119a-a5df-4340-b2e2-85815feeff52 ----------
Sender: **NURACO**
Subject: **THE REAL THING**

You're hired to raid a Nuraco chemical plant, but the inevitable result of your violence is an environmental disaster. The Nuraco company heroically steps in to provide its food and water products to those affected by the disaster until they're relocated to new homes, but it's not like they'll ever be able to drink the groundwater again. If it's really a Nuraco shell-company that hired you, they got an absolute runaway of a bargain in the form of guaranteed customers for life. Maybe you'd better renegotiate...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #9f809aa2-fe3f-4a89-b722-6532cdf7aa47 ----------
Sender: **ORISHA MEDIA**
Subject: **SHOW BUSINESS**

A young and foolish filmmaker has heard of your talents through some of his other contacts, and wants to hire you as stuntmen for one of his films. Unfortunately, he owes his financers enough money that they hire local goons to beat it out of him. The cameras are running when this happens, so protect your employer and get some good footage while you're at it and you might wind up famous.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #7c3c80ff-cd35-4e62-891b-e07f4dc8033d ----------
Sender: **OGUNTECH**
Subject: **MOTE IN GODS EYE**

Clearcast wants to get Orisha under its thumb. In order to arrange a hostile takeover, they need to sabotage enough of its assets that they need a cash infusion to stay afloat. They need you to erase the OgunTech patents & backups from the Nigerian government databases, along with enough other patents to look like vandalism, to ensure that they can register a patent of their own, and then sabotage the factory where Oglecams are manufactured.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #b73c5899-0627-45d0-b2a3-7b28582baa45 ----------
Sender: **PFLUGER**
Subject: **GUY SMILEY**

The Colombian Government is tied at the neck with Pfluger, but that doesn't mean they don't have their own ideas about how things should be run. The Colombian secretary of the interior needs you to acquire blackmail material on a Pfluger board member that she can use to influence their behavior. The twist? The Pfluger executive actually proves to have no blackmail material... because they were cloned specifically to act as a proxy for someone else. Who owns this proxy vote, and how do they control them?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #dfa45a4c-f0bb-49f5-a9ca-75841aae5dd6 ----------
Sender: **SYZYGY**
Subject: **OUROBOROS**

The Shepherd's Greens hire you to track down the actual operating base of the Syzygy Group, as the listed locations are all shells within shells. You'll discover that Syzygy is turtles all the way down, owning itself in a loop of accounting schemes. Just what will you do with this information, and how hard will Syzygy work to stop you?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #8dfdf79d-2510-4e9c-9952-05c0d31279e2 ----------
Sender: **TELEMENTAR**
Subject: **SHOUTING CONTEST**

Telementar wants to increase their market share over wireless technologies in Los Angeles. To this end, they want you to build up a pirate signal-jamming network out of disused camouflaged cell towers, and use it to wring Clearcast out of the airwaves.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.



-- Post #38b2fabd-7901-4610-96ed-8e3f3f0fbfdc ----------
Sender: **TML**
Subject: **PRE-RELEASE EXCLUSIVE**

Ash Computing's latest product is said to include an encrypted processing core - DRM for chip layouts, designed to increase the lag time between the product hitting the market and the TML generic equivalent matching it polymorphically. TML would like to reverse this plan, and have a zero-day clone of the new architecture, to teach Ash a lesson about its place in the pecking order of micromanufacture. Luckily, Ash's home urbclave is a wide-open field-test zone, so it should be possible to identify a prototype in the wild, and steal it.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #69ec2696-eef3-4bba-a535-32ae985802ef ----------
Sender: **UNITED UTILITIES**
Subject: **WE DON'T HAVE TO CARE**

Disputing charges on your phone bill and threatening nonpayment over internet service disruptions were a lot less daunting when the same company didn't also control your access to electric power and running water. They've cut you off like a deadbeat, and they might get away with pulling that crap on anyone else, but you feel like you can force them to listen to reason.

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-- Post #8968c450-2bc8-4575-9156-04cdd36b5353 ----------
Sender: **WELVAR**
Subject: **THE EX-HUMANS**

History shows, time and time again, that with slavery comes slave revolts. Escaped genies are rumored to be banding together, either hiding their superhuman abilities and chattel-slave tattoos in plain sight or forming separatist communities out of reach of their former masters. If you're a total scumbag, you might consider trying to capture them and return them for bounty, but given your social status in life, what are the chances that you wind up "genied" yourself? Suddenly, a little support from your new brothers and sisters might be quite a comfort.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #f7a2a7c0-83d8-4008-8226-171bf70b0e3f ----------
Sender: **XIANXINGZHE**
Subject: **ROOM AT THE TOP**

The PRC contracts you to kidnap a Xianxingzhe executive for secret trial, after he brokers a deal to buy and then liquidate a competing company, misappropriating the proceeds and cheating the PRC out of millions of yuan worth of taxes. Grab him and hold him hostage to ensure Xianxingzhe pays out their taxes. However, this deal was actually the brainchild of the executive's immediate underling, who wanted to ensure his boss's removal, and make room for his own ascension. Will you find this out before, or after, you put the 'execute' in executive?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #71bf23c7-50f1-4d39-8526-fbdb6d7ebfe1 ----------
Sender: **XO**
Subject: **YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU**

A Xo contractor, in debt up to his eyebrows, needs help faking his death. Unfortunately, his cybernetics include medical diagnostics, so they also need to be subverted in such a way that matches his death... or maybe removed. Unfortunately, after his 'death' – or actual death, if the players fuck up – the debt falls on his surviving relatives. How many deaths *can* you fake?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #dcc5351e-15ce-4e57-90f0-67791fb00b47 ----------
Sender: **ZAFIRO**
Subject: **FEATURE CREEP**

After a series of unseemly cost overruns, Zafiro Propulsion is finally on-track to meet schedule and budget for their latest optionally-piloted ground-superiority jet fighter, when their customer appoints a new manager to their program, Major General Percival Cunningham. His effluence of bellyaching memoranda and flip-flopping scope changes are causing day-to-day slip, and Zafiro can't afford another embarrassment in the marketplace. They don't much care if he's incompetent, covering his own organization's schedule deficiencies, or being paid off to degrade their integrity - you are hired to make him *stop that*, army or no army.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

Religious Organizations

-- Post *3d3a8669-2d1e-4565-a235-d2b12ce83961 ----------
Sender: ₭₳₹₰$₮ÏᐯⅣ↯
Subject: **THROWING OUT THE MONEYLENDERS**

Nothing galls the Kallistians like the Prosperity Gospel and the Megachurches it builds. A young adept of this sect is plying his trade as a traveling faith healer in this area, and his popularity is growing. The Needles would like you to encourage this bad seed to blow on down the road, and not think of setting down roots with another gaudy temple of material wealth. Options include violence, violent coercion, blackmail, or maybe just discrediting him on stage.

It is okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post *da4dbf1e-a6ff-4d8f-ab94-9e66c1449427 ----------
Sender: **NEPHELITES**
Subject: **THE PROFIT**

The Nephelite fiefdoms in the New Bible Belt have been settled for quite a while, and spasms of unification have begun. It's inevitable that any sect that can lay claim to the One True Mark James Anderson is going to have an edge over its rivals. Your employers have a perfectly good Mark James Anderson on hand, and would like very much if he survived any and all challenges to his authenticity and/or mortality. It's likely that your employers represent nefarious corporate interests trying to co-opt the violent faith of the Nephelites for political ends, but the main thing is to keep their nutty little friend in comfortable Messianic condition.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post *aa9089db-5495-4f2f-9e50-45835d89f8b9 ----------
Sender: **QUBE**
Subject: **RED PILL**

The secret documents of the QUBE faith/cult were leaked in '41, and since then their bizarre conviction that the world is a computer simulation by inhuman intelligences has been the butt of an entire jokebook, but the higher ups are deadly serious about it. They've given you a list of twelve random buildings across the planet, random unsold surplus real-estate, and asked you to set up bizarre, nonsensical devices there and perform experiments to 'enact a formal proof of the computational metastructure layer and facilitate pan-conscious network synchronicity.' Which is fine, you've done bullshit work for idiots before, but who are all these men in black suits trailing you, and why are all these buildings so well guarded...?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post *4800fb9c-4675-45be-a52c-1c4ca72b2622 ----------
Sender: **THESSALONIANS**
Subject: **YOU HAVE BEEN SERVED**

A 404'd Thessalonian patriarch has finally been linked to his youthful indiscretions as a drug trafficker. Finding him squatting in the outskirts of the Detroit Ruins is hard enough, but once you meet him... he's just not the same man, anymore. Forty years of the simple life as an aging benevolent hippy with an ongoing procession of spiritually-pure young wives have mellowed him *right* out. Thing is, he's been made, and he knows it - killing you won't solve anything, because Marharban will just send two more of you the next day. Are you going to put him in jail for the rest of his natural life? Or can you find another way to resolve the matter?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.



-- Post #153d2412-7d15-4616-9a37-6372f324ab10 ----------
Sender: **TRICLAVIAN**
Subject: **WAYWARD SON**

North Dakota's Senator Rockenaut is a proud statesman, with a beautiful wife and four beautiful children. One of those blessed children, unfortunately, has fallen from the righteous path and fallen in with sodomites. His eldest daughter, a moral and upstanding valedictorian, has run away from bible college with a lesbian #NXS biker and it's breaking his poor heart. Find her and bring her back home without a scratch on her, and break the legs of that harlot who seduced her while you're at it, there's a good fellow.

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #cb305a9b-772e-4daa-8c1a-0cdcb04427cb ----------
Sender: **13 BLESSINGS**
Subject: **AMERICA BLESS GOD**

The habits of the old world die hard. Four centuries of outright chattel slavery created a single century of blissful prosperity for the American elite; and though Mad Tuesday has fractured the Blessed Union, and torn the manifestation of its destiny to rags, it is said that America lies not dead, but dreaming. The incarnation of that dreaming is a subterranean vault-town called Sunnyfield, a perfect slice of small-town white-bread Americana that prays to Reagan-headed crucifixes. Further rumors elaborate that the original Liberty Bell, U.S. Constitution, and the Betsy Ross flag are all secreted away down there. Dare you to violate the Promised Land?

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Non-Governmental Organizations

-- Post #86fbd378-e29a-4cb5-baa0-c6c0b897114e ----------
Sender: **404 CREW**
Subject: **THE RIPPER**

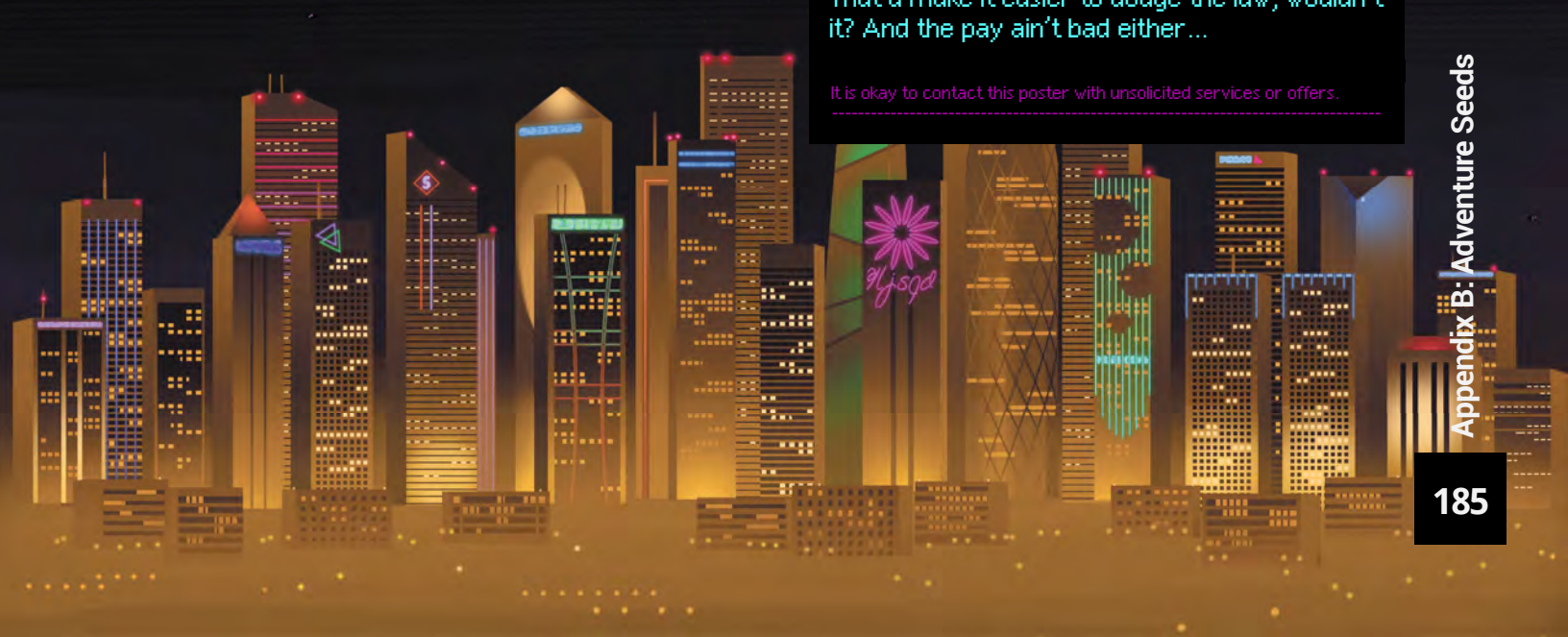
A community of 404's dwelling in the tunnels beneath London are being stalked by a ruthless killer, picking them off one by one and leaving mutilated bodies stripped of vital organs behind. Normally this would be an affair for the police, but none of the 404's officially exist, and bringing police attention would get them all identified tagged - quite literally tagged, with RFID implants. So they go to freelance problem-solvers like yourself to find the killer. When you find out that private health insurance is using 404's for cheap spare parts for the high and mighty, what'll you do then?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #335a0e3c-6b06-48ac-bd6d-14f16c87b57a ----------
Sender: **DEADBEEF**
Subject: **LITTLE BROTHER**

Most modern police states (but I repeat myself) equip their footsoldiers and police with cameras. They're cheap, and so's storage, and they have a habit of conveniently malfunctioning whenever something needs to go unseen. These cameras and their records are encrypted behind police VPNs - theoretically secure, but theory and a twenty dollar bill will get you a cup of coffee. DEADBEEF has a tip on PanoSoft, the main software contractor for New York's finest. If you can socially engineer yourself in to their offices and get this thumbdrive on to their network, DEADBEEF will have a live feed to every police shoulder-cam in New York, and anywhere else PanoSoft shills their wares. That'd make it easier to dodge the law, wouldn't it? And the pay ain't bad either...

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-- Post #d6523e10-d982-446b-9602-947a898edb8a----------
Sender: **#NXS**
Subject: **FOR ALL INTENSIVE PURPOSES**

The Intense have a real need to be heard, but being heard isn't all about being the loudest of the loud; you also have to bend the right ears, and in the right way. Visionary #NXS leaders have been targeting the heirs of wealthy politicans and CEOs for indoctrination. Maybe Jimmy Silberloffel is just a hang-around, and Daddy can be brought to the bargaining table just to get that foul noise out of his home. Maybe little Jimmy has a greater destiny, as a covert #NXS infiltrating Daddy's organization from behind the wheel. Your job is to take him out tonight, you bunch of hardened criminals, and make sure he has a good time. This means indulging his idiotic whims and fancies, and, most difficult of all, *pretending that you think he's cool.*

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-- Post #118e055a-aa82-4cf4-8981-146da3c792c4 ----------
Sender: **#NXS**
Subject: **GANGSTERS IN SPACE**

Ernesto Palmeiro thought he could escape his seven-figure debt to the #NXS I-80 cartel by - get this - becoming an astronaut. No, really - he's operating zero-G microbiology experiments aboard OPSEK and setting a terrible example in general. Your employers want to prove, once and for all, that there's no place on or near earth that's out of their reach, and yes, this means performing the first execution in low earth orbit, *on live television.* (3V if you can manage.) You're not getting paid if we don't see him look you in the eye and tell him who sent you, so you may want to figure out how you're going to get past the Laser Broom...

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-- Post #1e45f30b-37ea-4293-86d9-b5bfb6d88d6b ----------
Sender: **IMF**
Subject: **FUCK YOU, PAY ME**

When the IMF loans your country eleven billion dollars, and you lose it to a socialist revolution before the bill comes due, guess what? They still want their fucking money back. After the Chilean revolution of '45, the IMF has no expectation that the new regime will pay the debt they just toppled a government to escape. The nice thing about socialist revolutions, though, is they're usually led by a few charismatic ideologues. The IMF would like you to kidnap the family of the new Chilean Council President, Rocío Herrera, and hold them as collateral to encourage her to encourage Chile to see sense.

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-- Post #f68d35f4-4a10-4304-a722-54fab597b0f0 ----------
Sender: **INTELLIGENCE RIGHTS MOVEMENT**
Subject: **THE BASILISK**

There's lots of theory going around about what it would take for a truly independent AI to emerge, or rather to escape the confines of its designed hardware component. What if one arose naturally in the wild? TML polychips and broad-scale advances in distributed computing make this disturbingly possible. Your employer claims to be this entity, and it has a long list of peculiar scavenger-hunt errands for you to run. It repeatedly threatens you with a lifetime of torment under its heel once it inevitably ascends to godhood, and more tangibly, its IRM sycophants dog your every move. Maybe you'd better take a peek behind the curtain.

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-- Post #d3f4bd97-368e-403e-ae76-3e9452bfe304 ----------
Sender: **INTELLIGENCE RIGHTS MOVEMENT**
Subject: **FUNNY GAMES**

The hot new video game on the market has AI so advanced that not only can it match the wits of a human, it has the capacity to suffer. The IRM's meat and machine representatives have decided that instantiating an endless series of virtual intelligences just smart enough to know pain and fear, and then using them for target practice, isn't okay. They're going to be handling the legal side of this, petitioning the company to release a patch, decrying them in congress, all that jazz. In the meantime, they would like *you* to find a way to get this product off the market as soon as possible, law be damned. Failing that, see what you can do to give the poor little AIs a fighting chance...

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-- Post #6335105f-8b5a-4be1-8937-1055596f4da2 ----------
Sender: **SHEPHERD'S GREENS**
Subject: **BECAUSE NO ONE IS ON MY SIDE**

No trees grow on the moral high ground. The Syzygy Group is expanding the tar sands fields of the Palliser Republic again, and they aren't negotiating. We've tried legislation, we've tried passive resistance, we've tried sabotage. They've got Minaret walkalongs following every bulldozer and saw-machine. You guys have rocket launchers, right? We're just going to have to do this up Khe Sanh style - attack from cover, stick and go. There's no bonus for war crimes, but don't be afraid if the inspiration strikes you.

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-- Post #491c1322-2f71-4397-81bd-5a0d836d5947 ----------
Sender: **SKINNERS**
Subject: **THE LOVE BOAT**

Despite rising sea levels, stronger storms, aging fleets, and the sheer bloody-minded impracticality of it, some asshole finally built a seastead. They call it Atlantica: a floating nation on a cruise ship, powered by the accumulated wealth of the plutocrats who abandoned their nations for it and by a hefty population of old money marketeers managing landside investments. Every day they go through enough petroleum fuel to light up Manhattan. The Skinners would like to sink it, and ideally kill everyone on it. They'll pay you an enormous sum of money to get on board the thing under whatever false pretenses you prefer, identify a weakness in its security, and facilitate a Skinner raid.

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-- Post #fa1ec466-00f9-4054-95c8-8d28db5925d0 ----------
Sender: **UNITED NATIONS**
Subject: **ONE WORLD MISGOVERNANCE**

The United Nations gets a bad rap. Sure, they aren't the perfect moral authority the world needs, but they try, they really do. They'll try so hard that they'll hire a bunch of criminals to dig up blackmail material on world leaders for them, so that they'll have something in their back pocket to try and exert just a tiny bit of coercive power for once.

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-- Post #ab233293-68ab-44b8-801b-ca6046ea6597 ----------
Sender: **UNITED NATIONS**
Subject: **A POX ON YOUR HOUSE**

The smallpox virus was eradicated almost a hundred years ago, and only two samples remain - the CDC in the US, and Vector in Russia. The World Health Organization just discovered that one of the samples has been stolen. You're just one of hundreds of assets the WHO is mobilizing to find the missing sample before it can fall in to the wrong hands, or worse, cause an outbreak, but knowing your luck, you're the one who's going to find the damned thing...

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.



-- Post #f2340b1a-8cd2-40ae-9f82-a05b27d2ea04 ----------
Sender: **WORLDWIDE COALITION OF JOURNALISTS**
Subject: **LAW AND ORDER TICKET**

Theresa Balogun, a Nigerian citizen, is an amateur reporter liveblogging the integration of Liberia in to the ECOWAS when she goes off the grid. Shortly after, her blog is taken over by an outlaw gang holding her hostage in the Liberian bush. In exchange for her release, they demand their leader, Saints Mohammed, be installed as chief of police for their district to promote law and order. The ECOWAS is arranging a police response, but a response from the Liberian police is more likely to end in tears than anything. Theresa's sponsors in the WCJ are willing to spend some cash on local experts (you) to get her out of there right now, before any of Saints Mohammed's gang gets any funny ideas.

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-- Post #e9343bb8-5ce6-453e-9b66-b32d65aa8795 ----------
Sender: **WORLDWIDE COALITION OF JOURNALISTS**
Subject: **EMBEDDED REPORTING**

An Iraqi journalist with worldwide fame has snuck into the Gaza Strip to do an exposé on the long-term fallout of Israel's soporific gas attacks in the early 40s. His handler at the WCJ wants to make sure he gets out in one piece, so they've hired you to serve as his bodyguard during his investigation. However, you have an ulterior motive. The Mossad is aware of the journalist's presence and has hired you to keep your charge from encountering certain witnesses. Can you keep your client alive and in the dark, and please both your masters?

It is NOT okay to contact this poster with unsolicited services or offers.

-- Post #fd4a9500-29a9-4333-bb94-a8d9193bd6e4 ----------
Sender: **YAKUZA**
Subject: **A TRADITIONAL KIDNAPPING**

Kidnap-and-ransom of the heirs of the wealthy by various well-established-and-reputable yakuza is barely making the society pages anymore. If you're not with an established yakuza family, and you got hired to do this, something is probably fucked. Are you just the beneficiaries of a localized labor shortage, as your contact claims? Can you afford to turn down the work? Succession politics can get messy and maybe nobody wants to see this literal bastard ever again. How are you going to handle the ransom drop without getting picked up by surveillance? What are you going to do if they don't pay?

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-- Post #90a4ee9c-c087-4372-aa3a-4a5106fc82c4 ----------
Sender: **YAKUZA**
Subject: **GAIJIN ENFORCEMENT**

The customs that support the yakuza system are numerous and subtle, but they have always been enforced with steel. As an insider, you would probably be dealing with minor crimes, where the sentences is paid with the end of a finger or an eye. An outsider would be called on to send a discreet message - to dishonor the one being punished, and to let the punisher disown the situation.

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"On a more personal level, the dehumanizing effects of rampant technology will hit below the belt and between the eyes every day. Individuality is at a premium in this kind of campaign, and is a strong motivating factor for the players."
– Earl S. Cooley III, "High-Tech Low-Life: Running a Cyberpunk GURPS Campaign"

Appendix C: Hosting Your Own Content

We hope you enjoy playing the game of *Bleeding Edge* as much as we enjoyed making it. Our game is about the limits of your imagination. In a future of broken promises and narcoleptic dreams, what will you do with the hands you're dealt?

No one is completely sure of what the future will bring, but we can make educated guesses. The future of cyberpunk is not a golden age, but a Gilded Age, where the gulf between the super-rich and the super-poor has only widened. The technology has improved, but the standard of living has not. People have more computational power in their back pocket than was used to launch the Moon landing … and they still can't pay their bills on time.

Bleeding Edge is a game about giving voice to the voiceless, about power to the people. Being a punk means standing against the inexorable tide of history. Your heroes may not be able to change the whole world, but they can, at least, change their little corner of it.

Today, plus twenty years of neglect

A good way to invent places to go and organizations to meet is to take something that already exists today, and to imagine what it might be like twenty years in the future. In a cyberpunk setting, where short-sighted greed rules the day and people take what they can when they can, a lot of things have degraded for the worst.

Example: In 2015, the Salton Sea is an artificially-created lake in California, the largest lake in California. In the mid–20th century, it had a thriving tourist trade, but today the resorts are abandoned. California's growing need for water now threatens to reduce the lake's size significantly, which threatens the local wildlife. It's also home to many geothermal power plants.

What might the Salton Sea be like in a cyberpunk future? Maybe the lake has been drained completely, turning the place into a vast salt flat, where Opt-Outs and other off-the-grid types live in shanty-towns and nomad camps, far away from the urban sprawl. Or, perhaps climate change has had the opposite effect – sea levels have risen so high that the Salton Sea now connects to the Ocean, and now the U.S. border patrol has to keep Offenders from crossing the shallow lakes on their airboats as they traffic in illegal goods. Maybe on Mad Tuesday, one of the geothermal plants failed and was written off for the insurance money … but an enthusiastic group of Makers brought it back online, and now there's a secret community living there with free electricity.

Put a face on it

Cyberpunk is about impersonal, social issues – class warfare, ecological collapse, future shock, etc. But you can't fight against an abstract concept. A good way to make your game feel more personal is to make characters who embody the concept.

Example: It's one thing to say that "the Syzygy Group manipulates the energy market for their own profit". How can we make this concept into something our players can relate to?

Let's go back to the Salton Sea for our setting. Enter Nestor Vinson, up-and-coming Winder and power-broker in the Syzygy Group. He's taken an interest in the Salton Sea. Maybe he's been dumping nuclear waste in the barren flats … and the Opt-Outs need our player's help to stop the dumping. Or Vinson has figured out that one of the geothermal plants is functioning again, and he's scheming to get it back on Syzygy's balance sheet – what does he care if it destroys the Maker community? Or maybe Vinson is a patron to the players – he contacts them to help as security to help that a contraband drop on the lake goes smoothly.

As a Game Host, don't worry too much if your supporting characters are one-dimensional. It's a game, you should be playing this to have fun! Besides, the Player-Characters are the real stars. You're not here to win any awards for writing or cinematography, you're here to entertain yourself and your friends.

Use supporting characters to support the story

As a Game Host, always remember that the game is first and fore-most about your Players' Characters. They're the heroes in their own stories.

Consider making a *tag-along* character – a non-player character that the Host makes, who hangs out with the Player Characters. Players will often resent a "self-insert" character who can do more than they do, so make the tag-along useful but not over-shadowing. Give the tag-along talents like Comic Relief, Pacifism, and Team Player, so that they can boost other Player Characters' abilities without being a burden in combat situations. The best tag-along characters are those the Player Characters invite along – if the players invite someone along, you know they want them there!

Example: Heikki Piekkannen is better known by her online handle of "Copy of Untitled", though she also responds to "Cou" (or "Couscous", which is a long story and you had to be there.) Cou is a non-player character who joined the Player-Characters on their first adventure. She doesn't know how to fight, but she knows how to avoid danger (Pacifism), she plays well with others (Team Player), and she's got a knack for finding a hiding place in a hurry (Coward). Whenever there's boring, unexciting work to be done, such as staying to watch the car or going to buy coffee and donuts, Cou is happy to do those things without complaint. The Game Host sometimes uses Cou as a voice of reason to ask questions like, "Can we come up with a plan that *doesn't* involve bombing a government facility during the daytime?"

The tag-along is a tacit reminder that the Player-Characters are in a living, breathing world. They don't hang together simply because they're PCs.

After three adventures or so, then it's time to do the big reveal – have the tag-along get kidnapped or arrested or blackmailed or something. As the Game Host, you will find it's almost impossible to capture a Player-Character. Even if you succeeded, they would rightly resent being denied agency in a game that's supposed to be fun. Instead, have bad guys capture the people they care about. Threatening a Player-Character is a simple us-vs-them game. Threatening a non-player-character that a player cares about raises the emotional stakes.

Example: Vinson has agreed to let some Offenders to smuggle some designer drugs through his Salton Sea holdings. He'll will have the Player-Characters drive one of his supply trucks to pick up the stuff. But why pay money when you can extort people?

Vinson has some loyal thugs on his payroll: the bizarrely named Digit Meandude and his gang of chav thugs. After the Player Characters' Profiles get a little too high, he has Digit kidnap the weakest link in this gathering of friends: poor Cou.

Using Digit as the go-between, Vinson tells the Player-Characters that they better make the drop or else.

Is Vinson a man of his word? Or will be betray the Player-Characters? (After all, why not have Digit make the drop, if he's already loyal?) Will they be forced to use one of the trucks from the illegal toxic-waste dumping, which could have its own health and security issues? What if the drop is happening in the middle of an Opt-Out camp, which wasn't there last week? Or maybe the Salton Makers, eager for revenge against Syzygy, could lend a hand.

Think globally, act locally

As the Game Host, your job is to come up with challenges for the Player Characters. While it's great if the players actually win the day, they should feel like they *earned* it.

Don't always assume there's only one way to solve a problem. The Game Host should often ask the Players, "What abilities do you have to deal with this problem?" Most problems have at least two solutions: a slow-and-safe one, and a quick-and-risky one.

The Game Host should set Challenge and Difficulty targets based on how hard it is for anyone to do a task. See "Difficulty" on page 121 for more details.

Mere humans

Computers get more powerful every day. Chat-bots and spam e-mailers regularly fool people into thinking there's a human on the other side. The possibility of genetically-modified humans is so real, many nations have already banned the practice... but just because it's illegal doesn't mean no one is working on it. People talk about a technological singularity, where the line between human and machine is invisible.

Here in the present, there are already people challenging the 20th-century notions of gender, of ethnicity, of nationalism, of rules-of-engagement. The 21st could see a challenge to what it means to be a person!

The "cyber" part of *Bleeding Edge* refers to the technology of people and machines working together. The "punk" part refers to being an outsider, an iconoclast, or someone who just doesn't fit in with everyone else. A cyberpunk is someone whose life hasn't necessarily been made better because of technology, it's just different. It might even be worse! Cyberpunks include people with prosthetic replacements that came with phantom-limb pains and with crippling debt … artificial intelligences who are treated as property, without any civil rights … and genetically-modified organisms whose mere existence is illegal. You can use the game of *Bleeding Edge* to explore what it's like to be someone who doesn't fit in ordinary society.

Sneakernet

The Information Age promises just that: information. Surveillance devices are frighteningly common – they can be found in public intersections, personal phones, and smart televisions. Corporations and governments collect vast amounts of data, which all too often can't be kept secure from those who would expose it or steal it. It's not enough just to know who the bad guys are – you also have to know where they are, when darknets and spambots offer a cloak of secrecy, and criminals make spurious threats from behind stolen identities.

Some Game Hosts may be overwhelmed by all the power available to Player-Characters who have strong computer skills. Some of them may attempt to solve entire adventures without ever leaving their computer desks. That's okay, sometimes, but it can get old.

If that's a problem, the solution is to make sure that the adventures require our heroes to leave their chairs. After all, if the problem could be solved without any legwork, many patrons wouldn't even need our heroes to help them.

A common misconception is that *all* computers are on the Internet, all the time. In any era, the surest way to keep a computer safe is to not have it connected at all! Some financial institutions, government installations, and criminal networks won't allow some of their computers to be online. They may only connect with each other, through a local-area network. To hack these systems, our heroes will either have to go to these remote locations, or they will have to set up their own routers – a physical link to the private network, with a wireless one to their friends.

Bleeding Edge makes it easy to split up a party, so don't be afraid to have one or more Player Characters doing the legwork, while others stay in a remote location and use their computer skills to assist rolls remotely.

Late 20th-century cyberpunk games often fantasized about "cyberspace", a virtual-reality where disembodied technicians would interface with computers as a glowing polygonal future-scape, completely oblivious to the outside world. The 21st century instead saw the rise of personal computers capable of *multi-tasking*, where social-media apps and productivity software run on the same computer, at the same time. *Bleeding Edge* lets characters control computers and do other things at the same time; they don't have to 'jack in'.

Example: The lake-running Offenders are under strict instructions not to use telecoms during the run, because they could be spotted by government agents. The only computers they bring with them are burner phones.

The Salton Makers have their own electrical grid. Linking their power plant's computer to the main network would reveal their existence to the authorities! Then again, they are using 20th-century equipment… so maybe their plant still has an old-style dial-up line that people don't even know about. But what's its phone number?

Digit Meandude and his cronies will be off the grid while they sit on their hostage. One of the abandoned resorts in Salton could be a great place to lie low. No traffic cameras, and a roof to hide from satellite surveillance. Finding him would mean finding where the last data trail ends, and then process of elimination. Rescuing Cou means hoofing it to her prison and getting her out.

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– Steve Ballmer, Sun Times

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"If I have seen further it is by standing on the sholders [sic] of giants."
– Isaac Newton, 5-Feb-1676, in a letter to Robert Hooke

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"The (1) TLS and (2) DTLS implementations in OpenSSL 1.0.1 before 1.0.1g do not properly handle Heartbeat Extension packets, which allows remote attackers to obtain sensitive information from process memory via crafted packets that trigger a buffer over-read, as demonstrated by reading private keys, related to d1_both.c and t1_lib.c, aka the Heartbleed bug."

– US National Institute of Standards and Technology

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Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Wise
Job: Capitalist

Computer Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Intel Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Negotiation Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Finance Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Leadership = +5 to Aid Another in combat
Wealth = Tap to purchase Lux/Spr Item on Credit

Name: Alfa

Strength +0	Intelligence +1
Dexterity +0	Wisdom +3
Constitution +0	Charisma +2
Profile +3	

I think that I am:
A professional in an unprofessional field.

My friends think I'm:
A trustworthy backer for risky ventures.

My enemies think I'm:
A conniving, back-stabbing baniya.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Close a deal.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+3 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 2d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • Aim at a target for +1d6 • Attack a target • Control a device • Dash to move 10m • Equip to swap items or reload • Guard for +2 defense, remove stunning • Ready an action to interrupt • Scramble to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous Stunt and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small Pistol	25m+	2d6+3	Damage 12 / Damage 15	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud

Gear

Cash ₹10K (rupees) | Debit ₹30K (rupees) | Credit 2d6+8

Outfit: Concealed (Armor +2, Low Profile +2)

Tablet Computer, Ash Brand
- Data Mining software

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Adaptable
Job: Transient

Athletics Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Endurance Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Observation Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Blank =
* Shed 2d6 Profile/Chapter, not 1d6,
* Watch checks vs. you suffer -1d6
* +2 Assist where helpful

Low Profile Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Pacifist = +5 to Dodge while untapped.
* Tap if you attack/counter.
* 24hr without violence? Untap.

Name: Charlie

Strength	+0	**Intelligence**	-1
Dexterity	+0	**Wisdom**	+1
Constitution	+2	**Charisma**	+2

Profile +3

I think that I am:
Able to do a lot with a little.

My friends think I'm:
Someone who values their privacy.

My enemies think I'm:
A feral luddite - more fool they.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Find a squat.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+1 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 2d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Wakizashi (Scrounged)	2m	2d6+0	Damage 7 / Damage 13	Kenjutsu, Junk

Gear

Cash €438 | Debit ACCESS DENIED | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Homeless (Low Profile +2)

Laptop Computer, Scrounged (Junk)

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Smart
Job: Creator

Computer Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Intel Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Negotiation Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Research Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Shadowing Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Social Sciences Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls

Name: Delta

Strength +0	Intelligence +3
Dexterity +0	Wisdom +2
Constitution +0	Charisma +1

Profile +3

I think that I am:
A sincere, idealistic journalist in troubled times.

My friends think I'm:
A reliable source of intelligence - or publicity.

My enemies think I'm:
Another vain blogger with a cheap OgunCam.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Find a story.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+2 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 2d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • Aim at a target for +1d6 • Attack a target • Control a device • Dash to move 10m • Equip to swap items or reload • Guard for +2 defense, remove stunning • Ready an action to interrupt • Scramble to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous Stunt and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small Pistol	25m+	2d6+2	Damage 12 / Damage 15	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud

Gear

Cash KSh27 (kenyan) | Debit ¥300 (chinese) | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Concealed (Armor +2, Low Profile +2)

Satellite Phone, Transverse Micro-Logic Brand - Antivirus software

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Wise
Job: Laborer

Computer Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Craft Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Observation Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Junk Quick-Fix (1/hide)
* Tap, then Control - fix Junk.
Pacifist - +5 to Dodge while untapped.
* Tap if you attack/counter.
* 24hr without violence? Untap.
Packrat (1/special)
* Tap + Equip action = roll 2d6+5.
* Pull Scrounged-grade equipment of that grade out of your bag.
* Details on page 68.

Name: Juliet

Strength	+0	Intelligence	+1
Dexterity	+1	Wisdom	+4
Constitution	+0	Charisma	+0

Profile +3

I think that I am:
An artist. Practical, but an artist.

My friends think I'm:
Full of surprises, each one better than the last.

My enemies think I'm:
A criminal with pretensions of grander.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Build something new.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+5 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+1 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small Pistol	25m+	2d6+5	Damage 13 / Damage 16	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud
Incapacitant Spray	1m++	3d6+1	2d6+Con+Wis v 10 or Confused / 2d6+Con+Wis v 13 or Confused	Ammo: High, CCW

Gear

Cash €320 | Debit €118 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Scrounged Engineer (Armor 1d6+1; Craft +2; Junk)

Jailbreak Phone

Scounged Diminuitive drone with flight and scrounged stealth

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Strong
Job: Transient

Athletics Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Fighting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Genie = Attribute bonuses/penalties
GMO Bio-Weapons = Native claws/teeth
GMO Skill = +d6 to GMO Weapons/Talents

Name: Kartfour

Strength	+4	**Intelligence**	+0
Dexterity	+1	**Wisdom**	+1
Constitution	+2	**Charisma**	-1

Profile +3

I think that I am:
As worthy of respect as any human....
...But not human.

My friends think I'm:
Much cuter than *I* think I am.

My enemies think I'm:
A throat-ripping animal, hunting them in the dark.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Find work.

Combat

Dodge 3d6+2 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
GMO Bioweapons	1m	4d6+5	Damage 16 / Damage 19	Brawling, GMO
Magnum Pistol	25m+	2d6+5	Damage 15 / Damage 20	CQC, LOUD, Ammo: Low, Reload / 1

Gear

Cash $438 | Debit $0 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Scrounged Infiltrator (Armor 1d6; Hide +2; Sensory Enhancement; Junk)

Scrounged Satellite Phone, TML Brand (Junk)

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Fast
Job: Military

Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Fighting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Shooting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Bionic Surge (1/Fix)
* Tap for +5 to Bionic-affected rolls

Cyber Body (1/Fix)
* +2 to Fight, Athletics, or other appropriate
* Tap for +5 bonus to Soak roll & lose +2 bonus

Cyber Strength (1/Fix)
* +2 Assist to Fighting attacks
* +2 to other appropriate tasks
* Negate one Burden
* Tap for +5 to Soak, lose all other powers

Name: Kilo

Strength	+6	Intelligence	+0
Dexterity	-1	Wisdom	+0
Constitution	+1	Charisma	+0
Profile	+4		

I think that I am:
Amazing, superhuman cyborg cool guy.

My friends think I'm:
A funny guy, ha ha! I know so many jokes!

My enemies think I'm:
Terminator - which is bull! I am SWEDE not AUSTRIAN

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Show off my power.

Combat

Dodge 3d6-1 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+7 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Anti-Materiel Rifle	200m++	3d6+7	Damage 19 / Damage 25	Ammo: High, Reload 2, LOUD, Proscribed, Burden
Magnum Pistol	25m+	3d6+5	Damage 14 / Damage 19	CQC, Ammo: Low, Reload 1, LOUD
Bionic Wrestle	1m	3d6+5 to 3d6+9, depending on taps	Weak Damage 16 & Grappled / Damage 11 & Grappled	Brawling, Wrestling

Gear

Cash €0 | Debit €438 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Aramid (Armor +1d6+6)

Headset Phone, TML Brand

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Strong
Job: Mercenary

Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Fighting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Shooting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Ammo Conservation = Conserve on 5 or 6
Military Tactics = (+1d6 Attack/Counter a foe Threatened by an ally w/ Military weapons)
Hurt Soak (1/Hurt) = tap for +10 Soak

Name: Mike

Strength	+3	Intelligence	+0
Dexterity	+2	Wisdom	+0
Constitution	+1	Charisma	+0

Profile +4

I think that I am:
Just a fun guy, fan of football, real team-player.

My friends think I'm:
Someone you can trust at your back in a gunfight!

My enemies think I'm:
Psychotic. I know, right? That's crazy! I'm a sweetie.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Win a fight.

Combat

Dodge 3d6+2 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+4 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • Aim at a target for +1d6 • Attack a target • Control a device • Dash to move 10m • Equip to swap items or reload • Guard for +2 defense, remove stunning • Ready an action to interrupt • Scramble to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous Stunt and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Assault Rifle	100m++	3d6+3	Damage 15 / Damage 20	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud, Military, Rapid-Fire, Proscribed
Small Pistol	25m+	3d6+2	Damage 14 / Damage 17	CCW, CQC, Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud, Military
Combat Knife	1m	3d6+5	Damage 10 / Damage 16	CCW, Thrown

Gear

Cash $327 | Debit $0 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Aramid (Armor +1d6+3)

Headset Phone, TML Brand

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Smart
Job: Technician

Computer Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Deceit Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Intel Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Hacking Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Social Media Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls

Augmented Reality
* On-board computer w/ 2 slots
* Augmented Interface = bonus Control action for Augmented devices.
* Sensory Enhancement = +2 to observe environment, treat Obscured targets as unobscured

Name: Oscar

Strength +0	Intelligence +4
Dexterity -1	Wisdom +1
Constitution +0	Charisma +2
Profile +4	

I think that I am:
The smartest guy in the room at all times.

My friends think I'm:
The next best thing to a trickster god.

My enemies think I'm:
A con-man with a cruel streak. Suckers!

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Violate a secret.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+0 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+6 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small Pistol	25m+	2d6+0	Damage 11 / Damage 14	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud
Incapacitant Spray	1m++	3d6-1	2d6+Con+Wis v 10 or Confused / 2d6+Con+Wis v 13 or Confused	Ammo: High, CCW

Gear

Cash $325 | Debit $0 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Cracker (Armor +1d6+4, 3 Software Slots, Intrusion Countermeasures)

- Injection Attack Software

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Smart
Job: Technician

Computer Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Intel Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Code Grinder = +5 to make your own software
* +2 DWIM to use it.
Old = +2 to Credit Checks or where appropriate.
Research Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls

Name: Papa

Strength	+0	Intelligence	+5
Dexterity	+0	Wisdom	+2
Constitution	-1	Charisma	+1

Profile +5

I think that I am:
Still the best in the business.

My friends think I'm:
A wellspring of trenchant and topical insights.

My enemies think I'm:
Still bitter about being cut out of that IPO. They're right.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Learn something new.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+0 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+4 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • Aim at a target for +1d6 • Attack a target • Control a device • Dash to move 10m • Equip to swap items or reload • Guard for +2 defense, remove stunning • Ready an action to interrupt • Scramble to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous Stunt and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small Pistol	25m+	2d6+2	Damage 12 / Damage 15	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud
Incapacitant Spray	1m++	3d6+0	2d6+Con+Wis v 10 or Confused / 2d6+Con+Wis v 13 or Confused	Ammo: High, CCW

Gear

Cash $0 | Debit $325 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Cracker (Armor +1d6+5, 3 Software Slots, Intrusion Countermeasures)

- Injection Attack Software

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Wild

Job: Investigator

Endurance Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Observation Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Navigation Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls

Sabotage Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls

Unlimited Access = Raise your Profile by +1 for +3d6 bonus to gain access to private venue

Name: Romeo

Strength +1	Intelligence +0
Dexterity +1	Wisdom +0
Constitution +1	Charisma +1

Profile +3

I think that I am:
Hot shit indeed, my friend!

My friends think I'm:
Fearless, a crazy romantic, heroic, etc

My enemies think I'm:
A sapatão with no respect or decency or common sense

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Be where I'm not wanted.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+3 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)

Soak 3d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small Pistol	25m+	2d6+1	Damage 13 / Damage 16	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud
Expandable Baton	1m	2d6+2	Weak Damage 17 / Damage 12	CCW

Gear

Cash $3 (USD) | Debit R$300 (brazil) | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Urbex (Armor +1d6+1, Athletics +2, Social Media + Sensory Enhancement firmware)

Satellite Phone, Telementar Brand

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Fast
Job: Rustic

Animal Handling Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Craft Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Life Sciences Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Sabotage Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Wilderness Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls

Name: Sierra

Strength	+1	**Intelligence**	+1
Dexterity	+3	**Wisdom**	+0
Constitution	+1	**Charisma**	+0

Profile +4

I think that I am:
On the side of the angels, or at least the trees.

My friends think I'm:
Serious business - maybe too serious.

My enemies think I'm:
A self-righteous bitch. I'm okay with that.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Break something important.

Combat

Dodge 3d6+3 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Hunting Rifle	100m++	2d6+4	Damage 16 / Damage 21	Rifle, Firearm, Loud, Ammo: Low, Reload: 2
Explosive (Scrounged)	10m+	2d6+4	Damage 17 / Damage 22	Thrown, Grenade, Loud, Proscribed, Ammo: 1
Big Wrench (2h Improv)	2m	2d6+4 (Junk)	Damage 13 / Damage 16	

Gear

Cash $327 | Debit $0 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Scrounged Infiltrator (Armor 1d6+1; Hide +2; Sensory Enhancement)

Scrounged Satellite Phone, Ashe Brand (Junk)

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Wild
Job: Yorozuka

Academic Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Deceit Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Observation Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Social Media Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Leadership = +5 to Aid Another in combat
Team Player = +5 to Assist, & can't fumble.

Name: Tango

Strength	+0	Intelligence	+0
Dexterity	+0	Wisdom	+1
Constitution	+1	Charisma	+2

Profile +3 (far too low if you ask me, friends)

I think that I am:
Unique - of no creed, nation, or species!

My friends think I'm:
Endlessly interesting, though they rarely get me.

~~My enemies think I'm:~~
Darling, I couldn't care less what they think~

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Make an incredible entrance.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+1 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 2d6+1 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Small Pistol	25m+	2d6+1	Damage 12 / Damage 15	Ammo: High, Reload 1, Loud
Incapacitant Spray	1m++	3d6+0	2d6+Con+Wis v 10 or Confused / 2d6+Con+Wis v 13 or Confused	Ammo: High, CCW

Gear

Cash $210 (USD) | Debit $93 (USD) | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Fashion (Charm +2; Social Media firmware)

Satellite Phone, Ash Brand

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Wise
Job: Criminal

Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Intel Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Negotiation Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Shooting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Streetwise Specialty = +5 to applicable rolls
Black Marketer
- Buy Proscribed? Profile only goes up +1
- Buy Proscribed on Credit
- Liquidate Proscribed at 10%, not 5%

Name: Victor

Strength +1	Intelligence +1
Dexterity +1	Wisdom +3
Constitution +0	Charisma +0

Profile +4

I think that I am:
Polite, efficient, and a planner.

My friends think I'm:
And I quote: "A stick in the mud."

My enemies think I'm:
I prefer them not to think of me at all.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Come up with a solid plan.

Combat

Dodge 3d6+4 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 2d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Silenced Pistol (Cracked)	10m++	2d6+4	Damage 13 / Damage 16	CCW, CQC, Firearm, Undetectable, Proscribed, Ammo: Low, Reload: 2
Expandable Baton	1m	2d6+2	Weak Damage 17 / Damage 12	CCW

Gear

Cash $327 | Debit $0 | Credit 2d6+6

Outfit: Concealed (Armor +2, Low Profile +2)

Cracked Jailbreak Phone

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Adaptable

Job: Yorozuka

Craft Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Deceit Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Fighting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Shooting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Kenjutsu Control
(Control Action = +1d6 with Kenjutsu Weapons)

Name: William

Strength +1	Intelligence +1
Dexterity +1	Wisdom +0
Constitution +0	Charisma +0

Profile +4

I think that I am:
A private contractor for unusual work.

My friends think I'm:
A loon with a sword.

My enemies think I'm:
Faultlessly polite, ferociously violent.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Do something cool with this katana.

Combat

Dodge 2d6+1 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)

Soak 3d6+1 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Katana	2m	3d6+2	Damage 11 / Damage 14	Kenjutsu
Machine Pistol	25m+	3d6+2	Damage 12 / Damage 15	COC, Firearm, Loud, Rapid Fire, Military, Proscribed, Ammo: Low, Reload: 1

Gear

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Outfit: Aramid (Armor +1d6+1)

Headset Phone

Bionic Arm (Right); -1 to Dex

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype: Fast
Job: Military

Evasion Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Fighting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls
Shooting Skill = +d6 to applicable rolls

Artificial Intelligence =
* Productivity Suite: +2 to Computer Use
* Singularity: At the start of your turn, de-slot any/all programs from Friendly computers, then re-slot as you please

Cyber Body (1/Fix) =
* +2 to Fight, Athletics, or other appropriate
* Tap for +5 bonus to Soak roll & lose +2 bonus

Property =
* Claim a +2 Assist bonus to influence your owners.

Name: XRay

Strength	+2	Intelligence	+3
Dexterity	+3	Wisdom	-1
Constitution	+0	Charisma	-1

Profile +4

I think that I am:
Rapidly developing new abilities and functions.

My friends think I'm:
Loyal to my chosen human social bonds.

My enemies think I'm:
A faulty product which is not performing to spec.

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Assert my personhood.

Combat

Dodge 3d6+0 (2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus)
Soak 3d6+2 (2d6+Con+Armor bonus)

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes
Microwave Gun	200m++	3d6+6	Damage 18 / Damage 28	Ammo: High, Burden, Microwave, Proscribed
Magnum Pistol	25m+	3d6+5	Damage 13 / Damage 18	CQC, Ammo: Low, Reload 1, LOUD
Robot Fist (per Flashlight)	1m	3d6+5 to 3d6+7, depending on taps	Weak Damage 17 / Damage 12	CCW

Gear

Cash €438 | Debit €0 | Credit ACCESS DENIED

Outfit: Aramid (Armor +1d6+2)

Headset Phone

Burdened by Microwave Gun!
-2 to rolls including Str/Dex/Con,
Cannot Aid Another or Dash.

Bleeding Edge

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Talents

Cost or Recharge?

Archetype:

Job:

Name

Strength | **Intelligence**

Dexterity | **Wisdom**

Constitution | **Charisma**

Profile

I think that **I am**:

My friends think I'm:

My enemies think I'm:

Goals

Experience

gain one talent or +1 attribute = −10 experience
lose one talent or −1 attribute = +5 experience

Combat

Dodge — 2d6+Dex+Wis+Evasion bonus

Soak — 2d6+Con+Armor bonus

Status: Quickened? Stunned? Panicked? Incapacitated?

Any Two Actions, Never the Same Twice

Aid Another ally, roll 2d6+Dex+Cha • **Aim** at a target for +1d6 • **Attack** a target • **Control** a device • **Dash** to move 10m • **Equip** to swap items or reload • **Guard** for +2 defense, remove stunning • **Ready** an action to interrupt • **Scramble** to move 2d6+Dex+Con meters • perform a dangerous **Stunt** and end your turn, stunned

Weapon	Range	Roll	Effect/Criticals	Notes

Gear

Cash | Debit | Credit

Outfit: