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The Roleplaying Game

Second Edition



**Written By
Gareth Hanrahan**

Babylon 5 created by J. Michael Straczynski



Credits

Writer
Gareth Hanrahan

Editor
Ian Belcher

Graphic Design Consultant
Brandon Bray

Illustrations
Brandon Bray & Iordanis Lazaridis

Publications Manager
Ian Belcher

Production Director
Alexander Fennell

Proofreader
Scribendi

Playtesters
Mark Billanie, Tina Cook, Jason Denton, Jason Ellis,
Craig Freeman, Daniel Haslam, Mark Howe, Thomas
Howe, Alan Moore, Robert Poulin, Michael J Young

Special Thanks
J. Michael Straczynski, Fiona Avery,
Isabelle Richard, Skye Herzog

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From: max.eilerson@olympus/mars/stellarcom
To: editor@unibooks/earth/stellarcom
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Look, if whatever two-credit hack you dragged out of the gutter can't do his own research, then I really don't have time to do it for him. I'll send you some background information on IPX but tell him to get off his ass and do some actual work. I still don't see what you want to hire another hack for. I'm a talented writer and I know my first draft is more than publishable. If you want to butcher my unique voice just to put out another book of mass-market pap, then I can take my story elsewhere – and I'm the only person who can tell what really happened on the Excalibur. I want final approval over any changes made.

At some point, we need to talk movie rights and specifically who's going to play me. I've a very distinctive profile but it's not enough to just hire some handsome action hero. He'll need to capture my intelligence and my passion. I'll send you some names of possible candidates. When I'm back on Earth next time, we'll do lunch.

Finally, I want to make it clear that this isn't going to reveal any of InterPlanetary Expedition's corporate secrets. I've met the Drakh and I've met the IPX lawyers – I know which scare me more. So, we'll need to replace anything that they object to and replace it with fictionalised versions. To be honest, they'll probably welcome the opportunity to wash away any taint of association with Clark.

And I'll put my lawyers on anyone who accuses me of being a collaborator or xenophobe. I have a very deep, very intimate appreciation for all species. Especially dead ones with advanced technology.

Dr Maximillian Eilerson
PhD (Arch, U. Mars.), PhD (Linguistics, UCLA), B.A (Hons, U. Mars).

INTRODUCTION

In many ways, the *Babylon 5* universe is a science-fiction retelling of a fantasy epic. There are ancient prophecies, slumbering monsters, warriors with bright swords (or StarFuries), wise mentors, jealous kings, powerful wizards, angels and demons... and there are also crazed, greedy adventurers who delve into deadly, trap-filled dungeons in search of treasure and magic items. They are the employees of IPX – and they have just hired you.

This sourcebook details the history and inner workings of the IPX corporation, from its connections to EarthForce to the search for a cure to the Drakh Plague. Characters can be employed by the corporation, or struggle against it, or just use the equipment and new character options presented in this book. There is a galaxy out there to be plundered.

IPX – exploring the past to bring you the future.



HISTORY

To the modern ear, the very name InterPlanetary Expeditions sounds quaint. A holiday trip to Mars or Proxima is well within the means of most Earth citizens. Going to another planet is hardly a remarkable thing, so the company name sounds absurdly grandiose, on a par with 'Intercity Expeditions' or 'Slightly Overgrown Garden Explorers'. Small wonder, then, that the company prefers to use its initials, IPX, in all advertising and public relations material.

Back when the company was founded, though, interstellar travel was impossible and even reaching the moon was a challenge.

2080 to 2110: The Early Years

You can't underestimate the importance of real estate. Land's still the foundation of wealth, really. There are whole worlds out there and that's where the real money is.

- Jasper Hartung, January, 2079

The history of IPX cannot be divorced from the history of the Hartung family. Various members of this corporate dynasty would guide the growing company through its fortunes and failures as it changed from its initial purpose to the home of the xenoarchaeology specialists of the modern era. The first Hartung to be involved in IPX was Jasper Hartung, a self-made billionaire and investor. His company, Hartung Holdings, had sizeable assets in the aerospace and orbital construction industries; as space became the next battlefield, his fortune grew and grew. In 2077, Hartung became convinced that the military space race was beginning to fade but that the new technologies developed during the rush to orbit and the moon had finally brought colonisation of Mars and the Jovian moons within reach. Hartung set about purchasing agricultural, chemical and biotechnology companies as well as aggressively raising funding for a new megacorporation – InterPlanetary Expeditions.

Hartung conceived of a company that would have whole planets as its end product. IPX would turn Mars and

Ganymede and Titan and Europa into garden worlds, new homes for Humanity, and believed that Humanity would pay a handsome price for their new homes. It was a grand dream and one that many believed was technically unfeasible. The terraforming of Mars – the closest and most suitable of the other habitable worlds – was estimated to take centuries, even millennia by some scientists, although Hartung insisted it could be done within 30 years given enough investment.

There had been earlier attempts to colonise Mars, culminating in the establishment of the Ares base in 2065. This first colony was abandoned over a lack of funds and the outbreak of World War III put an end to that period of activity. Humanity would not return to Mars until the Dawn missions of 2101 and the establishment of the EA Dome in 2134.

IPX's first contracts were closer to home. The company was involved in constructing the first large-scale lunar arcologies, which demonstrated its growing expertise in life support and ecological design and in space construction. Hartung accepted the lunar contracts with distaste – they were poorly-paid government jobs and did not give IPX any holdings of its own on the moon. He continued to push for a full-scale colonisation of Mars but the civilian space race he had anticipated went in a different direction. The asteroid belt and the smaller Jovian moons were rich in metals and rare minerals, and those who dared seek their fortunes in space went to the airless rocks of the Belt instead of the red dunes of Mars. IPX was just as involved in the 'Belt Rush' as anyone, happily supplying spacecraft, portable habitats, hydroponics and life support systems to the belters. Yet it is a sad fact that by 2100, 'InterPlanetary Expeditions' had launched a grand total of nine expeditions to other planets after 20 years in business. Worse still, only two of those expeditions had set up any sort of permanent offworld base.

Jasper Hartung died in 2102, leaving the bulk of his fortune to his son, Henry. His will also established the Hartung Foundation, a non-profit group dedicated to sponsoring private efforts to colonise other worlds. Jasper's niece, Martina, was appointed as administrator of the Foundation. Meanwhile, the position of CEO and chairman of IPX passed to Yuri Fahrner, who continued to build the company's skills in engineering and habitat design. Yuri was seen as a more stable guiding hand than

Jasper Hartung, who had lost the confidence of many investors with his apparent obsession with Martian colonisation. Ironically, it was Yuri who was to oversee both the dawn of IPX's real involvement with Martian terraforming and the company's first war.

2110 to 2140: Lawyers, Guns and Money

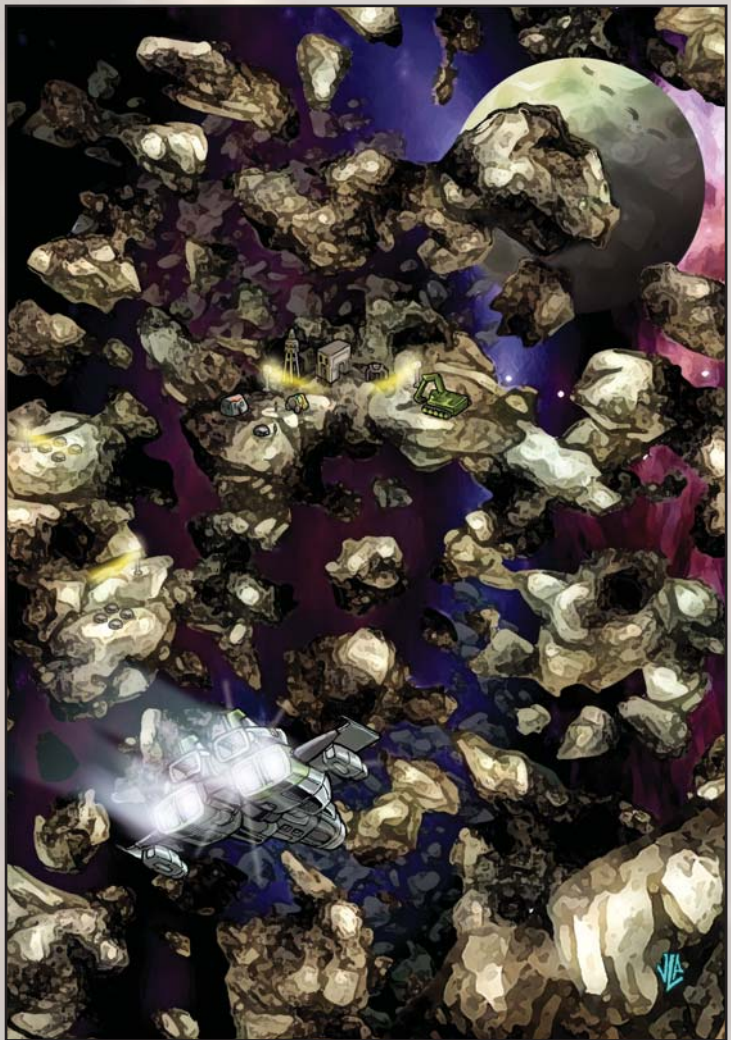
Asteroids are very unstable, you know. They fall apart all the time.

- Yuri Fahrner, testimony during the Trojan Point Incident Inquiry

During Jasper Hartung's time as CEO, the company had been focussed on colonising planets and the technologies it had developed during this time were just stepping stones to this ultimate goal. After Jasper's death, the company took a new approach and went for the easy, short-term goal. Everyone else was getting rich off mining the asteroid belt and while IPX was making a considerable amount of money by supplying equipment to the mining corporations, Fahrner pointed out that the company could make an awful lot more money by cutting out the middlemen and exploiting the belt themselves. They had the ships, the equipment, the expertise and the manpower.

What they did not have were the claims. IPX was a late entrant into the Belt Rush and other corporations had already staked claims to the most profitable sections of the asteroid belt. While there were still unclaimed parts on the margins, these wild zones were the domain of the fiercely independent beltters – the same pioneering, rugged people who Jasper Hartung dreamed would be flocking to Mars. IPX initially offered to recruit the more successful beltters but few were interested in becoming part of another grasping corporation. The company turned to other methods of persuasion.

The first shot in IPX's private little war with the belter community was fired by the other



side. Rick's Rock was a small habitat in orbit of Callisto, one of Jupiter's moons. Over 200 people lived and worked there. The habitat's life support system was an IPX design and the company's contract stated that IPX was obliged to provide repairs and maintenance to the vital system. In September of 2118, an IPX representative contacted Rick's Rock and informed the beltters that a design flaw had been found in the life support system and that the Rock would have to be evacuated while repairs were made. Moving 200 people was a massive undertaking for the beltters, who normally operated in tiny ships that could hold no more than five or ten people. In a classic example of the belter community spirit, every mining ship within range of Rick's Rock immediately responded to their call, abandoning their current mining operations and flying to the rescue of the colony.



IPX miners swooped in and took possession of the suddenly abandoned mine sites. The 'problem' at Rick's Rock, a problem allegedly so dire that the whole station had to be evacuated immediately, was fixed within 48 hours of the IPX technicians arriving – and at least some of that 48-hour period was taken up with the technicians hacking into the Rick's Rock computer network and stealing the belter's survey data.

In short, Rick's Rock was nothing but an IPX scam to draw the miners away from their claims. When an infuriated young belter discovered an IPX extraction crew hard at work on 'his' asteroid, he turned his mining laser on the corporate team, killing one IPX engineer and maiming two more. IPX responded with full force, sending corporate mercenaries in to deal with the belter 'terrorists', while their lawyers staked claims to much of the belter territory. The war would drag on for nearly 30 years and there are still said to be hostile, bitter beltters lurking out in the moons of Neptune or in the Oort cloud who plot their revenge on a long-vanished company. The clashes between IPX and the independent miners spread as disenfranchised miners turned to piracy. The results were the so-called 'Raider Wars' of the 2130s and the rise of the Belt Alliance as a military force in the solar system. Ironically, IPX's weapons division ended up supplying many of the weapons and ships used by the Belt Alliance to kick IPX's mining division back to Mars.

Fahrner's bid for short-term profits through belt mining never really paid off and while the change in corporate focus to mining did increase IPX's profits, the Belt War was hugely costly and came too late for the company to garner the same vast profits as the other mining companies who got in at the start. Perhaps it was this defeat which led Fahrner to re-evaluate Jasper Hartung's earlier plans. By 2125, IPX was back to sending expeditions to Mars. The Martian division of the company was led by Henry Hartung, Jasper's son. If IPX was too late to beat its competitors to the belt, then it would certainly beat them to Mars!

The market for Martian colonies had improved greatly since Jasper's death. The flood of eager colonists had yet to materialise (that would have to wait for the development of jump technology and the rise of John Carter) but EarthForce and EarthGov were both interested in developing Mars. IPX-built habitats sprang up across the ruddy tundra of the Red Planet and the first terraforming research station was constructed in 2132. Finally, the company was doing actual InterPlanetary Expeditions.

2140 to 2160: The Martian Roswell & The Collapse

Alien Artefact Was Just A Meteor, Says EarthForce

- Headline in Daily Dome newspaper

In 2147, IPX surveyors were working on the cratered plains of Syria Planum, searching for the best site for the ninth terraforming station. One of the surveyors picked up a tiny magnetic anomaly. Such things are not uncommon on Mars. Most are debris from some earlier mission or probe, or more often simply chunks of iron-heavy meteorite. The anomaly was not buried very deeply, so the survey team decided to dig it up.

Accounts of what happen next vary. According to official reports, the survey team found fragments of a dangerously radioactive meteorite, which necessitated EarthForce sealing off the area around the survey site for hundreds of kilometres until every shard of the lethally radioactive ore was secure. According to rumour and legend, they found... something else. Some stories talk about alien ships or even alien bodies. Others insist the surveyors found the ruins of a native civilisation, a Martian race that had thrived on the Red Planet millions of years before Humanity evolved. Other stories talk about evidence of secret missions to Mars in the early 2020s, in the 1980s, even in the 1940s ('Nazi Rocket Found On Mars' was one notable headline). The whole incident ended up in the same category as Roswell or the Philadelphia Experiment – a conspiracy theory that was disproved over and over but never went away completely.

By the 2220s, though, it would be an open secret within IPX that the company did actually find something in the Martian sands. The 'something' was a handful of alien artefacts, broken fragments of mysterious origin. IPX and EarthForce researchers pored over the fragments for decades but were unable to discover much about them. They appeared to be organic technology of some sort but they had been exposed to tremendous heat and pressure that had completely destroyed their internal workings. Save for the occasional odd energy emission and a feeling of unease and 'darkness' picked up by stronger telepaths, the fragments never gave up any secrets

Two of the three IPX installations in Syria Planum were shut down in the 2200s; the third's still operational. The major settlement in Syria Planum now is the Psi Corps colony there, which is built almost on top of the original survey site. The director of the Psi Corps, Kevin Vacit, visited the IPX labs in San Diego in 2148, soon after they dug up the artefacts. I'm guessing the Corps took over a lot of the research from IPX.

The discovery of the fragments did galvanise IPX's efforts on Mars. The ninth, tenth and twelfth IPX installations on Mars were all built on Syria Planum and all of them contained EarthForce-funded laboratories. This was the beginning of the company's involvement with xenoarchaeology, with bioweapons research and with dangerous EarthForce black ops and cover-ups.

By 2150, IPX was showing record profits. It was a sprawling corporation with far too many ill-matched subsidiaries and interests – from agricultural labs on Mars, to bulk freighter construction in Earth orbit, to biotech weapons research, to insurance and investment portfolios inherited from Hartung Holdings. Analysts called for the corporation to spin off some of its subsidiaries but Fahrner did just the opposite, centralising more and more power.

The political situation on Earth was hugely volatile in the 2150s. The destruction of San Diego by a terrorist nuke was the spark that triggered an explosion of war and world-wide paranoia. The still-unsteady Earth Alliance was desperately trying to hold the aggressive military powers of China and the Russian Bloc in check, as the two fought increasingly bloody proxy wars. World War IV loomed on the horizon.

IPX was ready for war. Fahrner had been stockpiling weapons and supplies for nearly ten years, as well as investing in other war-related industries. All of the company's available liquid assets, all its war chest and a considerable amount of

borrowed money were gambled on Humanity tearing itself apart in a catastrophic global conflict. If the gamble paid off, IPX would make trillions.

Then, in 2156, the Centauri made first contact with Humanity. The impending global crisis dissolved as Humanity looked at the strangers from another world and realised that the differences between one nation and another were very, very trivial compared to the gulfs between the stars. The world stepped back from the brink and everyone rejoiced as peace broke out across the land.

Yuri Fahrner, CEO and chairman of InterPlanetary Expeditions, stepped out a 30th storey window. He left behind a company that was suddenly on the verge of bankruptcy.

Oh, the stories they tell in the IPX backrooms about the early days. Jasper was a lunatic obsessed with Martian independence and scattered weapons dumps all over the planet in preparation for a revolution that never came. Yuri was a bastard who'd sell his own mother's corpse to the pak'ma'ra; Henry had all sorts of daddy issues and Claudia, well, she got very friendly with several Centauri diplomats. They can do surprising things with those tentacles.

2160 to 2190: Division and Rebirth

There are other races out there. Most of them are primitive savages. You need not trouble yourself with them – the Centauri Republic has brought the Pax Centauri to the galaxy.

- Comment from a Centauri diplomat to the AEGIS Committee



With debts from its never-profitable Mars division mounting and with the massive financial problems caused by Fahrner's blunder, IPX bowed to the inevitable and was broken up. Henry Hartung tried to salvage his father's dream of corporate-built planets but ironically he was foiled by the very foundation his father had set up. The Hartung Foundation helped fund John Carter's colonisation of Mars. His fleet of barely spaceworthy ships took off from Earth and jumped through hyperspace through the Mars beacon. Suddenly, there were thousands of people living on Mars and IPX's Martian division became worth something. A consortium of investors bought the terraforming technology and formed a new corporation called Universal Terraforming. Other megacorps swallowed up IPX's manufacturing, mining, financial and most of its weapon research concerns. Hartung was able to salvage little more than the name, the EarthForce contacts and some of the researchers.

As far as most people were concerned, IPX ceased to exist. Before 2160, IPX was one of the 30 biggest corporations on the Earth stock exchange; after the break-up, it was not in the top 3,000. The original goal of IPX – to build and sell new habitable worlds – was now obsolete, especially as the Centauri brought word that habitable planets were not especially rare in the galaxy. Laboriously terraforming worlds like Ganymede or Titan seemed far too much work

compared to the idea of just jumping through hyperspace to some garden world. The first world found by Humanity was the pleasant planet of Proxima, which put the nail in the coffin of the terraforming movement for a century and took much of the gloss off the settlement of Mars. Nor was IPX able to compete with the other megacorporations – its collapse and subsequent break-up meant that IPX no longer had the resources and technology to colonise a new world. While Hartung did attempt to build support for such a venture in 2175 (he tried to launch a settlement on Vega 7), it was clear that once again, IPX was too late to catch the wave of enthusiasm for the new frontier. The other megacorporations had gotten there first.

IPX might have vanished entirely by 2170, if not for Hartung's connections to EarthForce. He got access to what became known as the *Centauri Report*, a compilation of the information, documents, remarks and rumours about the rest of the galaxy obtained from the Centauri soon after first contact. Much of the Centauri Report would turn out to be Centauri propaganda and self-aggrandisement: *'ours is a vast, vast galactic empire, oh people of Beta 9.'*

But there were many useful pieces of information in the report. One piece in particular caught Hartung's eye – there were numerous worlds described as: *'Once occupied by inferior species, who were destroyed by war or by negligence.'*



Hartung's daughter, Claudia, was a noted archaeologist. He brought her onto the board of IPX and began to restructure the company to focus on xenoarchaeology. EarthForce's New Technologies division was cautiously supportive of the idea but no one was really sure what was out there. One of the few advantages left to IPX was their mastery of hostile environments. The company had invested billions of credits on developing technologies to survive on worlds like Venus and Io, a suite of technologies that was seen as pointless in a galaxy full of Earth-like worlds; however, while hostile environment gear was now largely useless in colonisation, it would prove vital in archaeology.

The first IPX xenoarchaeological expedition was launched in 2173 under the direct command of Claudia Hartung. Its target was a moon in the Proxima system; satellite flybys had shown signs of habitation there.

The Proxima Dig

The dig on Proxima III's moon – later named Grainne – was the first real xenoarchaeological expedition and the basic principles laid down then still endure, from the initial use of satellite photography to computer-aided contextual translation. Geophysical surveys turned up the outline of the buried tachyon transmitter and one of the field engineers developed a system for preserving the delicate honeycomb structure of the transmitter panels while removing them from the ground.

The dig eventually discovered that the moon was once used as an outpost by a race called the Markab. The aliens had abandoned their base over a century before IPX found it and had stripped it of all useful technology. The harsh conditions on the moon's surface had destroyed much of what remained but a buried transmitter gave IPX and EarthForce the first clues towards non-Centauri tachyon communication technology.

By 2185, IPX had funded over 30 expeditions to worlds discovered by EarthForce explorers. These expeditions had brought back a wealth of scientific and archaeological finds but EarthForce wanted something of definite military value. One dig in the Orion system discovered the ruins of an alien starbase, belonging to an as yet unidentified species. The starbase's computer archives were decoded by IPX and they listed several ships as 'lost or abandoned'. One of the ships was logged as having been abandoned in orbit of Orion V, a gas giant. IPX satellites circled over the vast gas giant, searching for the proverbial needle in a haystack, for the wake of a tiny ship in a decaying orbit.

They eventually discovered it in the upper atmosphere. In a daring salvage operation, IPX ships dropped down into the planet's atmosphere and strapped

booster rockets to the alien hulk, giving it the thrust it needed to escape its doom. Once back in a higher orbit, IPX tore the ship apart, looking for useful technology. They found a bizarre energy-based defensive system, similar to the EarthShield ballistic missile shield that had led to the creation of the united EarthForce over a century before. By 2194, IPX scientists had reverse-engineered the technology. These 'interceptors' were sold to EarthForce for a quite staggering amount of money and would prove to be a vital part of Humanity's growing military strength in the coming century. IPX's new direction had finally paid off.

2190 to 2230: Exploring The Past To Bring You The Future

There are races out there with technology hundreds of years in advance of ours, but we can close that gap in only a few years. Imagine what the scientists of the 18th century could have done with a combustion engine to study, or the 20th century with a fusion reactor.

- Claudia Hartung

Claudia Hartung succeeded her father as chairman of IPX in 2199 and it was under her leadership that IPX assumed its current structure. It became apparent that if IPX continued to follow in the wake of the Explorer Corps and the other corporations, it would eventually lose some key discovery to one of its growing number of competitors. The early period of Human hyperspace travel was a golden age for the entrepreneur and the explorer. Who knew what technological wonders were on the other side of the next jump gate? One penniless Human hitchhiker on a Centauri trade vessel became a millionaire overnight because he was the only one on the ship willing to talk to the pak'ma'ra in the hold and so learned about the rich Quantum-40 deposits on Melat. A common form of seaweed from the oceans of Abba was discovered to be an incredibly effective stimulant for Humans, leading to the development of stims. The Earth Alliance was suddenly awash with new products and new technologies, and IPX was determined to provide as many of them as possible.



IPX therefore pushed out beyond known space. Not only did their ships explore towards Centauri space and the League worlds but they also travelled spinwards and rimwards. They also built connections and spy networks with alien races; IPX was one of the first Human companies to employ aliens and had non-Humans in executive positions up until the 2260s. Ironically, many of IPX's new contacts warned them about pushing too far. Towards the Rim, they whispered, space grows strange and ancient and terrible races walk unknown paths between the stars. The older spacefaring races like the Markab were superstitiously afraid of the Rim of the Galaxy. IPX had no such fears.

Claudia Hartung died in 2225. In the latter stages of her life, she divided her time between running the company and participating in digs, a practice which drew a great deal of criticism from shareholders. In May of 2225, an expedition discovered the ruins of an alien city on Jericho II. Hartung went to oversee the dig personally, as it was the single largest operation yet undertaken by the company. On August 23rd, all contact with the expedition was lost. A rescue mission arrived in November but could find no sign of Claudia Hartung or any of the 307 archaeologists, scientists, field-workers and other staff stationed at the dig. Examination of the records and logs showed nothing out of the ordinary, except that Hartung had ignored the recommendations of safety engineers when drilling into the lower levels of the ruined city.

The Jericho Incident would lead to a major change in how IPX operated. The families of the vanished workers sued the company, using the records from the dig as proof of Hartung's negligence. The resulting settlement was costly but not half as costly as the damage to IPX's reputation. Many of its top researchers defected to rival xenoarchaeology companies and others refused to work with IPX again unless the corporation made a bigger commitment to safety and careful exploration.

I've read the logs of the Jericho incident. They're fakes. It looks like the whole thing was far more of a disaster than they wanted to admit, like they drilled into an active reactor or something. Boom – and old Claudia gets blamed. IPX is a great place to work. It keeps you sharp. Screw up, and you pay the price.

Internally, Claudia Hartung's death left a power vacuum. Several members of the board remembered the disastrous leadership of Yuri Fahrner, and so would only support a Hartung for chair. Others wanted a more experienced candidate than any of the living Hartungs. They compromised by electing Sidney Barratt as chairman, a grandson of Jasper Hartung and cousin of Claudia.

Barratt was a businessman, not an archaeologist, and had even less patience than Claudia did with the demands and quibbling of the scientific community. He established a definite and strict firewall between 'IPX the company' and 'IPX expeditions' to shield the corporation from the bulk of its legal responsibilities. Field operatives would essentially be independent contractors, taking all the risks and making all the decisions themselves. There would be virtually no oversight from head office. Results would be all that counted, not safety or valid archaeology. To encourage the sort of 'adventurer and tomb robber' he needed, Barratt reactivated the dormant Hartung Foundation, using it to fund the purchase of small explorer ships.

2230 to 2235: The Dilgar War

It would be immoral for us to make use of the weapons of such an enemy.

- Senator Helen Locke

IPX played a key role in the war against the Dilgar. Three IPX vessels accompanied Admiral Hamato's Earth Expeditionary Force into Dilgar-occupied space. Not only did IPX have as much experience as anyone in dealing with alien races but they were also experts in reverse-engineering technology, especially biotechnology – and biotechnology was the Dilgar's speciality. The Dilgar War was massively profitable for IPX, yielding more finds and new technologies than any other three missions put together.

The war reaffirmed IPX's value to EarthForce. Hamato's own logs spoke of the 'great debt owed to the InterPlanetary Expeditions scientists for developing a cure for a lethal plague released by the retreating Dilgar on Krish', while private communications from the IPX ships to EarthForce New Technologies division carried a constant stream of reports on Dilgar hull designs, bioweapons, spinal lasers, genetic engineering and other valuable technologies.

The Dig on Omelos

The star of the Dilgar homeworld went nova shortly after the war. The explosion consumed the inner worlds of the system and bathed the rest in lethal levels of radiation. The surviving Dilgar were wiped out. When the burst was detected three years later, IPX launched an expedition to the dead world.

The Dilgar knew the nova was coming. The expedition found a world of graves. City upon city was filled with newly-built tombs, each one containing a single Dilgar corpse. The Dilgar also left thousands of booby traps; fortunately, many of these were biological weapons that were sterilised by the radiation from the star. The expedition's great success was the reconstruction of a chemical works which had been partially destroyed by exploding power plants.

2235 to 2245: Growing Pains

Who the hell is George Waugh?

- transcript of IPX board meeting

EarthForce's stellar performance in the war against the Dilgar was based partially on the technology recovered by IPX, and this did not go unnoticed by other races. The older spacefarers like the Abbai, Markab and Vree were unwilling to scavenge technology from the numerous dead worlds and elder civilisations scattered across the galaxy but the ambitious newcomers to the galactic stage had no such compunctions.

Human xenoarchaeologists were joined by rivals from the Narn, the

Drazi, the Brakiri and other expansionist races. There was also a resurgence in archaeology as a interest among bored Centauri aristocrats. Other Alliance corporations continued snapping at IPX's heels. Suddenly, the dead world became very crowded indeed.

Another battle was taking place in the IPX boardroom on Mars. Claudia Hartung's son, Christopher, was engaged in a struggle for power with the company CEO, Barratt. Hartung managed to rally the support of the IPX scientists and researchers, as well as a sizeable proportion of the shareholders. The clash between Hartung and Barratt began over personal differences but quickly escalated until it divided the whole corporation.

In 2242, Hartung launched a bid for control of the board. New investors had purchased 12% of the total shares, giving them the deciding vote in any skirmishes between Barratt and Hartung. By forcing a vote of no confidence in Barratt over IPX's falling share of new xenoarchaeology finds, Hartung hoped to take control of the company founded by his great-grandfather. When the dust settled, however, the victor was a dark horse candidate, a former EarthForce officer named Waugh. IPX's primary customer, EarthForce's New Technologies Division, had tired of IPX infighting and decided to take a more active role in controlling the troubled corporation.

2245 to 2250: The Earth-Minbari War

There's another chunk at 14 degrees. Christ. What did the Lexington do to her?

- transcript of transmission between IPX salvage pods

IPX divides alien races into several categories based on their technological value. Right at the top of the scale in terms of return on investment is the 'highly advanced race', a species whose technology exceeds any known race but can still be reverse-engineered and exploited within a reasonable timeframe. Up until first contact with the Minbari, this 'highly advanced culture' remained theoretical – IPX had never found any culture with a Technology Level notably higher than that of the Centauri. Now, there was a race with technology beyond their most profitable dreams but instead of being conveniently extinct, their advanced weapons were being used to wipe out Humanity.



'What did you do in the war, Max?'

I turned away so he couldn't see the pain of the memories, of the desperate secret battles against the Minbari, of the vicious staff fight against the captain of the *Black Star*, of seducing the beautiful high priestess to get their command codes... none of it could be told.

'I got an exemption from the planetary draft,' I replied through gritted teeth. 'I was finishing another PhD.'

A doctorate... in danger.

- from *Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World* by Max Eilerson

If EarthForce had been able to capture any of the Minbari ships, IPX might have been able to reverse-engineer the enemy's chief advantage – the incredible Minbari stealth technology. The only enemy vessel to be destroyed was the Minbari flagship, the *Black Star*, and that was nuked so thoroughly that only the tiniest fragments were salvaged. IPX's main contribution to the war was using its contacts with alien races to obtain weapons.

2250 to 2260: The Modern Era

The years after the Earth-Minbari War were massively profitable for IPX. As EarthForce rebuilt its fleets and forces, the budget for new technologies soared and IPX and its competitors were there to fulfil that demand. Explorers skirted the borders of Minbari space, mapping the region controlled by the mysterious aliens and searching for clues to Minbari technology. They found nothing but a wall of mystery. No race had had any contact with the Minbari Federation in centuries, save for warnings not to trespass into their space.

What the explorers did find was even more interesting – tales of organic technology, of living ships and of another race called the Vorlons. Capturing this organic technology became IPX's number one priority. With organic technology, the Alliance fleets would be capable of defending against any foe, even the Minbari. The other races believed that the Earth Alliance had some secret weapon that they had used to defeat the Minbari at the Battle of the Line – organic technology could be such a weapon.

In 2253, IPX researchers working in the old Syria Planum field discovered a new anomaly. They began excavating the

site and found an intact alien vessel of incredible size and complexity. The ship was obviously organic technology, so EarthForce brought in Psi Corps researchers in the hopes of making contact with the living ship. In the short time IPX had to investigate the ship, they learned a great deal about the potential of organic technology – hulls that harmlessly dissipated any energy they were exposed to, stealth technology far beyond that of the Minbari defensive systems. Three weeks after the ship was discovered, another identical ship appeared in the Martian skies over the dig. It dug the buried ship out of the desert and reactivated it. The two ships flew up into the Martian atmosphere and somehow vanished into hyperspace before reaching orbit.

Most of the dig was destroyed when the second ship blasted the soil and sand away but a radio transponder had been embedded into the outer skin of the buried ship. Scanners in hyperspace picked up a stray signal from the transponder as the alien ships passed the Io jump gate, indicating to IPX that the transponder was still active – and could be followed. The signal was too weak to be detected over interstellar distances, so the company launched hundreds of automated probes, each one scanning Rim worlds for that elusive signal.

It took nearly three years to find that signal again, years that IPX spent profitably expanding its operations. A new head office was built on Mars, while new branch offices were established on a dozen other worlds. The galaxy was rapidly becoming a much smaller place, as new trade and diplomatic efforts like the Babylon Project brought disparate alien races together.

The loss of the Icarus was a disaster for IPX. The company wanted to keep its interest in Alpha Omega III as secret as possible to avoid competitors and other agents from

learning about the black ships from Mars. The high-profile destruction of the expedition drew attention to the company's efforts on the Rim, forcing it to wait and spread misinformation before dispatching another ship to Z'ha'dum. By then, it was too late.

2260 to 2262: The Clark Regime

When the various Hartungs were running the company, IPX managed to stay mostly clear of political entanglements – while its primary customer and chief patron was always EarthForce, the company always had some sympathy to the Mars separatist movement. Now, with Waugh as CEO, IPX became unprecedently involved in Earth politics in its support for President Clark. IPX installations on Mars were used to support military efforts against the resistance; reports from scouts in the field were passed directly on to EarthForce Intelligence and the Ministry of Peace.

However, IPX was rapidly being sidelined by events. Aliens were moving in the highest corridors of power, aliens who brought secrets of organic technology. The senior management of IPX realised what was happening almost immediately – Morden was a former employee of IPX after all and as soon as he showed up in EarthDome speaking of his 'associates' in such terms, it was obvious he was working with the aliens from Alpha Omega III. IPX was kept in the dark about Morden's return until he had established strong ties to Clark and the Psi Corps. By then, it was too late for anyone in IPX to act even if they wanted to.

IPX was called to Ganymede by EarthForce in late 2259, where they had located an anomaly identical to the one found on Mars in 2253. The Ganymede dig took six months to complete, as this time IPX had a much bigger

goal. On Mars, they had known almost nothing about the alien ship, but now, IPX and EarthForce knew enough to attempt to activate the ship themselves. It was less an excavation and more like an experimental medical procedure, a transplant – or a resurrection.

The buried ship was destroyed when an alien ship – later identified as a Ranger *White Star* vessel – attacked the excavation site on Ganymede, bombarding the site from orbit. Still, this time IPX had recovered a wealth of data about how the ships functioned and how they were made. More importantly in terms of future archaeological efforts, they learned how to detect such buried ships from the effects they had on the surrounding soil and from the faint radiation emissions from the dormant vessels.

As the Clark government pushed for more research into organic weapons technology, IPX established more bases on the Rim. The rebellion against Clark's rule severely restricted the company's ability to carry out its mandate – without access to places like Babylon 5, where clues, rumours and alien artefacts were easily obtainable, finding new candidates for digs proved very difficult. Over the objections of much of the board, IPX permitted its employees to break the sanctions against the rogue worlds in mid-2261.

2262 to 2267: After The War

The fall of the Clark Regime sent shockwaves through the military-industrial complex of the Sol system. Individuals and factions that had become incredibly influential under Clark were suddenly sidelined or even arrested as war criminals. Other sections of the complex vanished, with whole departments of EarthForce being pulled under

'Time to die, Eilerson.' snarled the Narn. The snub nose of his blaster held a promise of plasma death.

I stood my ground. 'Do you know what the Rakaan thought about bloodshed in their holy places?'

The Narn's eyes burned hot with hate. 'You can't talk your way out of this! Die, by my hand!' His finger closed on the blaster trigger. There was a tremendous explosion.

I stood over his body and growled, 'If you'd read my paper on Rakaan Temple Architecture, you'd know they all have automated retribution systems, you fool.'

- from *Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World* by Max Eilerson



'It's madness and I absolutely forbid you to go down there. You're not ready for what's sleeping on that planet.' the Techno-Mage scowled. A bead of sweat rolled down the dome of his bald head.

'You heard him, Max. We'd better turn back.' quavered Gideon.

'Damn it, Captain, the cure to the Drakh Plague could be down there! We can't turn back now! So what if everyone who ever landed on that planet died horribly? None of *them* were... Max Eilerson!'

- from *Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World* by Max Eilerson

deeper layers of secrecy to protect them from the post-Clark investigations. IPX took the opportunity to wriggle out from under direct EarthForce control. CEO Waugh was arrested and charged with supplying illegal biological weapons for use against the Martian rebels and Christopher Hartung took control of the board once more. His tenure as CEO would last barely six months, before increasing ill health convinced him to turn the company over to his younger brother, Richard.

2267 to 2270: Crusade

Maybe the cure is buried beneath some ancient alien city forgotten under centuries of sand.

- from the briefing of Captain Matthew Gideon, Commander of the *Excalibur*

The Drakh attack on Earth put the spotlight on xenoarchaeology like never before. Suddenly, IPX was seen as a potential saviour for Humanity. If the cure for the alien plague loosed by the Drakh did exist in some lost city or buried Shadow base, then IPX was the best placed company to find it. The centralisation of the hunt for a cure on the untried *Excalibur* was – at least partially – a calculated attempt to ensure that if a cure was found, IPX would not be able to hold Earth hostage (not that charging for the cure ever crossed the mind of anyone in the corporation). While the *Excalibur's* efforts were the best known part of the hunt for a cure, IPX benefited from massive new investment during this period. The company tripled in size and for brief periods even exceeded its (adjusted) former market worth before the collapse of 2156.

The Drakh crisis resulted in a new golden age for xenoarchaeology. Driven by desperation, EarthForce and the Interstellar Alliance explored hundreds of new worlds and made contact with dozens of new races and found the remain of hundreds more. Many of these finds were only cursorily scanned by their discoverers, who moved on when they found no sign of advanced medical science. It would take at least another two centuries of work before all the sites found during the crisis gave up all their secrets.

2270 and Beyond: Exploring The Future

The Shadow War of the 2260s was a galactic conflict and the full shape of it could only be seen in retrospect. It was not until stories from the crews who fought at Coriana VI became widely known that IPX analysts worked out the truth. The mysterious Vorlons and their adversaries, the Shadows, were both incredibly advanced elder races, with technology far beyond that of the Minbari or the Drakh. Now, both these elder races had departed the galaxy, leaving their worlds behind... worlds full of super-advanced technology. The Vorlons prophesied that Humanity would be ready to go to the Vorlon homeworld "in a million years" – IPX have a ten-year schedule for finding the jump route there. The golden age of xenoarchaeology is just beginning...

Even some of the company's abandoned dreams might come true. In 2273, IPX claimed the Rim world of Gamma Theta V as a new company-owned colony, with the intention of making it the new gateway to the Rim. After nearly 200 years in business, InterPlanetary Expeditions still has a lot of past to explore and a very bright and very, very profitable future to bring to Humanity.

THE CORPORATION

InterPlanetary Expeditions stock is publicly traded on the CESE (Combined Earth Stock Exchange) and BEL (Mars stock exchange) but the company's headquarters is on Mars. The company is normally registered on Mars too but has been known to switch its holdings to another flag-of-convenience nation for financial or political reasons. In the past, IPX has been a Swiss, Greek, Zimbabwean, Trinidadian or Proximan company for brief periods. As of 2267, the largest shareholder in IPX is the Hartung family, with just under 30% of the shares divided among various members; various EarthForce cut-outs and close allies hold another 25%, while Simone Barrett is the largest individual shareholder at 11%. The remaining shares are held mostly by various investors and speculators, although the Hartung Foundation was granted 2% of the company stock in perpetuity when it was first endowed. The Hartungs have the support of the majority of the shareholders and a Hartung has been both chairman of the board and CEO since Waugh was ousted after the fall of President Clark (IPX normally combines the roles of chairman and CEO, a tradition started by Jasper Hartung). However, as IPX depends heavily on its relationship with EarthForce, especially the New Technologies division, the EarthForce board members have influence over the company disproportionate to their actual shareholdings.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

IPX was once referred to as being organised like the three monkeys of avoiding litigation: Administration hears nothing illegal, Operations sees nothing illegal and the Field Offices do nothing at all. The company's dedication to avoiding entanglements and responsibility is legendary; if any of its field teams do anything that might endanger the company, that field team is legally cut off almost instantly. Field teams might loot alien tombs, set off ancient booby traps, start wars with other races, destroy whole colonies by accidentally loosing ancient fire-breathing space goats but head office will disclaim any responsibility for the field team's actions the instant the operation becomes unprofitable. The company operates like an espionage agency at times, remorselessly abandoning agents who have been compromised.

Administration

The administration section of IPX is based on Mars, in the arcology in MarsDome One. Administration handles the basic functions of the company – accounts, payroll, purchasing and so forth, as well as liaising with the company's partners. The most important of these partners is obviously EarthForce but the company also has close relations with numerous aerospace corporations. IPX continues to research and develop new technologies for surviving and living on alien worlds but it has no manufacturing capacity of its own. Instead, it contracts the manufacturing of its spacecraft, satellites, portable habitats and survival gear out to other corporations, mainly Celis Aerospace and Universal Terraforming.

IPX also had a close relationship with the Psi Corps. Telepaths are incredibly useful in xenoarchaeology and xenopsychology – not only can a telepath bypass language and culture and communicate directly with an alien, mind to mind, but powerful telepaths can even pick up psychic echoes from physical objects, giving vital clues to researchers on site. The Corps was strongly averse to putting its cherished telepaths in danger, though, so each field operation involving a telepath required a complicated exchange of favours and debts between IPX and the Corps. Psi Corps demanded complete accountability when a telepath was placed in danger, while the whole structure of IPX purposefully deflects accountability. Reconciling the two was both difficult and expensive.

Administration's other major purpose is long-term planning, known as 'The Word from On High' in the internal company patois. Ever since the Earth-Minbari War, the word has been 'organic technology'; in the past it was 'hull design,' 'medical technology' and 'hyperspace navigation.' The Word from On High is whatever IPX is most interested in locating at the moment.

Technology and Support

Technology and Support (or 'Technically Separate' as it is sometimes referred to) works hand in hand with Operations. T&S is responsible for all of IPX's physical assets, such as buildings, spacecraft, mobile habitats, computer systems and so on. Expeditions lease ships and equipment from T&S.



IPX Internal Affairs

Security in the upper echelons is incredibly tight. All the executives are paranoid about valuable technology walking out the door, which is a very real danger when dealing with small artefacts. A nanotechnology researcher could inhale billions of credits worth of samples. Tags (see page 38) are used to track employee movements and random telepathic scans (both legal and illegal) are also used. There is a secret internal affairs directorate within the Administration branch which investigates employee theft or subversion.

T&S also includes IPX's security force, which is composed almost entirely of EarthForce veterans. Following a rash of thefts of artefacts in the 2200s, IPX tightened security considerably at all its facilities and laboratories. The security force is both highly paid to reduce the lure of bribery and highly automated. IPX laboratories are fitted with robot security systems, alarms and traps as well as Human security. IPX Security has a reputation for firing first and asking questions later.

Another section of Security, Section Seven, uses undercover agents to infiltrate expeditions and ensure that no technology or artefacts are stolen – by raiders, or by the expedition crew themselves. Employee theft is an unforgivable sin within IPX.

Operations

Despite the name, IPX Operations does relatively little fieldwork. Its main purpose is to research and reverse-engineer items brought back by field teams. If the researchers cannot

crack a technology fast enough, the samples are sold to EarthForce or another, larger company. While IPX is easily the biggest and most powerful xenoarchaeological company, it is a relatively smaller player when it comes to technological research and development. Companies like Edgars Industries or Mitchell-Hyundyne have far bigger, better funded and better skilled research departments.

The research department of Operations has won thousands of profitable patents for IPX but its main purpose is to support and guide field operations. Cracking the techniques used by some dead civilisation to grow crystal buildings would be a huge breakthrough for IPX but learning how to detect such buried structures from orbit is more immediately valuable. Short-term usability is more important than long-term profit. The work environment within the research department is absurdly pressurised; scientists are constantly required to come up with usable results. Few can stand the pace for long, whereupon they jump ship to a more reasonable corporate patron. The handful of long-term researchers in IPX tend to be either so brilliant that they can keep coming up with breakthrough after breakthrough or are so eccentric they have nowhere else to go.

Operations runs IPX's field offices, which are scattered all over known space. Field offices range in size from tiny grubby shacks on some new colony world to huge

The Corps had such a stick up its ass about putting 'valuable' telepaths in the field that IPX regularly turned to rogue teeps. Given a choice between starving in some gutter and a corporate paycheck, most of the saner blips took IPX's offer. The use of these rogue teeps had to be kept secret from the Psi Corps – which is damn hard, as the Corps auditors can just look inside your mind whenever they want. Peeping bastards. IPX policy was to hire/fire/dispose of blips at the level of expedition leader and blame any infractions of Psi Corps' monopoly on him: 'We had no idea that Labourer Smith was a telepath, Mr Psi Cop. Expedition leader Jones hired him. Go suck his brain, not ours.'

Of course, when the Corps went down, IPX was the first to take advantage – and I do mean take advantage – of the new labour laws.

corporate edifices but they all have the same purpose – to gather information and organise expeditions. The field offices are the main points of contact between IPX and its expeditions and digs. Each field office has a staff of researchers, advisers and corporate agents, and normally has a number of technical and security specialists on site as well.

The various field offices are organised into several districts. Each district has one or more offices scattered among its planets, controlled from the main district office. The active districts are:

⑤ **Sol:** The Sol district comprises just the planets of Earth's solar system. The district office is on Mars at head office but there are field offices on every continent on Earth (obviously, there is no xenoarchaeology on Earth, so the field offices there are focussed on recruitment) and on Io and Ganymede.

⑤ **Inner:** The old Inner District has been unprofitable for decades and would have been merged into the Sol District if it were not for high-level political infighting at head office. While the Inner District was the scene of IPX's early triumphs, like the discovery of interceptor technology, there have been no significant finds here in the last 50 years. Oddly, the systems around Sol were never settled by any alien races, so there is nothing to find save the occasional ancient outpost or space derelict. The district office for the Inner District is on Proxima; there are also offices on Beta Durani and Orion.

⑤ **Border:** The Border District is also fighting for its corporate life, despite being the most profitable of the five districts. The Border district has jurisdiction over all IPX operations from Vega to Jericho. Up until 2252, it also included the space now allocated to the Rim District and there has been growing pressure to further split it into a Minbari District following the opening of Minbari space in recent years. The Border district's sheer size make co-ordination between its offices difficult – the District Office is on Sinzar, with branch offices on Babylon 5, Sinzar, Jericho, Centauri Prime, Corillan and Beta 4.

⑤ **League:** The League district was the first major expansion of the company's efforts beyond Human space and was founded in

the aftermath of the Dilgar War. The League District is the best district for picking up rumours of potential new sites and legends of ancient spacefarers but the larger Border district has far more active expeditions. The district's main office is on Beta 9, with offices on Brakos and Krindar.

⑤ **Rim:** The Rim district is the newest of the five operational theatres and is generally seen as the one with the most opportunity for On High discoveries. While the Rim worlds were initially dismissed by Human explorers as being empty and inhospitable, in recent decades it has become apparent that there are strange and wonderful things going on out there in the quiet darkness of the untravelled jump routes. Strange, wonderful things that will do strange, wonderful things to IPX's bottom line. The Rim District is based at Deneb and has smaller offices on the Drakh-sponsored freeport of Thenothk and on Korel.

In addition to the Research section and the various Districts, Operations also includes the elite of IPX – the Special Projects teams. Special Projects teams take care of the most important missions, ones that cannot be left to contractors. Special Projects teams include:

⑤ **Strike Teams:** The best archaeologists and researchers employed by IPX, given the best tools and support by the company. The researchers sent to investigate the 'Thirdspace' gate were part of a Strike Team.

⑤ **Large Scale Operations:** IPX may need to, say, dig up a whole buried city or go to war with a primitive indigenous race to get access to their sacred temple; those sorts of massive investments fall under the aegis of LSO.

⑤ **Rescue/Retrieval/Re-secure Teams:** When an expedition gets into trouble, it can hope for the District Office to authorise the deployment of a 3R team. It can *hope*, anyway – 3R teams are only sent if the expedition is likely to justify the massive cost of a 3R deployment, as the 3Rs are trained and equipped like elite military units. The 3Rs can save a beleaguered expedition from disaster but they are also sent in to recapture lost items or data, or to cleanse, burn and remove any signs that an IPX expedition was ever there.



'It's obvious! It's a derivative of the hieroglyphs found on Lambda Phi, translated through a four-dimensional matrix and interlaced with a contextual datagloss!' I exclaimed.

They looked at me dumbly. I explained it again.

They still looked at me dumbly. I explained it again but I used shorter words.

Their faux-knowledgeable 'oh's and 'ah's did not fool me. I explained it again and used little shadow puppets.

'Look, this bunny is the original language from Lambda Phi and this bunny is the same text as seen by a third bunny, only this bunny's a higher-dimensional being...'

It's hard being a genius sometimes.

- from *Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World* by Max Eilerson

5 Black Projects: Like every other organisation of note in the 2260s, IPX has a black projects division. The Ganymede dig fell under the control of Black Projects. Virtually all of the Black Projects are undertaken at the behest of EarthForce and generally revolve around technologies or weapons that could tip the balance of power in the galaxy.

IPX Slang

The corporate culture of IPX has its own buzzwords and jargon.

Abo: From *aborigine*, a term for native inhabitants of a world. In the IPX usage, this can refer to colonists as well and is generally used derogatively: *'We want to blow up this mountain but the abos won't let us.'*

Bug-hugging: Wasting time on researching alien cultures and histories instead of focusing on things that could help IPX's bottom line. Ethical concerns in general, especially ones about treatment of abos (see above) or ruins.

Burnt Offering: A reference to the practice of shielding the company from litigation or responsibility by blaming any failures on the expedition leaders.

Company Man: A full employee of IPX, especially an undercover observer from security (see SS).

Dabblehair: A Centauri noble who pursues archaeology as a hobby; more generally, any unwanted civilian on a dig.

Farming: Using information gathered on an expedition for profit should the expedition site later be colonised.

Usually, it refers to marking mineral sites and other natural resources, then purchasing sites when the planet is opened to colonisation. A common form of retirement for contractors.

Gadflies: Contractors who hang around IPX offices, waiting for news of a potential new expedition to appear. Opportunists.

Gatemaker: The possibly mythical race who built the jump gate network and presumably left other advanced technology lying around the galaxy. Used as a synonym for improbably generous alien races: *'Then the gatemakers will shower us all in credits and pony schematics.'*

Genius: A xenoarchaeologist or other researcher on an expedition. Usually used in an insulting or sarcastic fashion by labourers.

GeoPhys: Geophysical survey of a site.

Ghost: A renegade, unlicensed telepath illegally employed by IPX.

Gold: Alien artefacts, especially valuable technologies. 'Fool's Gold' is also used to refer to researchers who waste their time pursuing useless or unobtainable information.

Gold Mine: A planet or site full of useful technologies.

Highwaymen: The Explorer Corps of EarthForce, so named because they construct jump gates ('highways') but also because the Explorer Corps has interfered with IPX operations in the past.

Medium: A licensed Psi Corps telepath hired by IPX for use on an expedition.

Medium Rare: A telepath whose brain has been fried by an ancient psychic trap or the strain of his work.

Mule: A labourer on a dig.

On High: IPX head office. Rarely, 'On Middle' is used to refer to the District Office and 'On Low' to the nearest local office.

Our Friends: The Thieves' Guild.

Pony Schematic: Organic technology.

SatScan: Satellite scan of a site.

Skimming: Making money by stealing artefacts or technology for private sale, instead of reporting such finds to IPX.

SS: Section Seven of IPX's security; undercover agents who watch for thieves and skimming.

Tag: The subcutaneous tracking chip implanted in all IPX employees and contractors. By extension, loyalty or obligation to IPX; outsiders are 'untagged.'

Tenure: Being hired directly by IPX. Derived from the university practice of giving professors an appointment for life, although employment with IPX is rarely so assured. Also, used ironically to mean 'killed on a mission.'

Toastworld: A dead alien world, especially one destroyed by war or disease.

Unobtainium: Alien artefacts, especially non-existent or impossible ones: *'You can navigate in hyperspace without a beacon, as long as you've got a solid unobtainium navigational computer.'*

Wetwork: Sitting in bars, buying drinks for spacers and aliens, in the hopes of picking up useful rumours.

Welcome Mat: Alien boobytraps. Welcome mats are seen as a good sign that there might be gold on a planet.

Word From On High: Messages from head office, especially directives to find specific technologies.

XenArch: Xenoarchaeology.

Xeno: Aliens.

Expeditions

The fourth section of IPX business concerns the expeditions that actually go to alien worlds, dig up alien artefacts and get into trouble. The vast majority of these expeditions – all except those carried out by IPX's strike teams or other direct employees – are carried out by independent contractors who are funded by the company. IPX supplies money (in the form of loans), ships, equipment, specialists and advice but the contractors take on all legal and financial risks. If the contractor fails to find anything useful to IPX, then he must still repay the cost of the mission to the company. As such missions involve quite staggering investments, the unfortunate contractors who fail will usually

be completely bankrupted by such a failure and have no choice but to become indentured to IPX. A successful operation, though, can make both the contractor and IPX rich, even after the contractor settles his debts to the company. It is a win/win proposition for IPX.

The most successful contractors have their own ships, which cuts the single biggest cost – ship hire – out of the equation. Especially skilled contractors get hired by IPX directly, but the company rarely takes such a risk: the whole point of the contractor system is to shift as much risk over to the contractor and leave IPX in the clear should anything go wrong.

With such a one-sided arrangement, some wonder why anyone would launch an IPX-funded expedition. The answer is usually greed: xenoarchaeology offers the chance to become staggeringly rich, quick. Find the right dead world, find some holy grail of biotechnology or weaponry or computing, and you can leap into the ranks of the rich in a single bound. Others work with IPX out of scientific curiosity – if you want to travel to unknown worlds or learn about alien civilisations, then IPX is willing to throw funding at you beyond the dreams of academics. The scientific community is very ambivalent towards the company, who are often referred to as the 'Dark Side of XenArch – quicker, easier, more seductive.'

Each expedition is formed for a single, specific venture, but successful expedition teams often stick together for future missions. Outfitting, launching and running an expedition is discussed on page 55.

OUR GALACTIC FAMILY

InterPlanetary Expeditions has offices all across the Earth Alliance, so there's one near you! IPX offers rewarding careers in the growing field of xenoarchaeology, from research and development to spacecraft operations and security! Join us as we explore the past to bring you the future!

- IPX recruitment slogan



IPX on Mars

The heart of IPX's business operations is the massive office complex in MarsDome One. IPX was one of the first corporations on Mars and their arcology there is the single biggest corporate-owned building in the entire city. The Martian Arcology is virtually a small city unto itself, with its own life support systems, its own water recycling, its own small spaceport and tube stop and its own internal defence grid. The Mars offices contain relatively few laboratories or research facilities and much of the building is taken up with the dull minutiae of running a galaxy-spanning corporation. The IPX offices are luxurious by Martian standards but Earthers find them quite austere.

The underdome section of the arcology contains the IPX archives, housed in bomb-proof bunkers that are guaranteed to survive a nuclear or mass driver strike. The archives are unimaginably vast, both in terms of data and physical artefacts. There are seemingly endless corridors, filled with crates and stasis pods, stretching off into the twilight of the artificial Hades beneath the domes. IPX maintains four other storage facilities for archived material, also on Mars.

The other notable IPX buildings in MarsDome One are the laboratories attached to Mars University. The company

is one of U. Mars's biggest benefactors, as well as one of the largest employers of university graduates. The university's xenoarchaeology program is staffed almost entirely by ex-IPX lecturers and staff and is nicknamed 'IPX 101'. Despite this largesse, the university's attitude towards the corporation remains rather chilly – IPX's goals are well known to be profit, not science, and those who accept IPX's patronage get little respect from their peers in the scientific community.

Outside the Martian capital, IPX has numerous research stations dotted around the planet. Obviously, Syria Planum holds a considerable number of these stations but Mars' xenoarchaeology has few secrets left to reveal, so most of the Martian stations are occupied with examining artefacts brought in from offworld. The Red Planet has been used as a laboratory by EarthForce, the Psi

Corps and other organisations since it was first colonised – the hostile surface conditions and the sheer number of anonymous domes scattered around the deserts and valleys means that it is easy to set up a secret and secure facility within easy reach of Earth.

IPX on Earth

Unsurprisingly, IPX has offices in Geneva, close to EarthDome, in the so-called 'MIRE' (Military Industrials Ringaround EarthDome). It is also one of the few companies to have representation in TeepTown, the telepath enclave that houses the Psi Corps on Earth. IPX runs a specialised six-week course in telepathic xenoarchaeology there, in concert with the Corps' Commercial Division.

The main IPX offices on Earth are in New York, where the company occupies the upper third of a Manhattan arcology. The company also has close ties to various Earth-based auction houses. The company is interested in alien technology, not alien art or culture (except in such cases where they give clues to alien technologies), so many items found on digs are later auctioned off to collectors. These sales make up a steady percentage of IPX's income, although the recent rise in xenophobia after the Earth-Minbari War has dented the market for alien art.

IPX is actually quite a small company – at least, the bits of it that matter are quite small. Once you know everyone in the research labs, the field experts, the good scouts, the regional office managers and the execs, you know everyone who counts, everyone who you have got to worry about. Results are all that count in IPX – there's always some young turk of a post-grad who wants to take your place or some space-crazed adventurer who is willing to risk his life against alien death-traps. The key to survival is making and breaking alliances. Having your name on the final analysis that breaks a new patent means you get to survive another budget cycle.

It is strange – for a company built on exploring the past, IPX has very little institutional memory. You are only as good as your last review or your last expedition. If you get slow or stupid, you are out.

So why work here? Well, I could live in some poky little apartment on the edge of the dome, with a vibe shower and a pile of empty pizza boxes and spend my days teaching stupid Marsies how to dig holes while I beg for pathetic little grants from under funded colleges staffed by cryogenically preserved geriatrics who are still having heart palpitations from meeting the Centauri for the first time, who can barely afford to ship me and a trowel to Proxima, let alone run a worthwhile expedition to the Rim.... or I could work for IPX and make more money in the private sector than any university professor dreams of.

We get the best toys here.

IPX in the Earth Alliance

The company's holdings on other colonies are considerable. Several colonies, such as Vega, were founded by IPX; in other places, old bases were sold to the colonists. InterPlanetary Expeditions has an excellent reputation for setting up the initial foothold on an alien world; the company's habitats and life support systems are second to none. The sale of old bases normally includes a clause guaranteeing IPX prime property in the heart of the new colony, and these investments pay off handsomely once the colony becomes established. Proxima colony, for example, is the largest and richest of the Earth Alliance colonies and IPX owns nearly 10% of Proxima City's commercial district thanks to the initial sale of IPX bases.

The company normally prefers to rent most of its property to more conventional businesses and only maintains small offices in the centres of colony cities. The true habitat for IPX is the strip around the

spaceport, where company offices jostle for room with spacer bars, fuel depots, charter ships and parts suppliers. At minimum, the IPX office on a newly-founded border colony will consist of an assayer's office, where explorers and traders can sell sample artefacts to the company; meeting rooms, where the office manager can meet with potential contractors; and a secure communications link with the District Office. A great deal of IPX business, though, is done in bars and on spaceport landing pads – the company operates at the fringes of known space, so it has to deal with the scum of the galaxy.

Notable Offices

Babylon 5: IPX opened a dedicated office on Babylon 5 after the Thirdspace Incident of 2261 but there

were IPX scouts on Babylon 5 as soon as it officially opened. The station is a crossroads for trade and intrigue among dozens of alien races, and one of the best places in the galaxy to pick up information and rumours. The IPX offices on B5 are located in Red Sector, off the Zocalo. The office has its own laboratory facilities and inherited most of the equipment brought in by the Thirdspace Strike Team. The head of the B5 office is Adecco Crinon; Earth-born, ex-EarthForce and a former pilot, Crinon was seen as a safe choice to run the office. However, he and station commander Lochley have a simmering mutual dislike of each other, which has caused the company numerous headaches in the past.

Before the establishment of the B5 office, IPX's main agent on the station was a scout called Hugo Larsden. He was killed in late 2260; station security found his body in Downbelow, with an alien knife in his heart. The murder is still unsolved. Larsden's quarters were also looted.



Beta Durani: The Beta Durani colony is notoriously violent and crime-ridden but it has proved to be one of IPX's best recruiting grounds for new contractors. The Earth-Minbari and the recent civil war created many skilled and battle-hardened pilots, who found themselves mustered out or on the wrong side when the wars ended. Experienced pilots are vital for missions on the Rim, where jump beacons are faint and travel is hazardous. Beta Durani is also the primary point-of-contact for IPX's dealings with the Thieves' Guild. The Durani office spends more money on bribes than it does on ships but it is one of the company's most valued assets.

The head of the Beta Durani office, Oscar Finch, attributes his success to diplomacy, courtesy and his complement of Narn mercenaries.

Beta 9: The Beta 9 office is located in the only major settlement, Canyon City. Beta 9 is used as a testing and training ground by IPX, and a proving ground for the company's survival gear. IPX had an increasingly good

reputation among the population until the planet joined Sheridan's revolt against President Clark. IPX employees formed a loyalist cell and attempted to sabotage the colony's environmental systems. Their conspiracy was discovered before they could strike and two of the IPX staff were hung by a lynch mob.

The new manager of the Beta 9 office, Branch Gelner, has tried to rebuild the company's reputation with the colonists. He has managed to win over the staff of the science stations in Canyon City but the miners who make up the majority of the population are slow to let go of grudges.

The Morgue: Technically, the Morgue is called IPX Advanced Research One but it is called the Morgue even in some official company reports. The Morgue complex consists of a space station in orbit of Callisto (one of the moons of Saturn in the Sol system) and four smaller habitats on the moon's surface. The troubles on Mars during the Earth-Minbari War and in recent times convinced IPX that the planet was no longer the most

Dealing in Alien Artefacts

The trade in alien cultural or technological artefacts from unknown cultures is forbidden by Earth Alliance law. Items from an unknown race must be quarantined and scanned before they can be brought into Alliance space. Certain corporations, such as IPX, have obtained certification (a 'xenotech license') to deal with such items by proving that they can follow strict quarantining and safety procedures. Getting such certification is impossible for an individual, although certain universities have managed to obtain special waivers in certain cases. Only IPX and the other xenoarchaeology and xenotech companies have universal licences, allowing them to bring in xenotechnology of all kinds.

Importing unknown alien artefacts, knowingly or unknowingly, can carry penalties of up to 15 years imprisonment and punishing fines (in the region of millions of credits).

Trying to bring a cargo pod packed with weirdly glowing alien globules onto Babylon 5 is utter foolishness but smaller curios and souvenirs do circulate in the markets and spaceports. Many of these minor artefacts end up being bought by IPX scouts or sold directly to an IPX office by a spacer looking for an easy credit. IPX has a strict policy on buying such items – they do not care how you got it, as long as you did not either steal it from them or loot it from a ruin or derelict ship yourself. Amateur tomb robbing just irritates the company – there are tales of a foolish trader who came upon a wrecked alien ship drifting in hyperspace. He boarded it and managed to wrench out a part of the wreck's navigation system, which he then sold to IPX. The company informed the trader that his vandalism had wiped the real prize – the wreck's navigational database leading to its planet of origin. According to the story, the poor trader is still out there in hyperspace, trying to find the wreck once more so he can make amends to the corporation.

ideal research base, so the Morgue complex was built. The station is not yet fully operational but promises to be one of the most advanced research facilities in the whole Earth Alliance when complete.

The administrator and chief scientist of the Morgue is an Earther named Neil Kelly, who treats the place as his own private laboratory/kingdom and is garnering a reputation as a tyrant.

Thenothk: The alien Drakh built and still control the city of Thenothk on the edge of known space but companies like IPX are more than willing to invest in a city outside the reach of Earth and Interstellar Alliance law.

The manager of the Thenothk outpost is Rachid Hussein. She has discovered something of the Drakh's control of the city but is unsure how to deal with the cryptic aliens. She knows that if she pushes too much, she will find a Keeper on her shoulder but the Drakh do hold a wealth of knowledge about organic technology.

COMPETITORS

IPX is the largest and most successful xenoarchaeological company but it is not the only corporation operating in the field. Given the stakes and money involved in xenoarchaeology, it is little wonder that there have been dozens of skirmishes and corporate wars between IPX and its rivals. Trenches can become graves very easily...

Ash'vrai: The Abbai are famed as diplomats and peacemakers, which is why IPX was shocked to encounter the group called the Ash'vrai, a group of assassins who hunt down and kill anyone who disturbs certain alien worlds. It is likely that the Ash'vrai was originally founded to stop servants of the Shadows from awakening buried ships and fortresses of their masters but the ancient order of the Ash'vrai now zealously stops anyone from troubling dead worlds close to Abbai space.



Department of the Environment & Terraforming: This section of the Earth Alliance government technically has jurisdiction over most of IPX's activities. Department inspectors have caused problems for IPX in the past, given the company's atrocious safety record. The company has hidden behind the shield of its EarthForce influence in the past but the department was a major irritant to IPX between 2261 and 2267.



The Drakh: The alien Drakh are the custodians of the leftover Shadow technology, and fanatically guard the homes of their vanished masters from being disturbed. The Drakh are the single greatest threat to IPX operations on the Rim from 2262 onwards and are responsible for the disappearance or destruction of numerous expeditions.



EarthForce Explorer Corps: Similarly, while IPX normally works closely with the Explorers, there can be clashes over major alien sites. IPX considers the Explorer Corps to be unqualified to deal with alien mysteries; the Corps have equally little respect for IPX's ability to deal with the true unknown.



The Corporation



EarthForce New Technologies Division: Putting New Technologies as a competitor of IPX might seem odd, as the two work hand in hand, but there has been conflict between the two in the past. IPX is still an independent company and its desire for profit sometimes clashes with New Technologies' goals, especially over the question of Martian independence. NTD does operate its own xenotech retrieval units, who have tried to cut IPX out of the deal in the past. The attempt to extract the Shadow ship on Ganymede, for example, was run by New Technologies and IPX was only grudgingly brought in because New Technologies needed the company's expertise.



Everson Exploration: The oldest of the other xenoarchaeological companies, Everson was founded by ex-IPX staff. The company's original purpose was to provide a better and more equitable working environment than IPX's money-driven pressure cooker. Everson pays its scientists better and has more reasonable expectations about success but lacks the equipment and backing of IPX. After several occasions where IPX drove Everson off planets by sheer force, the company entered into an alliance with a weapons developer, Auricon. Everson staff found themselves suddenly better armed and more aggressive than ever and some within IPX fear that Everson intend to replace IPX as the darling of the bioweapons researchers. Others dismiss Everson as a pack of clueless academics who have no idea how to leverage their new alliance.



EXARCH: The Earth XenoArchaeology Research Committee is a joint venture between several large universities, which pool their resources to purchase ships and equipment. EXARCH is dedicated to pure research and is a non-profit group. It is rare for EXARCH teams to beat IPX to a site, as the universities can rarely afford to make it to the Rim.



The Interstellar Alliance: The ISA is a problem for IPX in another way – the Alliance's policy of sharing technology between member races is a direct threat to IPX's bottom line. Gravitic technology, for example, was one of IPX's primary goals for decades, until the Minbari just handed it over for free. If this technology transfer policy continues, IPX will have to work twice as hard just to stay afloat.



Irkasse: A creation of the League, Irkasse combines the business sense of the Brakiri with the strength of Drazi security and the savvy of Llort treasure hunters, which makes for a formidable foe for IPX. Irkasse's goals are identical to IPX's – find useful alien technology and sell it to the League governments. The company is a new one and is suffering from growing pains: Drazi have trouble with the concept of archaeology in general; the Brakiri are gleefully skimming money off every deal; the Llort

do not have the concept of property (so artefacts tend to vanish) and the older League races frown on grave robbing. Nevertheless, if Irkasse gets its act together, it could be a significant problem for other xenoarchaeology efforts in League space.



Jensen Biotechnologies: This biotech company has recently begun investing in xenoarchaeology and seems to be intent on cutting IPX out of the equation and retrieving technology from dead worlds directly. In truth, Jensen fell under the control of the Drakh and other Shadow agents during the Shadow War and most of its xenoarchaeology efforts were aimed at destroying possible cures for the plague.



Narn Naval Procurement: Up until the Narn-Centauri War, the Narn Regime had its own aggressive xenotechnology program, which was run by the Narn Naval Procurement (H'Yal'Akos). After the war, the Narn are much less aggressive but the H'Yal'Akos are still active on the Rim. Like Riders Colonial, the H'Yal'Akos is willing to use force to acquire technologies and they have the direct backing of the Narn military. However, the Narn are a highly spiritual people in some ways and their beliefs have sometimes stopped them from exploiting tomb worlds and other holy sites. Like most races, though, their qualms can be overcome if the reward is big enough. After their experience with the Centauri, the Narn are very good indeed at reverse-engineering and replicating alien technology.



New Frontiers, Incorporated: The other big player in xenoarchaeology, NFI is more conservative than IPX and is unwilling to take risks on the Rim. However, NFI is Earth-based and has used IPX's connections to Mars against its rival in the past. NFI is also building connections to Earth universities in the same way IPX sponsors the University of Mars. NFI's operations are somewhat more professional and better prepared than most IPX digs but the company moves with glacial slowness compared to IPX's 'get in, get the tech, get out' modus operandi.



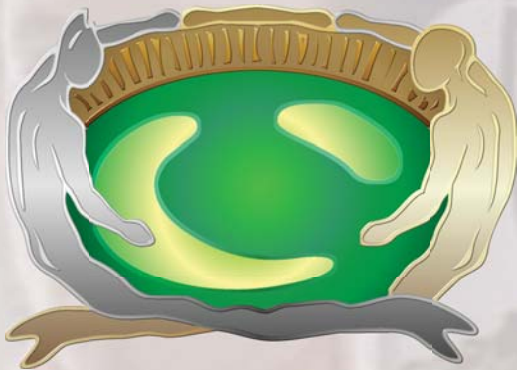
The Psi Corps: IPX works closely with the Corps but also has ties to the rogues and runaway telepaths. The corporation is pursuing a dangerous balancing act on the telepath question, and runs the risk of antagonising the powerful Psi Corps if its involvement with the rogues is discovered. The Corps is also interested in xenotechnology, especially organic and genetic secrets and telepathic artefacts.





Raiders: Like the Thieves' Guild, the Raiders have targeted IPX ships in the past. IPX vessels operate in wild space, beyond the protection of EarthForce, and often carry staggeringly valuable cargoes of high technology and alien artefacts. Raider attacks on IPX expeditions have forced the company to invest more and more in fighter escorts.

The Rangers: The secret police of Sheridan's Interstellar Alliance, part of the Ranger's mandate is to seek out and destroy the dangerous legacy of the Shadows. IPX's mandate is to dig up and exploit that legacy. While the two worked closely together during the hunt for a cure for the plague, they are diametrically opposed in general.



Riders Colonial: A new Proxima-based xenotechnology company, Riders Colonial make IPX look like cautious, reasoned and patient archaeologists. Riders Colonial researchers tend to charge in, blow things up and sift through the debris for shiny things. The company will likely lose its xenotech license because of its cavalier attitude to safety, although IPX observers offer even money that they will get themselves eaten by a alien welcome mat first.



Royal Centauri Bureau of Antiquities: The great Centauri Republic has no interest in the technology of lesser races, even advanced dead ones. However, archaeology is a

favoured pastime of many nobles. Most prefer to focus on races that were wiped out by the expanding Republic but this still brings them into competition with IPX and other xenotechnology hunters. Often, it is possible to come to an arrangement with the Centauri but this does involve tolerating eccentric old Centauri on the dig site: *'Yes, Lord Belro, you can have the paintings of the Centauri fleet bombing their cities from orbit. We just want their reactor schematics.'*



The Thieves' Guild: The company prefers to hire Guild members as treasure hunters and security specialists instead of having the Guild steal from them but there is little honour among thieves and the rising black market for xenotechnology makes IPX a tempting target for robbery. Several times, IPX has had to buy back items stolen from its offices and digs by the thieves.

VXT: IPX is unsure if this group is a Vree military force, a trading guild, scientists, some sort of protest against disturbing dead worlds or just bored teenage Vree with too much firepower. Regardless, IPX digs have been sabotaged, attacked or even had staff abducted by VXT saucers. VXT is alarmingly efficient at stripping alien sites of all useful technology, although it is unknown if they do this to research the technology themselves or just deny to it to IPX. The Vree government has refused to intercede, despite protests from EarthGov.



IPX CHARACTERS

InterPlanetary Expeditions campaigns can include characters from virtually any class and race in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game*. While the company is not known for employing pak'ma'ra or Drazi under most circumstances, IPX has no real bias against aliens – profit, not ideology, is the fundamental driving force of IPX. As for unusual character classes, Crusade can be seen as an unusual variant on an IPX campaign – and that even had a Techno-Mage in it.

Agents: IPX agents, in the sense of representatives of the company, are present in every spaceport and centre of commerce across the Earth Alliance and beyond. Most of these company reps are capable of going above and beyond the normal bounds of interstellar commerce using the skills of the agent in the word's other sense. Cool-headed treasure hunters who risk their lives disarming ancient alien traps and defences might also be agents – that Skill Mastery class feature comes in very handy when applied to skills like Acrobatics or (through being Multi-Skilled) Technical.

Diplomats: IPX executives are often diplomats, negotiating with the corporation's business partners as well as stubborn alien governments who are trying to block the extraction of artefacts from their space. Diplomats can also be used as first contact specialists, dealing with newly-encountered species.

Lurkers: Many of the best IPX scouts and stringers are lurkers, gathering rumours and

strange tales from spacefarers and sending them back to the corporation. Other lurkers are thieves but the company can find a use for such skills on the more hazardous digs... and when things go wrong, the value of the Survivor's Luck class feature cannot be overstated.

Officers: The command crew of IPX ships are often trained officers, although not all of them have the full military training of an active member of EarthForce. IPX does regularly employ ex-military personnel, especially fighter pilots – flying a shuttle through an unstable alien jump gate or a massive storm conjured up by a collapsing terraforming machine needs the sort of skills honed by flying a Starfury in combat.

Why does EarthForce love my Shuttle Pilot so much?

While the Officer class's +2 Military Influence or the Diplomat's +2 Political Influence make perfect sense for an officer serving in his culture's armed forces, or for a diplomat working for his government, they may not fit an IPX employee. Therefore, a character from the Officer, Diplomat or Soldier classes can choose to advance in IPX Influence instead of the normal Political or Military influence for his class each level. This option can be taken whenever the character gains a level, but is a permanent change – the character will no longer automatically gain the appropriate Influence each level.

A character does not have to take this option – an IPX employee who spends most of his time dealing with EarthGov, or a former officer who now works closely with New Technologies Division in a private capacity could continue to gain Political or Military influence, respectively.

IPX Influence

IPX Influence is nearly identical to Earth Economic Influence in its resources. However, increase the DC of any non-xenoarchaeological request by 5 and decrease the DC of any specifically xenarchaeological request by 5.



Rangers: Rangers are unlikely to find themselves employed by IPX – at least, as far as IPX knows. The Rangers are expert undercover agents and spies. John Sheridan – Ranger One for much of his life – knows that it was an IPX expedition to Z'ha'dum that triggered the last Shadow War,

Rangers could also work with IPX without being company employees, especially during the Crusade era. Finally, though it never happened in all the years since Valen founded the Anla'Shok – where would a failed or renegade Ranger go to use his skills?

Scientists: IPX and scientist characters go together like Shadow technology and top-secret weapons programs. Xenoarchaeologists, geophysicists, historians, psychologists, astronomers, cryptographers – the company thrives on obscure knowledge. The main question that any scientist in IPX must answer is: why am I here? Am I a company man, doing this for the money, or am I compromising my pure scientific ideals by taking a private sector paycheck? Pure science and the cut-throat commerce practised by IPX do not always sit comfortably together.

Investigate and the various Knowledges are common areas of study for IPX scientists and Alien Technology Familiarity is a very useful talent to have out on the Rim.

Soldiers: IPX digs need protection. It is a dangerous galaxy out there – raiders, thieves, rival corporations, alien monsters, automated death traps, primitive aliens who object to their holy sites being desecrated... all these are best dealt with through a barrage of PPG fire and the application of low-key but effective brutality. Soldiers hired by IPX are expected to keep the scientists and archaeologists safe, even from their own stupidity – and if that means that the soldier ends up being the one who actually goes into the bunker that has been buried for a million years, well, that is what the soldier is being paid for.

Try the Red Button again

This is an optional rule, designed to make the Alien Technology Familiarity class feature more useful in campaigns which feature a succession of minor alien cultures. It is frustrating to spend a Familiarity 'slot' on, say, the Lumati, if the characters never encounter Lumati technology again.

Under this rule, a scientist can use one of his Alien Technology Familiarity slots as 'General' familiarity, indicating that the scientist has made a study of general technological principles that can be applied to numerous cultures. When the scientist attempts a Computer Use, Drive, Operations, Pilot or Technical check with an unfamiliar device or vehicle (see the *Babylon 5 2nd Edition Rulebook*), he suffers a –4 penalty to his check for the first five checks he makes. After that, he is fairly familiar with the culture's design principles and only suffers a –2 penalty instead.

Telepaths: The supernatural senses of telepaths make them extremely valuable in certain situations. Scanning and combat telepathic abilities like Pain or Daze can be useful when dealing with hostile aliens and powers like *sense telepathy*, *jamming* or *extend shield* are vital should an expedition encounter telepathic technology. The most sought-after talent, though, is the power of *psychometry*, which lets the telepath pick up on the echoes of long-dead minds.

Traders: Smaller, poorly-funded IPX expeditions can benefit from having a canny trader on board who is able to bargain with suppliers and get them cut-price equipment. Class features like Cultural Diversity and Trader's Knowledge dovetail nicely with IPX's requirements.

Workers: Despite the advancements in automation and remote operation, the bulk of field work is still done by semi-skilled labourers. Archaeology still often comes down to digging trenches and carefully dusting off relics and for that IPX needs workers. The company calls them 'mules' – they get little pay and less respect but they are the backbone of most operations. IPX mules are usually blue collar workers.

IPX SKILLS

Acrobatics: Many IPX operations take place on worlds with unusually high or low gravity, or in zero gravity. Acrobatics is also useful for avoiding traps and other defences.

Computer Use: Ancient computer systems normally work on the same principles as modern ones and so use the same rules (but do not forget the -4 penalty for unfamiliarity with the culture).

The IPX computer network is a massive corporate network (DC 25) for the purposes of searching for files. The company maintains extensive archives, which can be accessed from most offices or downloaded to a mobile storage system, although only the company head office on Mars and the Morgue have the full archives.

Concentration: Concentration checks can be required when excavating especially delicate items.

Investigate: Investigate is the core skill for archaeology. See page 60 for rules for excavations and reconstructions.

Operations (Sensors): Another key IPX skill, especially when using satellite imagery.

Operations (Systems): Used for running geophysical scans, although Knowledge (engineering or physics) can help in interpreting results.

Profession (xenoarchaeology): The xenoarchaeology profession involves buying and selling artefacts, either legally (items that have come through quarantine but do not look promising enough to be purchased by a xenotech company) or illegally (black market items that might still be dangerous). The latter tends to be vastly more profitable and dangerous.

Telepathy: There are several specialised telepathic abilities of use to IPX:



Psychometry Variations

Distant Psychometry (DC 30): This variation allows the telepath to probe more deeply into the past by magnifying the weakest, most fleeting psychic traces. A successful use of this ability gives the telepath a psychometric flash, regardless of how much time has passed.

Walking With Ghosts (DC +10): Instead of getting a confused jumble of images and impressions when using psychometry, the telepath momentarily shares the perceptions of whatever echoes of a consciousness still linger. The effect is something like the *second sight* ability, only the telepath shares the perceptions of a mind long dead and gone.

Surface Scan Variations

Translation (DC 20): The telepath picks up on the linguistic structure of the target's mind, giving clues as to how the target communicates. This gives the telepath a +4 bonus to any Linguistics checks made when communicating with the target.



Dowsing (New Sensing Ability)

Power Required: 12

Range: Touch

Action: Full round

Telepathy Check: DC 25

Concentration: No

Multiple Subjects: No

It is unknown exactly how the Dowsing ability works or even if it really exists. If the Telepathy check succeeds, the telepath gets a hunch as to the location of a desired object or place. The telepath normally points out the location on a map, although sometimes the telepath 'feels' the correct direction to go in. The ability is unreliable and may work through picking up either latent psychometric information in the environment or by sifting through information subconsciously scanned from other people. Still, some IPX expeditions have been saved by a telepath who was able to 'guess' the right location to dig in.

IPX FEATS

The following feats are useful to IPX members but are not necessarily exclusive to such characters.

Excellent Researcher

You are skilled at synthesising information and drawing correct conclusions.

Prerequisites: Concentration 4 ranks.

Benefit: You get a cumulative +1 bonus to each Research check made when investigating a particular question (see page 62).

IPX Orientation

To compensate for your lack of scientific training, you have been given a basic orientation in key fields.

Prerequisites: Investigate 2 ranks, Knowledge (any) 2 ranks.

Benefit: Select any three Knowledge skills. You make checks in those three skill untrained. You also gain a +1 bonus to Investigate and Notice checks.

Special: This feat counts as the Mental Agility class feature for the purposes of taking the Xenoarchaeologist prestige class.

Trapspringer

You are familiar with many kinds of traps and how to avoid them.

Prerequisites: Notice 4 ranks, Subterfuge 4 ranks

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to any attempts to disarm or disable traps of any kind. You also have a +2 bonus to any Reflex saves made to avoid the effects of traps.

IPX CLASS COMBINATIONS

The class combinations below demonstrate how to use multi-classing and a little ability substitution to create new character archetypes. The basic classes in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game* cover a surprising amount of ground when combined in this fashion. Each of the archetypes below is built by taking five levels from one class in parallel with five levels from another. For example, the thief takes

'Once again, Dr Eilerson, your ingenious discovery is now my sole property.' The Minbari smiled a shark's smile as he grasped the idol, his other hand pointing a PPG at my chest.

'You won't get away with this!' I replied, facing death down fearlessly.

'Bluster does not become a scientist of your stature, Dr Eilerson. For the man who found the Vaults of Zin to stoop to empty declarations like 'you won't get away with this?'... it disappoints me.' he mocked.

'No, I *really* mean you won't get away with this.' I pointed behind him, indicating the white shining sword of the approaching *Excalibur* cutting through the clouds overhead.

- from *Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World* by Max Eilerson

one level in agent, then one in lurker, then another in the agent class and so on.

Each archetype lists a number of optional ability substitutions, swapping one class feature for another.

Thief (Agent/Lurker)

Some lurkers are just wanderers on the fringes of both space and society or driven to desperation by circumstance. Others are petty thugs and minor criminals. Some, though, are skilled thieves – burglars, pickpockets or masters of complex heists. The infamous Thieves' Guild is the home to the best of these rogues but IPX also employs thieves for certain delicate operations.

Characteristics: To reach the higher levels of his profession, a thief must be driven – either by overwhelming greed and ambition or by the desire to pit his wits against the best security systems and law enforcement in the galaxy. Whether they seek challenge or profit, most thieves keep a low profile when planning a heist, masquerading as a humble dock worker or ordinary lurker. It is only in the heat of the moment when the thief's true ruthless nature shows through the mask.

Background: Most thieves come from disadvantaged backgrounds and poor worlds, but not every thief can use poverty as an excuse to justify his crimes.

Races: There are thieves in every race, apart from perhaps the Minbari, but the best tend to be Human, Centauri, or Brakiri.

Abilities: A high Dexterity is the mark of a thief, although a good Wisdom score helps with spotting dangers and traps, while a high Charisma is useful for con artists. Thieves need high skills in Subterfuge, Stealth and Intrigue, while feats like Blind-Fight and Alertness are very useful.

Influence: Thieves almost always have some Criminal Influence.

Variant Features

Opportunism (Distraction): The thief can take this ability instead of one of the other uses of the Opportunism class feature. He gains a +1d8 bonus to Subterfuge attempts on a distracted target when attempting to pick a pocket or use other forms of sleight of hand.

Thief's Luck: Instead of taking the Survivor's Luck class feature, the thief may take the Thief's Luck ability instead. Once per day, the character may reroll a failed skill check, through he must abide by the result of the second roll, even if it is worse than the first.

Planning: Instead of taking the Master of the Craft class feature, the thief may take the Planning ability. Once





The Thief

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defence Bonus	Special
1 st	Agent 1	+0	+0	+2	+0	+0	Master of the Craft
2 nd	Lurker 1	+0	+2	+2	+0	+0	Downbelow Feat, Lurker's Knowledge
3 rd	Agent 2	+1	+2	+3	+0	+1	Multi-Skilled
4 th	Lurker 2	+2	+3	+3	+0	+2	Survivor's Luck 1/day
5 th	Agent 3	+3	+4	+3	+1	+2	Opportunism
6 th	Lurker 3	+4	+4	+4	+2	+2	Downbelow Feat
7 th	Agent 4	+5	+4	+5	+2	+3	Skill Mastery
8 th	Lurker 4	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	+4	Multi-Skilled
9 th	Agent 5	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	+5	Master of the Craft
10 th	Lurker 5	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	+6	

per day, by carefully planning a series of tasks, the thief can prepare himself to maximise his chances of success. The thief must spend at least one minute planning the operation, although most thieves will spend days or even weeks gathering information and preparing. Each minute of planning adds one possible skill check to the plan. Only Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Computer Use, Concentration, Intrigue, Subterfuge or Stealth checks may be planned for through this class feature.

Mechanically, the thief gains a pool of bonus points equal to his combined agent+lurker levels. He may apply any number of these bonus points to a skill check made in the next hour, as long it is a skill check that was planned for. Once a bonus point is used, it disappears. The following conditions must be met:

- ⑤ The thief may not fail any of the planned skill checks. Failing a planned skill check ends the plan and cancels the bonus pool.
- ⑤ The circumstances of each roll were known to the thief beforehand. A thief could plan for an Acrobatics check to jump over a pit but could not plan for an Acrobatics check to jump over a pit trap that suddenly opens beneath him.

For Example: Elias (3rd Level Agent / 2nd Level Lurker) is planning to swipe a focusing jewel from an ancient vault. He uses his planning class feature by plotting out a strategy that incorporates him infiltrating the Vault (Stealth check), breaking the security lock (Subterfuge check) and then sneaking out again (another Stealth check). It takes him three minutes to finalise the plan (as three checks are necessary).

Elias gains +5 bonus points that he can spread out between the two Stealth checks and the Subterfuge check. Should he fail any of these checks, any remaining bonus points are lost. Should another type of skill check come up, he will not be able to use the bonus points to affect that check.

Explorer (Scientist/Officer)

The EarthForce Explorers Corps members are the leading edge of Humanity's expansion into the galaxy. Successful first contact with new species requires both military discipline and scientific understanding. IPX employs many such explorers; some are ex-EarthForce, while others are just trained to survive and take command in the field. Explorers are commonly in command of expeditions.

Characteristics: Most explorers are possessed of a great curiosity to see what is out there, to press on beyond the frontiers of known space and to seek out brave new worlds and new challenges. Their scientific zeal is tempered by their discipline and prudence. Explorers tend to be self-sufficient but also make good leaders.

Background: Most explorers have at least some military training and are also usually connected to a government or other institution.

Races: Humans and Narn are the most common races for explorers – both are young, expansionist races with strong militaries.

The Explorer

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defence Bonus	Special
1 st	Scientist 1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study
2 nd	Officer 1	+1	+0	+0	+4	+1	Branch Specialisation
3 rd	Scientist 2	+2	+0	+0	+5	+2	Peripheral Studies
4 th	Officer 2	+3	+0	+0	+6	+3	Branch Feat
5 th	Scientist 3	+3	+1	+1	+6	+3	Alien Technology Familiarity
6 th	Officer 3	+4	+2	+2	+6	+3	Rallying Call 1/day
7 th	Scientist 4	+5	+2	+2	+7	+4	Peripheral Studies
8 th	Officer 4	+6/+1	+2	+2	+8	+5	
9 th	Scientist 5	+6/+1	+2	+2	+8	+5	Alien Technology Familiarity
10 th	Officer 5	+7/+2	+2	+2	+8	+6	Branch Feat

Abilities: Intelligence is key for both Knowledge skills and for many of the Officer's skills, such as Operations. Charisma is also useful when dealing with alien races. Linguistics is a very important skill for explorers.

Influence: Explorers commonly have Military Influence. Some become celebrities and public figures, giving them Social Influence too.

Variant Features

Expertise: When selecting his Primary Area of Study or Peripheral Studies, the explorer may choose an Operations skill instead of a Knowledge or Technical skill.

Technological Adaptation: Explorers are used to dealing with new technologies and alien cultures. The explorer may reduce his general unfamiliarity penalty by one instead of becoming familiar with a particular form of technology each time he gains the Alien Technological Familiarity class feature.

Security Specialist (Agent/Soldier)

Maintaining security on dig sites is a challenging proposition. Even planets that are believed to be uninhabited can have dangerous wildlife, and many dead worlds are guarded by automated defence systems. IPX has many enemies, from rival corporations to thieves to terrorists to native inhabitants of worlds who object to digs in their territory. Security staff must also watch other expedition members – employee theft and sabotage are not unheard of when dealing with such valuable items as new technologies.

Characteristics: Security specialists are not just guards or watchmen – they are capable of acting on their own initiative and dealing with swiftly changing situations. A specialist might be sent to track down a thief, to rescue a kidnapped archaeology team, to deal with a rampaging alien monster or to test-fire a new weapons system. When the scientists are stumped, grit and firepower can be all that stands between an expedition and disaster.

Background: Like explorers, many security specialists are ex-military. Others are former bodyguards, mercenaries or even criminals who have switched sides. Given how intimidating many specialists are, few people are willing to ask them about their backgrounds...

Races: Specialists can come from any race, although the Narn and Drazi are especially suited to the position.

Abilities: Depending on his style of enforcement, a security specialist could benefit from a higher Dexterity (for martial arts, improved Defence Value and firearms), Strength (for brawling), Constitution (surviving damage and protecting weaker individuals), Intelligence and Wisdom (investigating and spotting problems) and Charisma (intimidating and intriguing). Feats like Harm's Way and various Firearms feats are also useful.

Influence: Security specialists need solid Criminal contacts to stay on top of potential threats and problems.

Variant Features

Intimidating: The security specialist may add Intimidation to the list of skills selectable with the Master of the Craft class feature.



The Security Specialist

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defence Bonus	Special
1 st	Agent 1	+0	+0	+2	+0	+0	Master of the Craft
2 nd	Soldier 1	+1	+2	+2	+0	+1	Combat Training
3 rd	Agent 2	+2	+2	+3	+0	+2	Multi-Skilled
4 th	Soldier 2	+3	+3	+3	+0	+3	Co-ordinated Unit +1
5 th	Agent 3	+4	+4	+3	+1	+3	Opportunism
6 th	Soldier 3	+5	+4	+4	+2	+3	Combat Training
7 th	Agent 4	+6	+4	+5	+2	+4	Skill Mastery
8 th	Soldier 4	+7	+5	+5	+2	+5	To the Limit
9 th	Agent 5	+7	+5	+5	+2	+6	Master of the Craft
10 th	Soldier 5	+8	+5	+5	+2	+7	Combat Training

Stay Behind Me! The security specialist is adept at protecting other people. Instead of taking the Co-ordinated Unit class feature, he can take the Harm's Way feat, ignoring the prerequisites for that feat.

Tomb Raider (Agent/Scientist)

Some researchers believe that there are more dead civilisations than living ones in the galaxy. There are whole swathes of the galaxy that are barren of life but were once thronged with advanced spacefaring civilisations. It is as if apocalyptic wars swept across the galaxy almost at regular intervals, resulting in the extinction of hundreds of once-glorious empires. They left little behind save ruined cities and tomb worlds.

Tomb raiders are scientists and archaeologists with the skill and agility to bypass the defences of these dead worlds.

Characteristics: Tomb raiders are often impatient to get to the heart of a mystery. While a pure scientist might be

willing to slowly excavate a site, methodically working down through the layers and cautiously exploring each newly-revealed section, the tomb raider would prefer to rush in and find whatever treasures he can in the depths.

Background: Tomb raiders are often connected with corporations and the so-called 'xenotechnology race' that had driven IPX and its competitors to ever greater risks to secure alien technology. Unlike more legitimate archaeologists, tomb raiders usually aim at selling the items they recover, not studying them.

Races: Tomb raiders can come from any race, although the decaying Centauri Republic and the acquisitive Brakiri produce more than their fair share of them.

Abilities: Dexterity and Intelligence are the two key skills for the tomb raider.

Influence: Most tomb raiders have considerable Economic Influence.

The Tomb Raider

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defence Bonus	Special
1 st	Agent 1	+0	+0	+2	+0	+0	Master of the Craft
2 nd	Scientist 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	+0	Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study
3 rd	Agent 2	+1	+0	+3	+2	+1	Multi-Skilled
4 th	Scientist 2	+2	+0	+3	+3	+2	Peripheral Studies
5 th	Agent 3	+3	+1	+3	+4	+2	Opportunism
6 th	Scientist 3	+3	+2	+4	+4	+2	Alien Technology Familiarity
7 th	Agent 4	+4	+2	+5	+4	+3	Skill Mastery
8 th	Scientist 4	+5	+2	+5	+5	+4	Peripheral Studies
9 th	Agent 5	+5	+2	+5	+5	+5	Master of the Craft
10 th	Scientist 5	+5	+2	+5	+5	+5	Alien Technology Familiarity

The Xenopsychologist

Character Level	Class Levels	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Defence Bonus	Special
1 st	Diplomat 1	+0	+0	+0	+2	+0	Cultural Diversity
2 nd	Scientist 1	+0	+0	+0	+4	+0	Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study
3 rd	Diplomat 2	+1	+0	+0	+5	+1	Improved Diplomacy
4 th	Scientist 2	+2	+0	+0	+6	+2	Peripheral Studies
5 th	Diplomat 3	+2	+1	+1	+6	+2	Strong Influence
6 th	Scientist 3	+2	+2	+2	+6	+2	Alien Technology Familiarity
7 th	Diplomat 4	+3	+2	+2	+7	+3	Cultural Diversity
8 th	Scientist 4	+4	+2	+2	+8	+4	Peripheral Studies
9 th	Diplomat 5	+4	+2	+2	+9	+5	
10 th	Scientist 5	+4	+2	+2	+10	+5	Alien Technology Familiarity

Variant Features

Expert Raider: The tomb raider may select Subterfuge as his Primary Area of Study or a Peripheral Study.

Seize The Moment: Instead of the Opportunism class feature, the tomb raider may select Seize the Moment instead. Once per day, the tomb raider may gain a +4 bonus to a single skill check, attack roll or saving throw.

Problem Solving: Instead of taking Alien Technology Familiarity, the tomb raider may choose one of the skills affected by unfamiliarity (Computer Use, Drive, Operations, Pilot, Technical). The -4 penalty for unfamiliarity with a race's technology is not applied when using that skill and that skill only. If a skill with subskills (like Operations) is chosen, then the tomb raider must choose a particular subskill.

Xenopsychologist (Diplomat/Scientist)

Xenopsychologists are experts at understanding alien behaviour and culture, and in establishing communication and common ground between groups. Places like the Babylon 5 station are a xenopsychologist's dream environment, where dozens of species live, work and trade together. The sort of xenopsychologists valued by IPX, though, are those who specialise in understanding and decoding previously unknown cultures – first contact specialists and linguists who can help IPX expeditions understand what they encounter.

Characteristics: Xenopsychologists need to be open-minded and clear-eyed; any sort of preconception can affect the researcher's ability to understand

a new technology. They tend to prefer experiential as opposed to academic knowledge – a culture cannot be understood from books on theory; it needs to be directly observed and lived in before it yields up its secrets.

Background: Xenopsychology is the domain of academic institutions and government intelligence agencies, not corporations. While IPX does employ xenopsychologists, many of them chafe against the corporate ethos.

Races: The Abbai are the acknowledged masters of xenopsychology. Most other races are too caught up in their own affairs to really understand their neighbours, although Humans are making strides in this field.

Abilities: Wisdom, Intelligence and Charisma are the key abilities for xenopsychologists.

Influence: While xenopsychologists often have Political or Social Influence, they are also quick to pick up Local Influence on new worlds.

Variant Features

Peacemaker: The xenopsychologist may take Diplomacy as a Peripheral Area of Study.

Temporary Influence: The xenopsychologist is adept at gaining temporary contacts and prestige on a new world. Instead of the Strong Influence class feature, he may take the Temporary Influence feature. When the xenopsychologist makes peaceful contact with a new culture, he temporarily gains (1d4 + his Charisma modifier) in Local Social, Political Influence in the new culture. This temporary influence fades as the novelty of the character's presence wears off. This generally happens within 1d4 weeks but can occur within 1d4 days (Games Master's discretion).



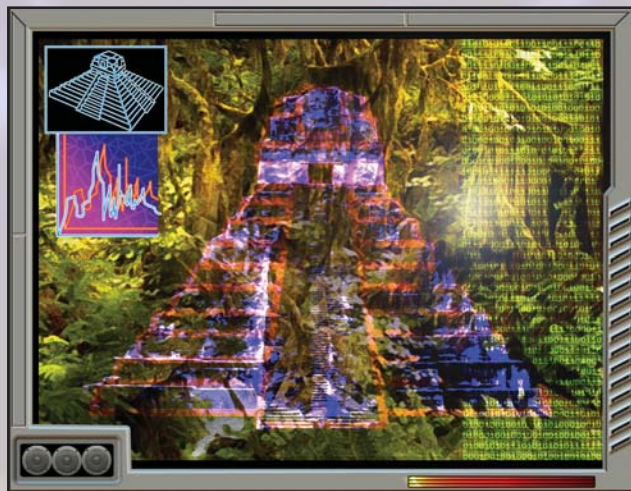
EQUIPMENT

PERSONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT

Chronovisor: A modern innovation, the chronovisor enables an archaeologist to see the vanished past. The device can pick up on the faint 'quantum echoes' left by structures, even after they have collapsed. When activated, the chronovisor projects a holographic image of the vanished structure. The longer the target building or object stood and the less time that has elapsed since its ruin, the more accurate the image. Tuning a chronovisor requires an Operation (sensors) check with a base DC of 10, plus any modifiers from the Chronovisor Modifiers table.

Chronovisor Modifiers

Structure existed for...	DC Modifier
100 years or less	+30
1,000 years or less	+20
10,000 years or less	+10
100,000 years or less	+5
More than 100,000 years	+0
Structure was last intact...	DC Modifier
10 years ago or less	+0
100 years ago or less	+5
1,000 years ago or less	+10
10,000 years ago or less	+20
More than 10,000 years ago	+30



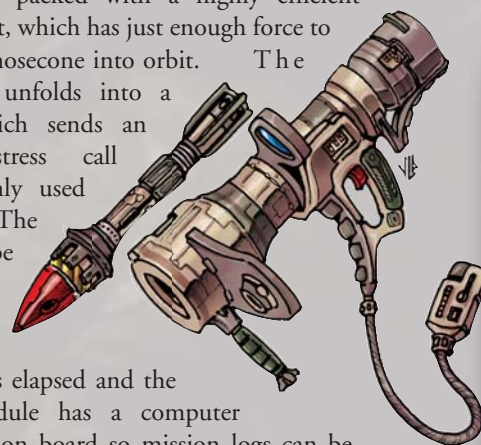
The images created by a chronovisor are often indistinct or distorted but the device does have the ability to recreate the images of structures or objects that have been totally destroyed. The underlying technology is derived from the Abbai and many archaeologists are unconvinced of the chronovisor's actual ability to read quantum traces. Some have dismissed it as 'alien voodoo' while others believe the devices have a telepathic component. Regardless of the underlying theory, chronovisors only offer a vision of the basic structure and broad architectural details – specific carvings or elements within a building will not be shown.

A single chronovisor can project a field 30 feet in diameter. Multiple chronovisors can be linked and tuned together.

For Example: An archaeology team is exploring a world that was bombarded in the last Shadow war, a thousand years ago. They find the ruins of a destroyed Minbari observation post and attempt to use a chronovisor to create a holographic image of the building as it once was. The DC is 10 (base) + 30 (the structure stood for less than 100 years) +10 (it was last intact 900 years ago) = DC 50.

However, raising up an image of one of the ancient temples of that world would be much easier – the temples stood for just over 11,000 years, so the DC would be 10 (base) + 5 (the structure stood for more than 10,000 years) + 10 (destroyed 900 years ago) = DC 25.

Distress Rocket: A distress rocket is a man-portable chemical rocket packed with a highly efficient binary propellant, which has just enough force to lift the rocket's nosecone into orbit. The nosecone then unfolds into a transmitter, which sends an emergency distress call on all commonly used frequencies. The rocket can be set to launch automatically after a pre-defined time has elapsed and the transmitter module has a computer memory crystal on board so mission logs can be loaded onto the rocket for the rescue team to find.



Improvised Weapons

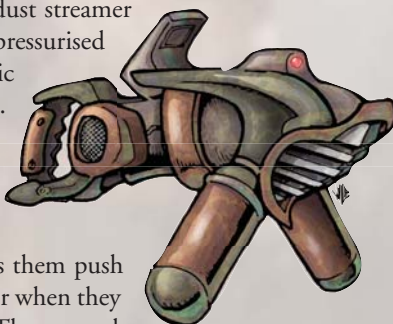
The excavating tool, the particle drill and the dust streamer can be used as weapons in an emergency, although none are especially well suited to combat. Unless the character has the specific Exotic Weapon Proficiency necessary to use one as a weapon, he will suffer a -4 penalty to attack rolls.

Improvised Archaeological Weapons

Weapon	Damage	Area of Effect	Critical	Ammo	Range Inc	Size	Damage Type
Dust Streamer	2d4	15 ft.	x2	10	Cone ¹	Medium	Bludgeoning
Particle Drill	3d8	—	x3	5	20 ft.	Large	Piercing/Energy
Excavating Tool	1d6	—	x2	—	—	Large	Piercing/Bludgeoning

¹ Dust Streamer attacks have a maximum range of 15 feet.

Dust Streamer: The dust streamer was originally a Centauri innovation but was reverse-engineered and mass produced by Humanity. The dust streamer consists of a pressurised jet of microscopic ferroceramic spheres. The spheres are charged with a static charge as they exit the streamer's nozzle, which makes them push away from each other when they hit an obstruction. The strength of the charge varies depending on what the spheres land on. This means that the stream of particles disperses earth and soil but does not affect other objects. A skilled operator can quickly blast away several feet of earth, stone or other debris without damaging delicate artefacts.



Drill, Particle: This bulky device consists of a cylindrical particle gun on a portable stand. When activated, the gun fires a ring of tiny particle beams into the ground, coring out a sample which can then be extracted. Deep core samples



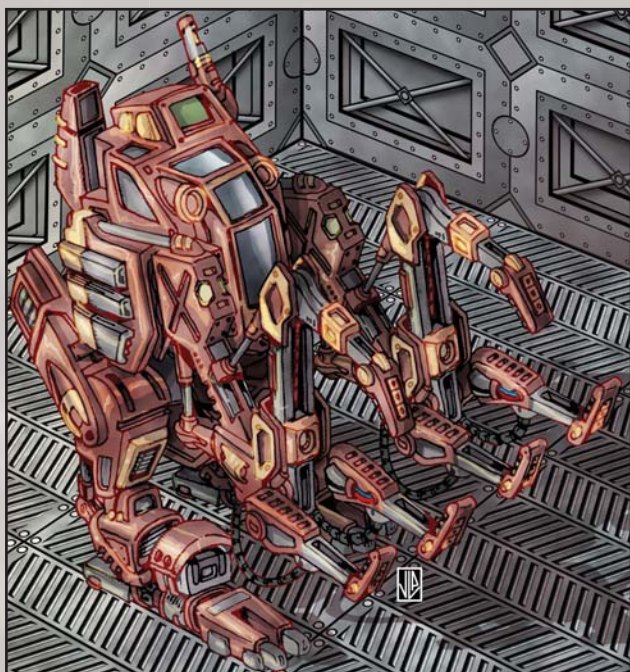
reveal a great deal about a planet's history; layers of carbon indicate forest fires or warfare, pollen dust can be used to trace industrial growth. The depth at which the drill beams converge determines the size and age of the sample. The particle drill can also be used as an ordinary drill, by reducing the diameter of the core to zero.

Excavating Tool: The basic tool of the modern labourer, this is a multipurpose digging implement, comprising a shovel, pickaxe and crowbar in one.



Exo-skeleton, Powered: Exo-skeletons powered by hydraulics

or synthetic myomer muscles are used by both colonists on high-gravity worlds and by some military units. The standard exo-skeleton used by IPX operations, though, is an adaptation of a design used by dockers and construction workers. The exo-skeleton stands nine feet tall and has two heavy-duty pincer-like grippers as well as fold-out manipulator hands. The exo-skeletons are clumsy and slow but quite powerful. The exo-skeleton's 'cockpit' area counts as a pressure suit.



Controlling a powered exo-skeleton requires a Drive check that accompanies every attack roll, Reflex saving throw or Str or Dex-based ability or skill check made by the controller. The result of the roll may not exceed the result of the Drive check.

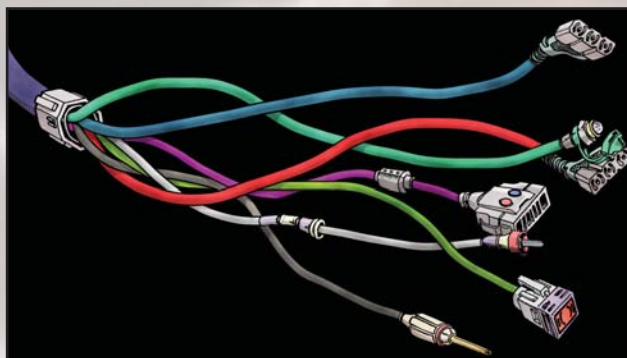
The wearer of an exo-skeleton gains a set Strength score of 26, a set Dexterity score of 3 and suffers a -6 penalty to attack rolls. It has a speed of 10 feet and, DR of 5 and an ACP of -8.

Microwaldo: A microwaldo is a mobile manipulator frame with several small arms and tools, as well as a screen and data tap. The operator inserts his hands into gloves on either side of the microwaldo, which translates the operator's movements to a smaller scale. The operator moves his hand an inch; the active microwaldo arm moves a thousandth of an inch. Using a microwaldo, the archaeologist can work at a far finer scale, excavating an item dust particle by dust particle.



A character using a microwaldo may make an Operations (systems) check (DC 15); if this check is successful, the character may then Take 20 on an Investigate check dealing with fine excavation, with a +10 bonus.

Rope2: Rope2 is a synthetic fibre that is incredibly strong and light. It is capable of carrying both data transmissions and power.



Smart Glue: This is a cutting-edge piece of Human nanotechnology. smart glue is used when reconstructing damaged or decayed items. The tiny robots in the glue begin by attaching the shattered pieces of the item together, then recreate any missing fragments by replicating the existing shards as closely as possible. Smart glue is not a perfect solution – at least 50% of the item has to be present and it cannot accurately repair highly decorated or technological advanced objects. It is perfectly adequate for repairing simple items like vases, primitive weapons, keys, mechanical parts and so forth.



Smart glue can either attempt to reconstruct a simple item (using a total Craft bonus of +6) or give a +4 bonus to any attempts to repair a simple item.



Scientific Link: Also known as a 'smart link', the scientific link is a more elaborate version of the common link. The scientific link covers the back of the hand and the forearm of the user, offering a full-scale computer interface. There is a tiny fold-out screen on a scientific link, although most users prefer to either project a display onto a convenient flat surface or connect the link to a pair of video glasses or a retinal display. A scientific link carries with it the same social connotations as a slide rule or pocket protector once did; the wearer has given up all hopes of being cool in favour of technology.

Stasis Pod: Archaeological stasis pods precisely replicate almost any conditions around an object, preserving it when it is being moved.

Often, artefacts can be damaged when removed from their resting place. The stasis pod comes in several sections, which are slid into position around the object to be preserved. When activated, the sections of the pod link together and precisely replicate the levels of moisture, chemical balance, pressure and so forth of the surrounding conditions.

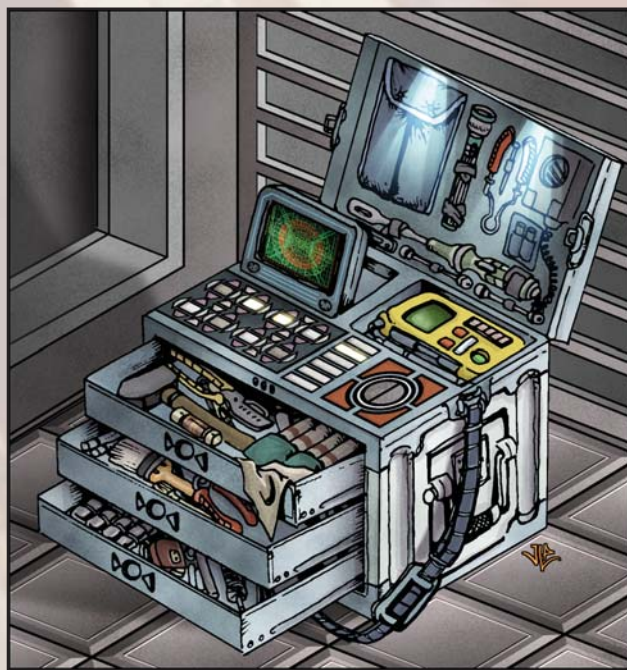


Subcutaneous Biotag: These tiny chips are mandatory for all IPX employees and contractors on an expedition. The biotag is inserted either beneath the skin at the back of the neck or in a tooth. Each tag is coded with the wearer's personal

details, such as name and employee number. The tag monitors the wearer's biosigns. Each tag also includes a tiny radio transmitter. In most circumstances, the transmitter is inactive but if the user's biosigns pass certain pre-defined thresholds, such as an abnormally low or high temperature, a loss of blood pressure, heart stoppage and so forth, the transmitter automatically sends out a distress call. The biotags are notoriously unreliable, often sending out erroneous alerts. The transmitter can also upload a log of its recordings to a medical computer or work as a short-range beacon when searching for a lost team member.



Toolkit, Archaeological: This box of supplies contains various digging tools, brushes, drills, sample containers and sterile wraps; it contains all the basic equipment needed to carry out Investigate checks on archaeological sites or objects.





Personal Archaeological Equipment

Item	Cost	I/R	Weight
Chronovisor	40,000 cr.	R	5 lb.
Particle Drill	8,000 cr.	—	10 lb.
Dust Streamer	2,000 cr.	—	5 lb.
Distress Rocket	500 cr.	R	50 lb.
Powered Exo-Skeleton	1,200 cr.	R	250 lb.
Microwaldo	1,200 cr.	—	10 lb.
Rope2, 100 ft.	200 cr.	—	2 lb.
Scientific Link	1,500 cr.	—	—
Smart Glue	200 cr.	—	—
Stasis Pod	600 cr.	—	5 lb.
Subcutaneous Biotag	100 cr.	—	—
Toolkit, Archaeological	120 cr.	—	10 lb.

EXPEDITION EQUIPMENT

Chemical Probe: A chemical probe 'tastes' the environment, detecting soil acidity, the presence of industrial compounds, alien organic matter and other significant information. It takes the form of a hand-held wand, with a sensitive probe at one end. A small readout gives immediate feedback to the user, but the probe is designed to be used with a hand computer.

The chemical probe can be used with Operations (sensors) or Knowledge (chemistry).

EM Scanner: This device scans probe the whole electromagnetic spectrum, picking up electrical activity, radio chatter, radiation, magnetic anomalies and other energy emissions. Broad-spectrum scanners like this are really only of use when searching for items or artefacts that are still active – locating a buried spacecraft that has no operational systems and is basically dead is a task better suited to a geophysical scanner.

The EM scanner can be used with Operations (sensors) or Knowledge (physics).

Geophysical Scanner: Geophysical units measure electrical resistance in the ground by passing a current through the soil. By painstakingly probing a whole area, a picture of the site can be constructed. Anomalies on the image indicate interesting areas; the ruins of a building, a burn site, disturbed earth or a crashed spacecraft would all affect the electrical resistance of the ground and show up clearly on a geophysical scan.

The geophysical scanner is used with Operations (sensors) or Knowledge (engineering).

Isocell: The isocell is a five-foot cube that is a smaller version of the technology used in medical isolabs. The cube walls are studded with sensors and biomonitors, as well as ports, airlocks and gloves so objects and tools can be used from outside. If the isocell detects that its containment is failing, it can be programmed to automatically incinerate its contents to prevent a hazardous leak or infection. Isocells are vital when working with potential biohazards.

Main Computer: Hand computers contain more processing power and memory than most individuals will ever need but any major research or data analysis requires a bigger computer system, such as the ones found on spacecraft, stations or established colonies. A main computer is a portable system of that sort, a central server robust enough to be used in the field. Expeditions with a dedicated spacecraft can do without a main computer by using their ship's systems instead but teams that are just dropped on a planet to be retrieved later need the processing power of a 'maincomp'. The specialised programs listed on page 42 all need access to a main computer or ship's computer.

Observer Satellite: Satellite surveillance and observation drive much of the space program; this small package is the current apex of a long, long development program. An observer satellite is a bundle of cameras and sensors which photograph the terrain from a low orbit. Observer

Some xenoarchaeologists will tell you that the best tools you can have don't show up on any equipment manifest or supply catalogue. They'll talk about using your eyes, and your imagination and your instincts. Nonsense.

We build sensors because they're more accurate than our eyes and we have computer simulations because they give better results than imagining what the place looked like a million years ago. People who bleat 'use your eyes' just don't know how to calibrate a thumper properly. This is science, people, science!

satellites do not just observe physical landmarks but can also detect heat, soil patterns, atmospheric phenomena and so on. The observer satellite is a Diminutive spacecraft that is normally dropped into position by the spacecraft that delivers the IPX team.

Portable Laboratory: A portable laboratory contains all the chemicals, tools, devices and other paraphernalia needed to carry out experiments in a particular scientific field. Portable labs can be outfitted for the purposes of biology, chemistry, physics or medicine.

It is possible to use a lab tailored for one type of skill check to carry out experiments related to another (using a chemistry lab for medical experiments, for example) but this incurs a -4 penalty to the check.

The laboratory consists of several easily transportable boxes of supplies. Despite the name, it is not portable by a single person but is considerably smaller and easier to manage than a full-size rover lab module.

Remote: Remotes are a category of small, remote-controlled robots. The flying recorder cameras commonly used by reporters are a form of remote. Expedition remotes are bulkier but tougher than such devices and have a much longer range. The most common configuration of remote is a small flying disc with a camera assembly and a small cargo pod, which is used to deliver samples and tools around a dig site. Other remotes have small manipulator arms or even weapons.

Remotes can be controlled from a hand computer or smart link using the Operations (systems) skill or can be programmed to carry out simple tasks: *'Fly around until you see Mr Eilerson, then give him this data crystal. Do not leave the confines of the dig site. Return here when this task is complete.'*

Most small remotes fly around on air jets or fans. Spider remotes are heavier, ground-based robots which travel on six or more jointed legs. This allows the robots to carry more powerful cameras and transmitters, so they are commonly used to explore underground areas. Similar drones are used in disaster zones, such as the ruins of buildings demolished by earthquakes or attacks. See the sidebar on page 41 for details on controlling drones.

RecDev (Recorder/Delivery)

Tiny Drone

Defence Value: 15 (+2 size, +3 Handling); **Base Speed:** 30 feet.; **Hardness:** 1; **Features:** Automated, Hover, Remote Controlled

Structural Spaces: 3 (Cargo 1, Control 1, Engine 1)¹

Ability Scores: Str 4 (-3), Han 16 (+3)

Attack Bonus: n/a

Skills: Notice, Pilot, Stealth

Spider Remote

Small Robot

Defence Value: 12 (+1 size, +1 Handling); **Base Speed:** 20 feet.; **Hardness:** 1; **Features:** Automated, Remote Controlled

Structural Spaces: 5 (Cargo 3, Control 1, Engine 1)¹

Ability Scores: Str 7 (-2), Han 13 (+1)

Attack Bonus: n/a

Skills: Drive, Notice, Stealth

¹ The RecDev and spider remotes may remove a cargo space and instead attach a weapon or manipulator arm. If a weapon is attached, it uses has an attack bonus equal to the drone's Handling score. If a manipulator arm is attached, the drone may use an additional skill (normally a Technical skill).

Automated: When given simple orders, the drone uses very primitive artificial intelligence to achieve its task (consider it Intelligence 1). While automated, the drone may only attempt a single order per turn. While automated, a drone may use any of its skills with a total bonus of +4.

Hover: A Pilot check (DC 10) is required for this drone to move its full speed in a single move action. Otherwise, it will move only half its base speed. Hovering drones may maintain a height of up to 10 feet.

Remote Controlled: While remote controlling a drone, the controller dedicates one or more his round's actions to the drone. Normally, the controller will dedicate both of his normal actions to controlling the drone (the drone therefore performs both actions). However, it is possible for the controller to split concentration, dedicating one move or attack action to the drone and using the other move or attack action himself.

Remote controlled drones always use the Initiative check of their controller.



Remote Controlling Drones

Controlling a drone requires a computer and a communicator (normally a dedicated control unit is provided that comprises both). An uncontrolled drone will simply stand still or hover, performing no actions. Operations (systems) is normally the skill used to control drones.

Controllers may only use the listed skills through a drone (thus a controller of a RecDev may only make Notice, Pilot and Stealth rolls through that drone). Any skill checks made through a drone use the controller's skill bonuses. Strength-based skills use the drone's Str bonus (rather than the controller's) and Dexterity-based skills use the drone's Han bonus (rather than the controller's Dex bonus).

Note that the controller may also need to make auxiliary checks concerning controlling the drone itself (notably Operations (systems) and Concentration checks).

Drones normally ignore effects that require a Fortitude or Will save, as they have no mentality or constitution to affect. Damaging effects that require a Reflex save use the drone's Handling score.

Relay Satellite: Communicators and links have a limited range; orbiting relay satellites extend this range greatly, allowing expedition members to communicate across planetary distances. Relay satellites can carry data traffic as well, allowing hand computers and smart links to connect remotely to other computers. The relay satellite is a Diminutive spacecraft that is normally dropped into position by the spacecraft that delivers the IPX team.

Smart Theodolite: A theodolite is used by surveyors when drawing up a plan of a site; it is a specialised combination of scopes and lasers which precisely measures the angle and elevation between two points. The smart theodolite is a small automated rover that trundles around a pre-defined area, mapping it. Smart theodolites are capable of traversing uneven terrain but their spongy wheels can get stuck in marshy or overgrown areas. The little robots have enough intelligence to avoid most static hazards.

Smart theodolites are programmed with Operations (systems).

Sonic Probe: The sonic probe, or 'thumper', uses echolocation to detect hidden features, especially ones deep underground. The probe emits a wave of sound into the surrounding ground, then listens for the returning echoes and resonance patterns. The probe is especially good at detecting deeply-buried objects, so long as their density is very different to their surroundings.

The sonic probe is used with Operations (sensors) or Knowledge (engineering).

Survey Balloon: For expeditions that do not have the resources to launch observer satellites, the survey balloon offers a low-budget alternative. The balloon is a cluster of hydrogen-filled sacs, with a small motor and a payload section that can be filled with cameras and other instruments. As long as the winds are not too strong, the balloon's motor can keep the survey balloon in place over a dig site for several days.

Survey balloons are programmed with Operations (systems).

Tachyon Transmitter: Faster-than-light communication uses tachyons to carry information through hyperspace. Conventional tachyon transmitters use the hyperspace drives of starships or jump gates; Babylon 5's tachyon traffic, for example, goes primarily through the local jump gate, although the station does have a backup internal transmitter. Important expeditions sometimes carry a stand-alone transmitter for operations in systems without a jump gate or a jump-capable ship in the system. These transmitters are staggeringly expensive and exceedingly rare.

Expedition Equipment

Item	Cost	I/R	Weight
Chemical Probe	400 cr.	—	2 lb.
EM Scanner	500 cr.	—	3 lb.
Geophysical Scanner	300 cr.	—	5 lb.
Isocell	800 cr.	—	12 lb.
Main Computer	25,000 cr.	—	—
Observer Satellite	15,000 cr.	—	—
Portable Laboratory	6,000 cr.	—	—
Remote, RecDev	4,000 cr.	—	4 lb.
Remote, Spider	6,000 cr.	—	40 lb.
Relay Satellite	30,000 cr.	—	—
Smart Theodolite	500 cr.	—	500 lb.
Sonic Probe	300 cr.	—	2 lb.
Survey Balloon	50 cr.	—	5 lb.
Tachyon Transmitter	75,000 cr.	R	—

IPM SOFTWARE

All of these specialised software programs come on a standard data crystal and require the processing power of a main computer.

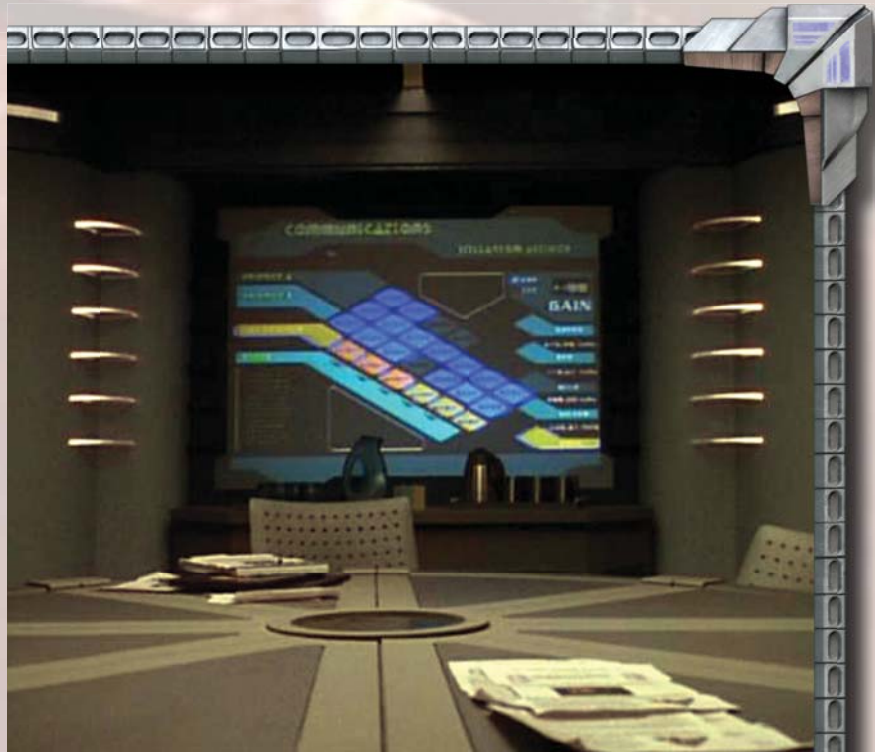
Adaptive Protocol Suite: The APS is a set of programs and tools designed to link standard Human-built computers to alien systems. It is the electronic equivalent of translation matrix software, although computer systems tend to be less idiosyncratic than languages. While the APS cannot solve the problem of understanding an alien computer architecture on its own, its tools do greatly aid a computer expert in doing so; access to the full APS system gives a +4 bonus to Computer Use checks when working to decode alien systems.

Augmented Overlay: Augmented Overlay systems are common in engineering and business. To use an overlay, every member of the team must wear a suitable set of video glasses and carry a hand computer or scientific

link. The Augmented Overlay's AI (AOAI) monitors the data gathered by the various team members and computer systems, and displays any relevant information on each user's display. For example, an archaeologist is working in a trench when a new satellite pass detects an interesting surface feature nearby. The overlay would highlight this feature in the archaeologist's display. Later, when the team's linguist manages to translate the alien alphabet, the AOAI would automatically overlay any alien text with the current best-guess translation.

For an experienced team, the Augmented Overlay is a great boon, giving a +2 bonus to all Intelligence-based skill checks as long as someone on the team has at least 8 ranks in the skill being tested (as if every user were automatically using the aid another action). However, processing the flood of information from an AOAI can be distracting; each user suffers a -2 penalty to all Concentrations and Notice checks while wearing the overlay glasses.

Expert System: Expert systems are 'dumb' artificial intelligences that contain a wealth of knowledge on a particular topic and have a complex set of rules to sort through their built-in databases and match what they know to the current problem. The more expensive the





IPX Software

Item	Cost	I/R
Adaptive Protocol Suite	600 cr.	—
Augmented Overlay	1,500 cr. each	—
Expert System (+1 bonus)	1,000 cr.	—
Expert System (+2 bonus)	2,000 cr.	—
Expert System (+3 bonus)	3,000 cr.	—
Expert System (+4 bonus)	5,000 cr.	—
Expert System (+5 bonus)	7,000 cr.	—
Expert System (+6 bonus)	10,000 cr.	R
Expert System (+7 bonus)	13,000 cr.	R
Expert System (+8 bonus)	17,000 cr.	R
Expert System (+9 bonus)	22,000 cr.	R
Expert System (+10 bonus)	30,000 cr.	R
IPX Archive	500 cr.	R
Translation Matrix	1,000 cr.	—

expert system, the more extensive its files and the smarter it is. An expert system's cost determines its total skill bonus in a particular Intelligence-based skill. In order to use any Intelligence-based skill other than Appraise or Knowledge, the expert system must have access to automated facilities capable of performing the necessary tasks – a main computer is generally necessary for expert Computer Use systems while a fully automated lab may be necessary for an expert Technical (engineering) system.

IPX Archive: A full copy of the IPX archive contains the full records of every previous expedition, the results of every scientific analysis and transcripts of every paper and report produced by the scientists and xenoarchaeologists of the company. However, no one outside the highest echelons of the company has access to the full archives; the archive copy described here is heavily edited but still very useful in cases where a dig encounters a dead race previously investigated by IPX. If there are references to a race in the archives, the information there gives a +4 bonus to Knowledge (specific culture) checks.

Translation Matrix: There are commonalities to most languages spoken by sentient beings. The vast majority of modes of communication have structures that are at least approximately cognate to verb and nouns as they exist in Human languages. As more and more races were encountered and their languages comprehended, scientists developed certain base forms of language, almost universal constants of communication. Using the translation matrix software, a xenolinguist can rapidly construct a rough translator for a newly encountered language. The matrix is a large library of common structures and rules; a given

race might construct sentences like the Drazzi and use the same passive subject system as the Minbari dialect of Lenn-Ah, so the researcher would use the library files on those linguistic structures as a base for an automated translator.

A translation matrix is vital for a xenolinguist hoping to construct an automated translator program for a newly encountered language. It grants a +1d4 bonus to any Linguistics check made with a culture whose language has not been encountered before.

BASE COMPONENTS

Atmosphere Processor: IPX's portable atmosphere processors are the best the Earth Alliance has to offer in terms of efficient planetside life support. The AtPro is a small chemical factory and air scrubber, designed to produce breathable air from alien atmospheres. If the planet's atmosphere does not contain any useful gases, the AtPro can also be used to reprocess the air sealed in a habitat, although air can only be recycled so many times. AtPro units are self-contained and need minimal maintenance.

Portable Habitat: Portable habitats come in all shapes and sizes; the buildings are modular and fit together easily. The joints between wall sections are automatically self-sealing, ensuring the structures are air-tight and the wall sections contain basic environmental controls to provide light and heat.

Polycarbon Tenting: Polycarbon tents are self-assembling airtight structures. The technology was first pioneered on Mars – there are tented cities in the canyons, as covering a canyon with a plastic roof is far cheaper than building a full-size dome. The polycarbon is 'inflated' by passing an electrical current through it and can be used in almost any conditions as long as the local atmospheric pressure is greater than 300 millibars.

The tenting is tough but is easily cut – dealing three points of damage to any section cuts a hole in the tent. The tent can self-seal small holes but any breach larger than an inch has to be patched manually.

Rover Modules: The cargo bed on the rear of the standard expedition rover can carry any of several modules. The modules listed here can be dropped off by a rover and connected by umbilicals to construct a temporary base. One of the modules will nearly always be a primary habitat module. While specialised rover modules can

Habitats, Tents and the Environment

A portable habitat is sturdy enough to endure all but the harshest conditions. If the portable habitat is in a windstorm, there is a 5% chance per hour that part of the habitat collapses; double this for hurricane conditions.

Polycarbon tents are not so hardy. They have a 5% chance per hour of losing structural integrity in a severe winds, 10% in a windstorm and 20% in a hurricane.

It is possible to reinforce a shelter by siting and building it correctly. The chief builder should make a Knowledge (engineering) check at DC 20 – for every point by which the engineering check exceeds 20, reduce the chance of collapse by 1% (to a minimum of 1%).

be constructed, the following are commonly used by expeditions.

- ⑤ **Digging Hut:** An open-bottomed module, used to cover a trench so archaeologists can work in shirtsleeves.
- ⑤ **Garage:** A garage module can store one Large, two Medium or four Small vehicles.
- ⑤ **Hangar:** A module with a fold-out polycarbon tent, which can be closed around a light shuttle or expedition rover.
- ⑤ **Lab:** A laboratory module contains all the chemicals, tools, resources and equipment needed to carry out experiments in a particular scientific field. Labs can be outfitted for the purposes of biology, chemistry, physics or medicine. It is possible to use a lab tailored for one type of skill check

to carry out experiments related to another (using a chemistry lab for medical experiments, for example) but this incurs a –4 penalty to the check.

- ⑤ **Life Support Module:** This module contains a portable fusion reactor, advanced AtPro and deepfreeze storage for supplies. A life support module can support itself for up to twelve months but it is normally attached to other modules. A life support module can sustain up to eleven other modules, though each attached module reduces its ability to sustain them all by one month.
- ⑤ **Mobile Bunker:** Used on planets where the expedition is threatened by hostile wildlife or aliens, mobile bunker modules are pillboxes with two PPG rifles on each of three sides of the bunker. The bunker also includes a secure armoury, which must be stocked separately.
- ⑤ **Primary Habitat Module:** A self-contained survival hut with supplies, six bunks and an AtPro capable of sustaining six people for a month. A primary habitat module can sustain up to five other modules, though each attached module reduces its ability to sustain them all by one month.
- ⑤ **Science Module:** Containing a main computer, a laboratory and a satellite uplink.
- ⑤ **Secondary Habitat Module:** Another survival hut which links to a main Habitat Module, and can sustain up to 10 people for a month. Up to four Secondary Habitats can be connected to a Primary Habitat.
- ⑤ **Unassembled Portable Habitat:** A single cargo pod can hold enough habitat parts to construct eight Small, four Medium, two Large or one Huge habitat.
- ⑤ **Unassembled Polycarbon Tent:** A single pod can hold enough tenting to construct 32 Small, 16 Medium, eight Large, four Huge or one Gargantuan tent.
- ⑤ **Workshop:** Workshop modules contain a small fabrication furnace and machine room, allowing for repairs of equipment and basic construction of new devices or tools.

Tools, Equipment & Consumables: Each cargo space's worth contains enough food, water, air scrubbers and other basic needs (toiletries, clothing, spare parts, data crystals and so on) for eight weeks for one person (note that an expedition will need consumables for its transit times via spacecraft as well as dig time).



Habitat and Tent Statistics

Size (in feet)	Example	Construction Time (Hab / Tent)	Cost (Hab / Tent)
Tiny (5 x 5)	Outhouse	30 minutes / 10 minutes	50 cr. / 15 cr.
Small (10 x 10)	Small Shelter	1 hour / 20 minutes	120 cr. / 40 cr.
Medium (20 x 20)	Habitat	5 hours / 1 hour	320 cr. / 120 cr.
Large (40 x 40)	Workshop	10 hours / 2 hours	960 cr. / 500 cr.
Huge (80 x 80)	Hangar	40 hours / 8 hours	3,200 cr. / 1,200 cr.
Gargantuan (160 x 160)	Covering a whole dig site	200 hours / 12 hours	11,520 cr. / 5,000 cr.

Base Components

Item	Cost	I/R	Weight	Cargo Space
Atmosphere Processor	3,000 cr.	—	4,000 lb.	—
Digging Hut	2,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Garage	3,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Hangar	3,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Lab	15,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Life Support	30,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Mobile Bunker	12,000 cr.	R	40,000 lb.	1
Primary Habitat	15,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Science	9,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Secondary Habitat	5,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Tools, Equipment & Consumables	1,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Unassembled Portable Habitat	Cost of habitat + 2,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1
Unassembled Polycarbon Tent	Cost of tent + 2,000 cr.	—	20,000 lb.	1
Workshop	3,000 cr.	—	40,000 lb.	1

Firstly, because those rover modules are chained together, try to sleep in a module at the **end** of a chain, otherwise you'll keep getting woken by morons going to the bathroom at four in the morning, local time. Secondly, primary hab modules are about twice as roomy as secondaries. Stick the mules in the secondaries at all costs. Even better, if you're the only scientist on an expedition, bring a folding cot and put it in the science lab. It's cramped but it's a hell of a lot comfier and roomier than any hab module.

I also bring my trusty collar gun along. Nothing says 'five more minutes of sleep' like shooting someone with an explosive slave collar.

IPX VEHICLES

Fusion Skimmer

A fusion skimmer is a high-speed hovercraft that has been adapted for use in almost any atmosphere. The vehicle's drive system automatically adjusts depending on the planet's gravity, although the skimmer cannot be used on worlds of 0.2g or less. The fusion skimmer's cockpit can hold up to six people, although it is more common for the skimmer to carry only two or three.

Tiny Surface Vehicle

Defence Value: 14 (+2 size, +2 Handling); **Armour:** 3; **Handling:** +2; **Sensors:** +0; **Stealth:** 8; **Stress:** —

Features: Fusion Engine

Crew: Civilian Veteran (+4 BAB, +6 Training), 1 Driver

Structural Spaces: 4 (Cargo 1, Control 1, Crew 1, Engine 1)

Grover

IPX has a small number of 'gravity rovers' — in actuality, second-hand Centauri Suture troop transports with their weapons systems removed and their anti-gravity drives

sealed in tamper-proof cases that automatically fry the delicate internal components if opened (a largely futile attempt by the Centauri to keep their gravity-manipulation technology from being reverse-engineered by Humanity). Grovers are finicky and hard to maintain but are much faster and more agile than standard expedition rovers. Grovers can carry the same modules as standard rovers.

Small Surface Vehicle

Defence Value: 13 (+1 size, +2 Handling); **Armour:** 15;

Handling: +2; **Sensors:** +6; **Stealth:** 15; **Stress:** –

Features: Gravitic Engine

Crew: Civilian Veteran (+4 BAB, +6 Training), 1 Driver

Structural Spaces: 14 (Cargo 7, Control 2, Crew 2, Engine 3)

IPX Expedition Rover

The standard IPX expedition rover is one of the most dependable vehicles ever built. The basic design has not changed in over a century and is based on the original rovers used by the Martian colonists. While the rover's electronics are regularly updated, IPX engineers are careful not to change any of the vehicle's tried and tested systems.

The forward cockpit contains spaces for three crew – a driver, a navigator and a sensor operator, although the vehicle can be driven by a single person. The sensor operator's seat can fold back into a sleeping couch, and there is a waste disposal system built into the back wall of the cockpit. There is an emergency escape hatch in the roof, although since this is not an airlock, the crew have to put on the pressure suits stored in the overhead lockers before firing the explosive bolts. An access panel in the floor can be opened for engine maintenance and access to the vehicle's drives and gears.

The back of the cockpit has an airlock on one side and a hatch on the other which can be connected by a flexible umbilical passage to the cargo section. The cargo bed can be fitted with a variety of modules; if the current rear module is habitable (such as a mobile laboratory or portable habitat), access to the rear module is via the front cockpit. It is possible to add two-wheel trailers to the rover, chaining a whole series of modules onto the back of the rover, each one connected by umbilicals to the next.

The wheels of the rover are intelligent, adjusting their tension and pressure dynamically in response to the topography. The tyres are divided into four concentric rings, each of which is divided into six sections; there are therefore 24 distinct chambers in each wheel and the rover can drive as long as four of these chambers are intact. Most IPX rovers are unmanned, although there is a weapons locker in each of the cockpits. In addition to rover modules (see page 43), the cargo bed can also carry:

- ⑤ **Cargo Pod:** A pod containing bulk cargo.
- ⑤ **EarthMover Pod:** A pod that consists of a digging blade and a powerful hydraulic arm, allowing the rover to be used as a construction tool or excavator.
- ⑤ **Expanded Cockpit:** a larger, more comfortable secondary living quarters, designed to allow the rover to be used on longer missions.
- ⑤ **Sensor Pod:** An array of scanners and transceivers increasing the rover's Sensor's bonus to +12.

Small Surface Vehicle

Defence Value: 12 (+1 size, +1 Handling); **Armour:** 11;

Handling: +1; **Sensors:** +6; **Stealth:** 10; **Stress:** –

Features: Fusion Engine

Crew: Civilian Veteran (+4 BAB, +6 Training), 1 Driver

Structural Spaces: 13 (Cargo 7, Control 2, Crew 2, Engine 2)

Jetbike

Also known as Marsbikes, these are one-person flyers powered by a small fusion engine. The jetbike gets its lift from high-powered thrusters, so it can be used in thin atmospheres or even zero gravity (the bikes have a small reserve tank of reaction matter). The thrusters can only lift the bike on planets with a gravity of 0.5g or less.

Jetbikes are highly sensitive, agile vehicles that require a skilled pilot to control their tendency to spin wildly or unbalance and lose the support from their underside thrusters. A Pilot test (DC 15) must be made every round of flight in order to keep control (a character is allowed to Take 10 on this check).



Diminutive Aircraft

Defence Value: 20 (+4 size, +6 Handling); **Armour:** 5;
Handling: +6; **Sensors:** +1; **Stealth:** 10; **Stress:**
Features: Fusion Engine
Crew: Civilian Veteran (+4 BAB, +6 Training), 1 Pilot
Structural Spaces: 2 (Control 1, Engine 1)

Lander Module

Few IPX expeditions go to worlds with convenient space stations full of shuttles, so getting to a planet's surface can be a problem for vessels without hangar spaces for their own atmosphere-capable shuttles. The lander module is an ugly low-tech solution to this problem – it is a cramped, squat and decidedly clumsy vessel that clamps onto a larger ship's airlock. The lander module is almost unflyable – it can go down and up but it cannot go from one point to another on a planet without going to orbit first and the module only has enough fuel for two trips before it must refuel from its mother ship.

Any ship that has a lander module attached to an airlock reduces its Handling and Stealth scores by one and increases its Stress score by one.

Tiny Spacecraft

Defence Value: 8 (+2 size, –4 Handling); **Armour:** 8; **Handling:** –4;
Sensors: +0; **Stealth:** 8; **Stress:** –
Features: Atmosphere Capable, Fusion Engine
Crew: Civilian Veteran (+4 BAB, +6 Training), 1 Pilot
Structural Spaces: 6 (Cargo 3, Control 1, Crew 1, Engine 1)

IPX Vehicles

Vehicle	Cost
Expedition Rover	80,000 cr.
Fusion Skimmer	5,000 cr.
Grover	240,000 cr.
Light Shuttle	150,000 cr.
Lander Module	100,000 cr.
Jetbike	4,000 cr.

IPX SPACECRAFT

Amber-class Surveyor

These small, cramped vessels are basically long-range shuttles. The bulk of the crew quarters are taken up with the life-support systems, which are capable of recycling the same air and water for weeks. The Amber class are most

I was high above the alien city on my jetbike when I heard the whine of rotors. Two alien saucers – no, three, four – emerged from shafts and zoomed towards me. The spinning edges of the saucers were razor sharp and hungry for my blood.

They weren't going to get it. Flashing back to my youth as a championship jetbiker on Mars, I kicked the throttle into high gear and wove a daredevil course between skyscrapers and walkways...

- from *Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World* by Max Eilerson

commonly used by mining companies and prospectors, although IPX has outfitted several with upgraded sensor systems (the normal Amber has only Sensors +2).

Flying an Amber has been described as rather like living in a small tin can stuffed with gym socks and some crews have been known to wear rebreather masks all the time to block out the stench. While the vessels are only slightly more aerodynamic than bricks, they are atmosphere capable, making them ideal choices for small expeditions. The cargo section can be pressurised and heated to convert it into a passenger bay. The nose-mounted particle gun is a new addition – older Ambers have another cargo space instead of the weapon.

Small Spacecraft

Defence Value: 13 (+1 size, +2 Handling); **Armour:** 10; **Handling:** +2; **Sensors:** +7; **Stealth:** 6; **Stress:** 15; **Features:** Atmosphere Capable, Fusion Engine, Slampad Landing Gear

Crew: Civilian Trained (+2 BAB, +4 Training); 1 Pilot, 3 Passengers

Structural Spaces: 8 (Engines 2, Control 1, Crew 1, Cargo 3, Weapons 1)

Fore Arc Weapons

Particle Gun (Close, Offence 5, 1 weapon space)

Argo-class IPX Operations Vessel

The mighty Argo-class vessels are IPX's pride and joy – only a handful of the huge ships have been constructed and they are never allocated to contractors. The purpose of the Argos is to secure and investigate key sites, especially on the Rim. During the Drakh crisis, the Argos did almost as much exploring and investigating as the *Excalibur*.

The Argo is a far more elegant design than the humble old Henry; it has a rotating middle section, giving it rotational gravity just like the Omega. The ship has its own jump engines, freeing it from dependency on jump gates or other carriers. It has a massive crew complement of nearly six times that of the Henry and carries them in far more comfort and with vastly better equipment. An Argo is a mobile research base with dedicated laboratories and computer facilities. The hold section is modular, which allows the ship to be easily reconfigured for specific missions.

Slampad Landing Gear

Shuttles and other Atmosphere Capable craft of Small or size or less may be outfitted with slampads. These drastically improve the craft's ability to land safely, regardless of terrain. See Landing without a Strip on page 60.

IPX did not skimp on the Argo's weapons, either – the turret is a holdover from the Henry but the rear-mounted particle array is new, designed specifically to dissuade raiders from attacking the ship. The front-mounted military-grade laser cannon, though, is designed specifically to blow away any rivals who might attempt to steal the site from IPX. Argos often routinely carry fighters as well as shuttles; IPX has even purchased several Thunderbolts and rumours insist that these are experimental 'furies equipped with alien weapons systems that are being test-flown by IPX.

Huge Spacecraft

Defence Value: Eight (–2 size, +0 Handling); **Armour:** 20; **Handling:** –2; **Sensors:** +7; **Stealth:** 5 **Stress:** 18; **Features:** Jump Drive, Fusion Engine, Targeting Computer (+3)

Crew: Civilian Trained (+2 BAB, +4 Training); 10 Pilots, 110 Passengers

Structural Spaces: 72 (Engine 5, Control 5, Crew 10, Cargo 30, Hangar 12, Weapons 10)

Turret Arc Weapons

MK I Interceptor (Close, Offence 3 or Intercept 10, 2 weapon spaces)

Medium Pulse Cannon (Long, Offence 10, Rapid Fire 3, 4 weapon spaces)

Fore Arc Weapons

Heavy Laser Cannon (Long, Offence 30, Beam 1d6, 2 weapon spaces)

Rear Arc Weapons

Medium Particle Array (Close, Offence 12, Array, 2 weapon spaces)



Fiennes-class Reconnaissance Vessel

An entire fleet of advanced-technology scouting and reconnaissance crafts, the Fiennes are tools of the (in)famous IPX exploration teams. They are sent with commercial fleets and other long-ranged convoys to map out decent places for IPX to set up colonies or research bases, take note of any trade routes that seem dangerous or risky and use that information to arrange for adequate escorts or alternate routes. They are armed with only enough firepower to harass enemy fighters or clear landing paths on alien worlds, and rarely ever try to fight any battle that they could easily escape.

By using a slaved activation drive for any friendly jump engine in their fleets, the Fiennes can actually force a ship to open a jump point at the push of a button – giving it as many escape routes as it has jump capable allies. It is preferable for an Fiennes to leave an entirely civilian convoy behind to the mercy of raiders rather than risk the advanced technology on the IPX vessel – reinforcements can always be sent back to help once the Fiennes is safe in port.

Small Spacecraft

Defence Value: 14 (+1 size, +3 Handling); **Armour:** 11; **Handling:** +3; **Sensors:** +5; **Stealth:** 14; **Stress:** 14; **Features:** Afterburners, Atmospheric Capable, Fusion Engine, Grapple, Remote Jump Point¹, , Slampad Landing Gear, Targeting Computer (+1)

Crew: Civilian Trained (+2 BAB, +4 Training); 1 Pilot, 1 Passenger

Structural Spaces: 9 (Cargo 2, Control 2, Engine 2, Weapons 3)

Fore Arc Weapons

Tri-Linked Particle Guns (Close, Offence 9, 3 weapon spaces)

¹ This ship can actually force any other allied ship to undergo the *Open Jump Point!* order with a DC 12 Operations (systems) skill check. This order will be the next order carried out by that ship, overriding any other orders.

Henry-class Long Range Surveyor

The Henry class is a relic of IPX's past – the bulky carriers are only useful in systems with their own jump gates, which closes much of the Rim off. Still, the Henrys carried out the bulk of IPX's exploration and technology retrieval

in known space and acquitted themselves well during the Dilgar and Minbari Wars. The Henry is a redesigned heavy freighter, with improved life support and sensors systems. A hangar for a light shuttle allows supplies and equipment to be ferried down to a planet's surface, although given the size of the ship's cavernous hold, this can be a painfully slow process.

The Henry's crew and living quarters are all along a central corridor running the spine of the ship. Experienced spacers often hold races down the corridor when the ship is not under thrust; less frequent travellers just hold onto the handholds along the sides as they crawl slowly towards the washrooms.

The defence turret contains an interceptor paired with a medium pulse cannon, giving the ship relatively good combat ability for a civilian transport.

Large Spacecraft

Defence Value: 9 (–1 size); **Armour:** 20; **Handling:** +0; **Sensors:** +5; **Stealth:** 5; **Stress:** 18; **Features:** Fusion Engine; Targeting Computer (+1)

Crew: Civilian Trained (+2 BAB, +4 Training); 4 Pilots, 20 Passengers

Structural Spaces: 36 (Engine 2, Control 2, Crew 6, Cargo 18, Hangar 4, Weapons 6)

Turret Arc Weapons

MK I Interceptor (Close, Offence 3 *or* Intercept 10, 2 weapon spaces)

Medium Pulse Cannon (Long, Offence 10, Rapid Fire 3, 4 weapon spaces)

Herodotus-class Expedition Base

The Herodotus is IPX's own design and is manufactured by Mitchell-Hyundyne under licence from the company. The ill-fated *Icarus* was one of these ships (although she had had much of her hold converted to crew quarters). The Herodotus is designed to function as a mobile base, deploying satellites, landing on a planet and carrying considerable amounts of cargo and vehicles.

No expense was spared when it came to the sensor array and the Herodotus is often refitted with an expanded science lab for missions when fewer heavy vehicles are required. On board, conditions are cramped but relatively comfortable; each crew member has a small cabin and the common areas on board are well-designed and pleasant to work in. The design's chief weakness is its lack of shuttle

space and relatively light armament for its size – fortunately, the Herodotus is normally escorted to its destination by a jump-capable ship, which offers protection from raiders and other hostile forces.

Medium Spacecraft

Defence Value: 11 (+0 size, +1 Handling); **Armour:** 15; **Handling:** +1; **Sensors:** +7; **Stealth:** 7; **Stress:** 16

Features: Atmosphere Capable, Fusion Engine

Crew: Civilian Trained (+2 BAB, +4 Training); One Pilot, 12 Passengers

Structural Spaces: 21 (Engine 3, Control 2, Crew 3, Cargo 8, Hangar 3, Weapons 2)

Fore Arc Weapons

Medium Pulse Cannon (Long, Offence 10, Rapid Fire 3, 2 weapon spaces)

IPM ARTEFACTS

Assembly Dust: Large drifts of this substance were recovered from a dead world on the Rim. Assembly dust is believed to be the remains of a large-scale utility fog – a theoretical form of nanotechnology where common items could be created or dismissed from a floating fog of trillions of nanomachines. Over millennia, it is believed that the utility fog broke down and settled, leaving the assembly dust.

When poured over an object, assembly dust can create a duplicate of that object. The duplicate comes out fully functional in almost every way, although the dust cannot copy stored information; pouring dust over a data crystal just creates a blank data crystal. The dust is activated by passing a control rod over it; the dust-created object can be turned back to dust using the same rod, although there is a 25% chance that the dust becomes ‘stuck’ and will not revert: instead, the object crumbles away to nothing after a few days. The dust has trouble copying extremely complex items – a PPG or other tool is easy to duplicate but copying, say, a Minbari gravity ring is beyond the artefact’s capabilities. The dust-created duplicates look identical to the naked eye but microscopic inspection reveals a strange pattern on the surface of the object. The dust must be handled with care, as it can duplicate organic objects just as easily as anything else. More than one would-be forger has accidentally created copies of his own hands.

The dust is normally traded in small pouches containing enough dust to copy a pocket-

sized item but the control rods used to activate the dust are the real treasure. It is possible to fake the presence of a control rod and set up a transmitter to send the activating signal to the dust but this has had disastrous consequences in the past when the wrong signal was sent.

Candle of the Dead: Cultures other than the Brakiri venerate the comet whose appearance heralds the return of the dead. These rare candles are said to be made from dust and ice collected from the tail of the sacred comet. It is said that if a person lights one on the grave of a dead person, that person will visit him at some point in your future. Some tales say the dead return in dreams; others speak of impossible radio messages or bizarre co-incidences.

Ceremonial Mask: 23 ornate masks were recovered from a dig on Gamma Phi 7, the only known remnants of the culture that once flourished there. The masks have a bizarre hypnotic effect in certain circumstances – if a mask is worn and the wearer is speaking to a single other person with no other observers present, the mask wearer gains a +8 enhancement bonus to Charisma. The wearer suddenly seems more imposing and reminds the observer of people he fears or respects. The mask wearer might suddenly sound more like the observer’s father, or a well-remembered school teacher, or a figure from myth.

Distortion Gun: The distortion gun appears to warp gravity when fired. It spits out a little knot in space-time, causing a visible distortion in the air like a heat haze. The haze travels a short distance before vanishing. The distortion has been known to cause illness, dizziness and even physical damage, as well as disrupt electronics. There is a 5% chance any complex electronics hit by the projectile stop working or crash; organic beings hit by the projectile must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or take 1d4 points of damage and be sickened for 1d4 rounds. Most notably of all, the projectile not only ignores armour, it ignores cover and all other obstacles – the distortion can pass through the hull of a battleship just as easily as it moves through empty vacuum.

The distortion gun can fire up to six shots before becoming depleted; it recharges one shot per day.

Personal Shield: A highly sought-after item, hotly traded on the black market, these little amulets absorb kinetic energy from fast-moving projectiles – in game terms, the shield will absorb any energy damage from PPG and other



ranged attacks. A fully-charged shield amulet will absorb 50 points of damage but most amulets have only 3d6 points worth of damage absorption left.

Phasing Glove: This artefact looks like a leather glove but is studded with alien electronics. The glove covers the entire forearm of the user – it is 18 inches long from the tip of the middle finger to the other end. When activated, the glove phases, allowing the wearer to push his hand through solid matter. Particular hand movements allow the wearer to rematerialise part of his hand, so a skilled operator can materialise his hand within a sealed container (to disable a lock or picking it from the inside, for instance).

The glove does have several drawbacks. Firstly, it is incredibly, painfully cold when activated and deals one point of cold damage per round of activation. Secondly, only the glove and the hand within it are phased – a character cannot phase anything held by the hand. Thirdly, the glove cannot phase through living flesh under any circumstances. Fourthly, although the glove will fit a Human or any race with a similar hand structure (Minbari, Centauri, Narn, Brakiri, Drazi and so on, but not Abbai or pak'mara) – however, the glove makers had only three fingers, not four. A wearer suffers a –2 penalty to any checks to manipulate items with the glove.

Power Leech: The device nicknamed the 'power leech' has defied analysis, mainly because it drains the power from any sensors directed at it. It is a squat lump of metal, about a foot long and six inches thick. The leech drains energy from any electrical systems around it; the drain is enough to shut down low-powered devices like links or passive sensors within 20 feet of the leech and more powerful items stop working within five feet. If the leech is attached to an item, it drains that item's power instantly – a leech sitting next to a fusion reactor would have next to no effect on the massive energy output of the reactor but clamp the leech to the side of the reactor and suddenly the reactor will produce next to no power. When the items are removed from the leech's proximity, they reactivate normally so long as they can be connected to a new source of power.

The leech does not appear to do anything with its siphoned power; there have been no detectable changes no matter how much electricity is pumped into the leech, leading some scientists to worry about the law of conservation of energy.

Ru'sha Mummy: The Ru'sha civilisation flourished half a million years ago but has left little to posterity save for these mummies. The Ru'sha were a small people, believed to be ancestors of the Vree – or else the two races evolved along parallel lines – as the mummified remains of the Ru'sha look very like dead Vree. The Ru'sha mummies have one interesting quirk – they are amazingly distracting to telepaths. Telepaths cannot explain why they find the mummies so disconcerting but some have described the feeling that the mummified aliens were trying to communicate with them. One powerful telepath said the mummy was screaming at him.

If a telepath can see a Ru'sha mummy, he must make a Concentration check (DC 30) before using any telepathic abilities. This distraction stops instantly if the mummy is removed from the telepath's line of sight.

Subliminal Flute: The subliminal flute is a musical instrument that has a curious subliminal effect. Anyone listening to the music of the flute becomes highly suggestible and easy to influence. The effects of the flute are similar to those of a hypnotic drug but are utterly undetectable to both medical and telepathic testing.

Playing the flute requires a Perform check (DC 20). If the check is successful, all listeners suffer a cumulative –1 penalty to Will saves and Sense Motive checks per ten minutes of playing. Also, the DCs for Diplomacy, Intimidate or Influence checks to convince the listeners of a particular course of action are similarly reduced. These effects fade within ten minutes of the flute playing ceasing.

The listener may make a Sense Motive check, with a DC equal to the Perform check result, to realise that he is being influenced. This check is made when the flute playing ceases, so it will suffer any penalties accrued from listening to the flute. A listener may also make a check if it is pointed out that he is acting strangely: *'Ambassador, why are you giving your bank account details to that lurker?'*

The music only works when the flute is played live – recordings do not work. The flute player, along with anyone who has successfully noticed and resisted the flute's song in the past, is immune to the flute's effects.

Techno-Mage Wand: Despite the name, no one knows if these devices are actually connected to the cryptic

brotherhood of Techno-Mages. The wand is a thin cylinder of some sort of flexible metallic alloy, engraved with curious and as yet untranslated symbols. The wand appears to focus the user's desires and emotions and to project them, but at a terrible cost; the wand user quickly becomes exhausted when using the device. The Techno-Mage wand can replicate the effects of any of the following abilities at a range of 30 feet:

- ⑤ Attack, for 3d6 energy damage.
- ⑤ Computer Use, for altering information and disabling security.
- ⑤ Intimidate, for scaring or intimidating others.
- ⑤ Subterfuge, for picking locks, disarming devices and sabotage.

In all cases, the wand uses the wielder's Will save bonus as its skill bonus or attack bonus. After each use of the wand, the user suffers 1d4 points of nonlethal damage and must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become fatigued..

The Roach: The roach is either a subtle form of organic technology or a bizarre natural symbiote. The roach is a small black and green insect, about the size of a thumb. The roach was found in an alien stasis chamber and may have been imported to the tomb world where it was uncovered.

When swallowed, the roach burrows through the stomach lining and wraps itself around the base of the spine. This is highly painful but not actually damaging. The user is wracked with agony for 1d4 days while the roach is in transit. Once the roach is in contact with the spine, it greatly augments the user's thought processes, acting as a secondary brain. The user gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Intelligence while the roach is in place.

The roach can be used safely for up to a month. After a month, the roach begins to take over. At first, the roach acts when the user is sleeping but then it asserts itself while the user is awake. The first researcher to use the roach, Dr Morningstar, was killed by the rest of his team at this point, when he attempted to disable the life support systems of their base. The roach was found in his spine during the autopsy that followed.

Zero Globe: A very handy tool for smugglers, a zero globe is an eight-inch wide sphere of clear material that shows up as just empty space to all known security scans. The globe does not show up as a suspicious 'blank spot' on a scan – it just makes it appear as though that section of a container is empty when scanned. The globe is fully visible to the naked eye; it simply evades x-rays and other mechanical detection techniques. The globe also stops its contents from emitting any detectable radiation or other signals.

IPX Artefacts

Name	Research DC ¹	Legality ²	Weight
Assembly Dust	40	I	1 lb.
Candle of the Dead	35	—	½ lb.
Ceremonial Mask	35	I	2 lb.
Distortion Gun	40	R	4 lb.
Personal Shield	25	—	1 lb.
Phasing Glove	35	I	2 lb.
Power Leech	35	I	20 lb.
Ru'sha Mummy	35	R	20 lb.
Subliminal Flute	35	I	1 lb.
Techno-Mage Wand	45	R	1 lb.
The Roach	40	—	—
Zero Globe	35	I	1 lb.

¹ See page 60 for details on how alien items are researched.

² None of these items are common enough to be known to law enforcement agencies, so the legality column indicates how they will be treated if discovered.



EXPEDITIONS

InterPlanetary Expeditions is the largest and best funded xenoarchaeology company in the galaxy. While its primary goal is the acquisition of military technology, especially organic technology or any technique that may narrow the gap between EarthForce and the fleets of the Minbari Federation, IPX is interested in any new technologies or items recovered from alien worlds. There are thousands of dead worlds out there, hundreds of once-mighty civilisations that were once more advanced and more powerful than Humanity. With the legacy of the past, IPX can enable us to build a better, brighter tomorrow.

Every IPX expedition is different. It is rare for even a company team to have exactly the same mix of people on two separate digs and contractor-run teams are even more varied, as contractors tend to run with whatever specialists they can get. With IPX's gruelling schedules and demanding shareholders, good science and thorough preparation are very much secondary to getting out into the field and bringing back results. The most successful contractor teams are the ones with the initiative and the wits to 'think on their feet and solve problems' – or, as permanent employees put it: *'Contractors rush in where sane people fear to tread.'*

This chapter covers all the steps in an expedition, from the initial rumours of a candidate world to the triumphant return to IPX and the vast financial rewards.

IDENTIFYING A TARGET

The first step is deciding where an expedition is going to go. Despite the fanciful tales of some holovids, not every alien world is a treasure-trove of ancient technology. The vast majority of worlds in the galaxy are empty, lifeless rocks. Even once-inhabited worlds are often useless to IPX – even the Gatemakers left a whole world full of nicely categorised Unobtainium items, there is no point in sending an expedition there if the Gatekeeper's technology is buried beneath five miles of ocean or volcanic ash. IPX resources are vast, but by no means limitless. A good candidate world is one with at least some intact surface features, like buildings, that indicate the presence of advanced technology. A sizeable proportion of IPX operations take place in space – hard vacuum preserves ships and other items perfectly. Candidate sites are usually found by one of the following:

⑤ **Chance:** Many IPX expeditions start with some random discovery. A farmer on some backwater planet digs up a new field and finds his farm is right on top of a crashed spaceship; a mining team find strange carvings in a strata of billion-year-old-rock. No matter how much research and preparation you do, xenoarchaeology is still a matter of luck as much as judgment.

⑤ **Explorers:** The EarthForce Explorers Corps keeps pushing out into unknown space and discovering brave new worlds. IPX is often right behind them, exploiting those brave new worlds. The Corps is not capable of the sort of in-depth xenoarchaeology that IPX can manage but there is a huge rivalry between the two organisations.

⑤ **Other Digs:** One dig often leads to another. Colony worlds usually reveal the location of the colonists' homeworld; military bases might have records of other bases or stations. Any race capable of producing interesting technology is almost certain to have been a spacefaring species, so they normally had several colonies and outposts, all of which warrant investigation.

⑤ **Probes:** Automated probes have been dispatched to the fringes of known space. Most of these robot spacecraft will fall victim to raiders or other dangers, or break down, or simply fail to find anything. Still, the faint signals from the long range probes do sometimes carry interesting information. One of the most promising digs of recent years, the *Icarus* expedition to Alpha Omega 3, started when a probe found signs of a dead civilisation on that Rim world.

⑤ **Research:** The archives of spacefaring races often contain useful clues. Species like the Abbai and the Markab have been spacefarers for centuries and have seen more of the galaxy than any Human. The Centauri were once great explorers and the Annals of the Imperial Stellar Cartography Society contain description of thousands of worlds. Sometimes, research can throw up an excellent candidate world – most of the older races do not practice the rapacious xenoarchaeology of the Humans or Narn. The

'Alien spacecraft now on screen.'

'It's like nothing I've ever seen before...'

'My god, it's incredible!'

I glanced up at the viewscreen.

'Late period Markab derelict, dating from about 600 CE. You'll find carbon-weave hull plating around a tri-phase jump engine and ion realspace drive, all controlled by a liquid computer system. It's space trash. Don't you people ever open a book?'

- from *Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World*, by Max Eilerson

Markab might be content to note that the planet Delta 9 is covered with the ruins of a world-sized city, without having any desire to raid that city for new technologies. Getting access to the archives of other races can be difficult but is often very profitable.

5 **Rumours:** Spacers tell stories. Every marketplace and spaceport is full of wild tales, from 'there's something living in hyperspace' to 'there's a planet of solid Q-40 out on the Rim' to 'there are ghost ships full of dead Minbari, who committed suicide after the Battle of the Line and their spirits want revenge on Earth'. There is sometimes a grain of truth at the core of these tales. The planet entirely composed of Quantum-40 is obviously a lie but if there are half a dozen similar stories, all speaking of a long-abandoned alien mining station orbiting a world on fire, then it may be worth investigating.

5 **Scouts:** IPX sends scouting missions to unexplored sections of the galaxy, as do other corporations. Prospectors and amateur explorers often come across signs of alien technology on distant worlds, and sell the location of these finds to IPX or to contractors. Some even make a career out of this; full-time xenotech scouts do not bother with the expense and hassle of putting together a full expedition, instead just gathering lists of candidate worlds and letting others take all the risks. Such scouts are a necessary evil in modern xenoarchaeology.

5 **Transmissions:** Out there, signals linger. A passing ship might detect a momentary radio signal or tachyon pulse from a long-dead race, a brief

IPX & Candidate Worlds

Most IPX offices have a list of borderline candidate worlds – sites that are not worth the expense of sending a company team but might be suitable for a low-budget contractor. These candidate sites are purchased from scouts.

burst of order in the chaos of galactic background radiation. While it is rare for transmissions to be detected – programs like Earth's SETI searched the skies for years but found nothing but a brief contact with a Vree navigation beacon – some promising candidate worlds have been located by listening to ancient radio traffic.

Initial Research

Just having a possible candidate world is not enough. The next step is research. Research normally involves combining one or more of the preceding avenues of discovery. If a drunken Drazl slurs that his cousin once saw a mile-long alien ship orbiting a dead world on the Rim last year, the next thing to do is identify which systems were visited by long-



range Drazzi patrols in the last 12 months and correlate those systems with EarthForce Explorer Corps records, with Centauri archives, with the myths of the primitive Lokren tribes, with the pictographs found on Theta Alpha II and so forth.

FUNDING AND INITIAL CONTRACT

Once you have a candidate world, it is time to contact the nearest IPX office to discuss funding. IPX brokers will work with a prospective contractor, helping him determine what his expedition will need in terms of equipment and staff, which obviously feeds into the amount of funding required. The main criteria examined by the broker are:

- 5 Has the contractor made a solid case to justify the expedition?
- 5 Are the potential rewards worth it?
- 5 What are the dangers of the mission?
- 5 The broker's attitude.

In game terms, the prospective contractor must make an IPX Influence check, using the modifiers on the IPX Funding Modifiers table. Compare the results of the Influence check to the IPX Contracts table.

IPX Contracts

Influence Result	Contract Offered	Bursary	Expedition Points Required
5 or less	No deal	—	—
6 to 15	Level 1 contract	100,000 cr.	25
16 to 25	Level 2 contract	200,000 cr.	50
26 to 35	Level 3 contract	400,000 cr.	100
36 or more	Level 4 contract	800,000 cr.	200

Permanent IPX employees may simply be assigned a mission and a budget or they can lobby like contractors for a more prestigious mission, in which case they use the funding rules too.

TRANSPORT, OUTFITTING AND RECRUITING

With funding in hand – plus whatever money the contractor and his partners wish to contribute themselves – it is time to get down to the real hard work of assembling the mission.

IPX Funding Modifiers

The Expedition	Influence Check Modifier
Based on wild rumours	-2
Based on unreliable evidence	-1
Some evidence and research	—
Well researched from multiple sources	+1
Physical evidence	+2
The Rewards – Target Is Believed To Be...	Influence Check Modifier
TL0	-2
TL1	-1
TL2	+0
TL3	+1
TL4	+2
TL5	+3
TL6	+2
TL7	+1
TL8	—
Especially Bizarre Technology	-2
Especially Valuable Technology	+2
Dangers	Influence Check Modifier
Target is on the Rim	-1
Target is in a warzone	-1
Potential rivals are interested	+2
Target is quarantined	-1
Broker's Attitude Is...	Influence Check Modifier
Hostile	-8
Unfriendly	-4
Neutral	—
Friendly	+2
Helpful	+4

¹ A successful Bluff or Subterfuge check (DC 20 to 30; Games Master's discretion) can make poor research look better than it is, effectively negating any penalty for the expedition being based on wild rumours or unreliable evidence.

Recruiting

Depending on the nature and scale of the mission, the specialists listed in the Expedition Staff table may be needed. Player characters may fulfil some or all of these roles themselves or they can recruit specialist Non-Player Characters with the listed skills.

Note that the cost of a ship's crew is included in the cost of hiring a ship but the contractor still needs to purchase supplies for the ship.

Technology Levels

IPX rates civilisations by Technology Level (sometimes simply referred to as the Tech Level).

A TL0 civilisation has not achieved space flight and may be anywhere from 'banging rocks together to make fire' to 'banging particles together to make atomic explosions'. TL0 worlds may still have useful technologies or resources, usually in some biological field, but the company is wary of investing too much in biotechnology and gene patenting – there are numerous problems when it comes to integrating the products of one biosphere into another. Many executives remember the Spoo Approval Wars and shudder.

TL1 are spacefarers who have knowledge of jump technology but are still less advanced than the Earth Alliance. The Earth Alliance is rated at TL2, which is considered roughly the galactic average. The Narn and most of the League of Non-Aligned Worlds are around TL2 (Tech Levels are a massive abstraction and are really only meaningful within the specific context of IPX Evaluation Reports).

The dividing line for TL3 is the casual use of gravity manipulation technology and can really be summarised as 'anything the Centauri have that we don't.' Some also refer to races with uniquely advanced quirks as being TL3 or 3.5 – the Vree have their mastery of antimatter weapons, the Abbai have their force shields and so on. Some of this technology is sought by IPX and its military backers, but other technologies are too different from standard Human techniques to be useful. The Vree, for example, have offered to sell gravitic technology to the Earth Alliance, but Vree technology is too different from Human designs to be easily integrated, so the trade would not be cost-effective.

The Minbari are somewhere around TL4, although some military analysts peg them at TL5. This level of technology implies the ability to miniaturise advanced technologies, altering the basic laws of physics as experienced by the user. For the Centauri, for example, to alter local gravity requires a room-sized gravity generator, focussing devices and a massive power source. The Minbari can fit all that into a decorative crystal ring.

TL5 technology is often either self-aware, telepathically active or both. Up until 2261, the Vorlons were also believed to be TL5, although this rapidly got upgraded to TL7 when they started blowing up planets.

Beyond TL4 (the Minbari) and TL5 (better than the Minbari), TL6 is defined as the highest level of technology that can be profitably exploited. IPX's main customer is EarthForce and EarthForce does not want an alien superweapon that they cannot re-engineer. They want alien superweapons that they can mass produce. Obviously, they will take a 'black box' device but the hard-nosed buyers in the New Technologies Division are more interested in technology that can be replicated than incomprehensible technomancy. Shadow technology, despite being TL7 in terms of power, was almost eager to be used and adapted and changed itself to integrate into Human systems instead of the other way around.

TL7 and TL8 are both 'magic' – technology beyond the comprehension of Humanity. With a hundred years of research and development, IPX might be able to reverse-engineer some TL7 devices but the investment would not pay off anytime soon. The company is all about the short cuts. The chief difference between TL7 and TL8 is that Humans can at least vaguely identify the basic principles involved in TL7 machines – 'the Vorlon planet destroyer just fired a bioelectric beam of impossible proportions' versus 'the Walkers just did... something.... glowy'.



Often a single individual can fulfil two or more of the roles – a scientist might have the necessary skills to cover both Knowledge (biology) and Computer Use, while the electronics technician might also be a skilled pilot. Such an individual will normally charge their usual rate for their main position plus half of the normal rate for any additional position.

Outfitting

There are three basic categories of equipment used on an expedition:

- ⑤ Base Components
- ⑤ Tools, Equipment & Consumables
- ⑤ Vehicles

Expedition Staff

Staff	Key Skill	Total Skill Bonus	Class/Level	Cost per Week	I/R
<i>Researchers</i>					
Archaeologist	Investigate, Knowledge (history)	+9	Scientist 3	1,500 cr.	—
Biologist	Knowledge (biology), Medical	+9	Scientist 3	1,800 cr.	—
Chemist	Knowledge (chemistry), Knowledge (biology)	+9	Scientist 3	1,800 cr.	—
Computer Expert	Computer Use, Technical (electronics)	+9	Scientist 3	2,000 cr.	—
Engineer	Knowledge (engineering), Technical (engineering)	+9	Scientist 3	1,800 cr.	—
Geologist	Knowledge (physics), Knowledge (chemistry)	+9	Scientist 3	1,800 cr.	—
Historian	Knowledge (history), Knowledge (philosophy)	+9	Scientist 3	1,500 cr.	—
Linguist	Linguistics, Knowledge (specific culture)	+9	Scientist 3	2,000 cr.	—
Physicist	Knowledge (physics), Knowledge (astrophysics)	+9	Scientist 3	1,800 cr.	—
Psychologist	Sense Motive, Knowledge (culture)	+9	Diplomat 3	1,800 cr.	—
<i>Technicians</i>					
Construction Technician	Technical (engineering), Technical (mechanical)	+6	Worker (blue collar) 2	1,200 cr.	—
Electronics Technician	Technical (electronics), Operations (systems)	+6	Worker (blue collar) 2	1,200 cr.	—
Mechanical Technician	Technical (electronics), Technical (mechanical)	+6	Worker (blue collar) 2	1,200 cr.	—
Labourer	—	—	Worker (blue collar) 1	600 cr.	—
<i>Pilots and Drivers</i>					
Fighter Pilot	Pilot, Knowledge (tactics)	+8	Officer (pilot) 3	2,500 cr.	R
Rover Driver	Drive, Operations (driving)	+6	Worker 2	1,200 cr.	—
Shuttle Pilot	Pilot, Operations (piloting)	+6	Worker 2	1,200 cr.	—
<i>Specialists</i>					
Diplomat	Diplomacy, Sense Motive	+10	Diplomat 4	2,000 cr.	—
Explorer	Investigate, Acrobatics	+10	Agent 4	2,000 cr.	—
Physician	Medical, Knowledge (biology)	+11	Scientist 5	2,000 cr.	—
Security Guard	Notice, Athletics	+5	Soldier 2	1,000 cr.	—
Soldier	Notice, Knowledge (tactics)	+10	Soldier 4	2,500 cr.	R
Telepath (Alien)	Telepathy	+10	Telepath 4	12,000 cr.	R
Telepath (Licensed)	Telepathy	+10	Telepath 4	5,000 cr.	R
Telepath (Unlicensed)	Telepathy	+6	Telepath 2	2,500 cr.	I
Thief	Stealth, Subterfuge	+11	Agent 5	4,000 cr.	I

The prices for Base Components and Tools, Equipment & Consumables can be found in the Equipment chapter.

Base Components are used to create the dig site's lab, habitats the like. Most Base Components take up one cargo space each.

Tools, Equipment & Consumables take up one cargo space per expedition member.

Vehicles like rovers and fusion bikes can be stowed in a partially disassembled state when placed in cargo and need to be reassembled upon arrival, a process which takes several hours per vehicle. Vehicles stored in hangar spaces are ready to launch immediately.

The cargo space on board many ships is quite limited, so it is common for smaller expeditions to be delivered in pieces, with the ship dropping the core of the expedition off on the target planet, then departing to fetch more supplies.

What Is The Minimum Equipment Needed?

If the target destination is a habitable world, then an expedition can make do with a polycarbon tent if necessary, although the researchers will whine about the poor conditions. However, if the destination is a hostile planet, rebreathers or even pressure suits may be needed by everyone on the team. Polycarbon tents can be used on some hostile planets but portable housing or rover modules are much, much safer.

Some sort of scanning and surveying equipment will be needed unless all the interesting items and ruins are on the planet's surface. Digging gear will also be needed if the team is doing excavations. The team will also need the appropriate amount of consumable supplies.

The team will need some way of getting to their destination; if their ship is not atmosphere capable, they will also need a shuttle to get to the surface. Finally, if the team needs to travel on-planet, a rover of some sort is usually essential.

Transport

The vast majority of IPX expeditions in the modern era are to worlds on the Rim, although even well-explored space can throw up the

But Mathematics Is Hard!

Some players love shopping and planning, and will enjoy squeezing the most efficient use out of every credit and cargo space. Others will just want to get right to the adventure. If a group tends towards the latter style of play, just assume the expedition has the basic supplies it needs and roll on the Rough & Ready Availability table if the question 'Do we have this unusual bit of equipment with us?' comes up.

Rough & Ready Availability

Contract	% Chance of Having a Particular Item to Hand
Level 1	15%
Level 2	40%
Level 3	75%
Level 4	95%

occasional surprise. For travelling off the beaten track, an expedition needs a ship. Some commonly used ship types are listed on page 47. Those ships are owned by IPX and leased out to contractors. Of course, a contractor may have his own vessel or find alternate forms of transport.

Assembling an expedition can take weeks or months. It is common practice for a team to gather at a travel hub like Proxima or Babylon 5, or at an IPX field office, which normally has a warehouse of equipment and vehicles that can be leased.

If the expedition target is accessible by well-travelled jump routes and has a jump gate, then even the smallest ship can probably make it to the destination intact. However, not every Rim world has a functional jump gate, despite the best efforts of the Explorer Corps. If a ship needs to 'piggyback' a jump point off a larger craft, the cost is generally equal to Excellent-level travel to the required location, if the ship is passing through or near that location anyway (see page 277 of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game: 2nd Edition*). Persuading a ship

Leasing Spacecraft & Vehicles

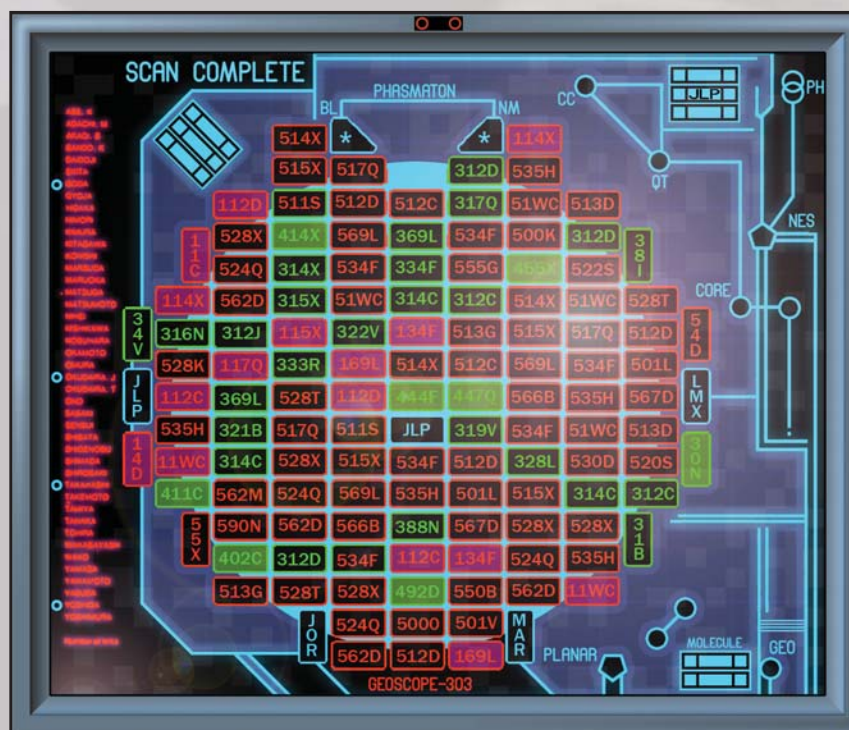
Leasing Craft

Craft	Lease Cost per Week
Amber-class Surveyor	2,500 cr.
Argo-class IPX Operations Vessel	25,000 cr.
Crawler	1,000 cr.
Delta-V Light Fighter	1,500 cr.
Fiennes-class Reconnaissance Vessel	5,000 cr.
Fusion Skimmer	500 cr.
Grover	3,500 cr.
Henry-class Long Range Surveyor	10,000 cr.
Herodotus-class Expedition Base	5,000 cr.
IPX Expedition Rover	1,500 cr.
Jetbike	500 cr.
Lander Module	900 cr.
Light Shuttle	1,000 cr.
Shuttle	1,500 cr.

Primary Survey

Once a potential site has been identified, it is time for the laborious task of getting all the expedition's equipment down from orbit. Smaller ships that are atmosphere capable are obviously much easier to offload; larger vessels can take dozens of shuttle trips to empty their holds. While the light shuttles used by IPX can theoretically land on any broken ground as long as it is fairly level, this can be tricky. Therefore, setting up a landing strip is a good idea.

Once the team is in place, it is time to depart. The journey to the destination can often take several days or weeks, depending on distance and the availability of jump transports. This time is customarily used for the team to get to know each other and to plan the mission. IPX missions often feel like a bizarre mix of college dorm, high-pressure corporate meeting and explorers willingly sailing off the edge of the world. If a contractor cannot win the full respect and co-operation of his team during this early stage of the mission, the expedition is likely doomed.



Landing without a Strip

The difficulty for the Pilot check to land a shuttle varies depending on the conditions and the shuttle's landing gear.

Condition	Slam pad Landing Gear	Conventional
Grass or flat ground	5	10
Broken ground	10	20
Sloped ground	15	30
Significant obstacles like trees	25	30
Very soft or marshy ground	20	30
High Gravity	+10	+10

If the check is failed, the shuttle has crashed rather than landed.

Setup

The first priority for any off-world expedition should be setting up an operations centre. Hostile environments also call for an emergency shelter. Rover modules are the fastest to set up, as they come ready-to-use and connecting one module to another via an umbilical corridor is easy. Polycarbon tents are almost self-assembling; it is only the portable habitats that take time to construct.

Surveying and the Dig

Sometimes no excavation is needed because the target is on the surface but most operations will involve a lot of digging, whether it is digging trenches to investigate an anomaly picked up by a geophys scan or clearing dust out of a ruin. Before digging can start, though, the team need to work out where to dig. Orbital scans can only detect surface features – the best preserved archaeology is often buried, so surveying tools and instruments must be employed. Each of the probes and scanners described on page 39 has a different purpose:

- ⑤ Chemical probes detect unusual chemical or organic traces, pollution and signs of industry.
- ⑤ Samples from drilling detect climate change, minerals and soil changes.
- ⑤ EM scanners detect signals, electrical activity and localised radiation.
- ⑤ Geophysical scanners detect buried objects, especially metal ones.
- ⑤ Sonic probes detect buried objects, especially very dense ones.
- ⑤ Theodolites 'detect' surface features that might not be apparent from the air.

Each of these scans normally requires a DC 15 skill check appropriate to the item or equipment being used (usually Operations (sensors) checks). Each successful scan reduces the DC of the subsequent Surveying check by one.

The Surveying check is an Investigate check. The appropriate DC to find an interesting feature or anomaly varies – consult the Surveying table. The Base DC depends on the composition and activity of the target – obviously foreign and/or metallic objects are easier to detect.



Surveying

Difficulty	Base Surveying Check DC	Example
Easy	10	Active reactor
Medium	15	Buried city
Hard	20	Debris from ancient crashed ship
Very Hard	30	Concealed tomb

Surveying Modifiers

Modifiers (Environmental)	DC Modifier
Shallow Burial (less than 5 ft.)	+0
Medium Burial (5 ft. to 15 ft.)	+2
Deep Burial (15 ft. to 50 ft.)	+5
Very Deep Burial (more than 50 ft.)	+10
Exact Location Known	-10
Rough Location Known	+0
Each success	+10
Modifiers (Scans)	DC Modifier
Each successful scan	-1
Modifiers (Target Size)	DC Modifier
Tiny (single tool)	+10
Small (parts of a corpse)	+5
Medium (ruined structure)	+0
Large (remains of a ship)	-5
Huge (remains of a large structure)	-10
Colossal (remains of a city)	-20

Once the team starts finding interesting archaeology, then the real work can begin.

INVESTIGATION & RESEARCH

Investigation

Investigation checks are used to unearth buried objects and to examine ruins and other archaeological features. While the various science skills are used to analyse clues, Investigate finds the clues in the first place. Important clues in archaeology are:

- ⑤ **Age:** There are various ways of testing the age of an item – carbon dating, for example, works on most Earth-like worlds, although it takes some time to calibrate the readings based on the levels of C14 in the atmosphere.

- ⑤ **Context:** An object's surroundings can say much about its purpose. For example, finding a powerful broadcast device in the ruins of a temple says much about religion's place and power in the society being investigated.

- ⑤ **Strata:** The deeper an item is buried, the older is it, assuming it was not deliberately buried. Items tend to be laid down by era, with the waste of recent ages burying older ones.

Investigate checks to uncover items vary in DC, depending on the conditions. Just sweeping off dirt and debris is only DC 10, as is properly recording a find. If an item is especially delicate, the DC is higher, up to DC 30 for the fragile remains of organic objects. Isocells, microwaldoes and stasis canisters are very useful tools in such cases.

Once an item is recovered (or a clue is found), the next step is to use Research checks to divine more information about the alien item.

Day 129: Still making Investigate checks... losing all hope...

The Games Master should only call for checks when it is dramatically appropriate. If there is no pressing crisis or major time factor, just assume the characters Take 20 a few times and find the interesting bits. Survey checks, for example, should only be called for when the actual act of surveying is 'on screen' – for example, when the characters are trying to find the buried entrance to the ancient alien labyrinth before the Narn do, in the same way a Pilot check should only be called for when a character is doing something exceptional with his craft and not when he is just performing a routine docking sequence.

Research

The primary goal of IPX expeditions is to find and recover alien technology, so there are special rules for dealing with alien devices. Characters who find themselves dealing with mysterious technology can use the following rules to attempt to unravel the purpose and function of a device. Scientists are the characters best suited to this task, as delving into the alien requires a grasp of the fundamentals of physics – even if Humanity’s understanding of these fields is painfully lacking on a cosmic scale.

There are four fundamental questions that a character must be able to answer before he can use an alien device successfully.

- 5 Where does it come from?
- 5 What is the device supposed to do?
- 5 What does it require?
- 5 How is it controlled?

Answering each question requires a Research check (or possibly more than one).

If the Research check succeeds, the character has answered that question, which will help when the character finally tries to activate or use the device. If the check fails, the character may still have learned something about the device, may have set off down the wrong track or may have caused a disaster. See page 63 for details on how Research checks work.

Once the characters have answered (or given up on) each of these questions, they can move onto the final step: attempting to use the device. See page 66 for details on how to use an alien device.

Question: Where Does It Come From?

Understanding the technological and cultural context of a device is key to unlocking its secrets. Different races use different types of technology. The Vorlons use organic technology, for example, while many Minbari devices harness special properties and types of crystal. Knowing what race created the artefact in question can give many clues to other questions.

Successfully answering this question gives a +4 bonus to all attempts to understand how the device is controlled.

Skills Used: Investigate (to search the area surrounding the device for clues); Intrigue (to find out who bought and sold the device, if it was not found on site), Knowledge (specific culture), Knowledge (history).

Possible Clues: Other cultural artefacts and evidence found with the device; recognising distinctive signs of a culture, like a script or style of design.

Results of a Disaster!: Fortunately, misattributing the origin of a device is relatively harmless; rolling a Disaster on this question counts as being on the Wrong Track instead.

Question: What Is The Device Supposed To Do?

For many people, this is the fundamental question that drives the value of a technology. A military officer in EarthForce’s New Technologies division, for example, does not give a damn if a particular device was made by one long-dead race or another, or if it works by quantum harmonic resonance or psychic waves. He just wants to know what the gadget does and if it can be used by the military. This is often the first question tackled by a researcher – spending months working on a relic only to discover it is a million-year-old pencil sharpener is rather depressing.

Successfully answering this question gives a +4 bonus to all attempts to understand what the device requires.

Skills Used: Depending on the device – Knowledge (physics), Knowledge (biology), Knowledge (astrophysics), Knowledge (chemistry); Investigate (to find evidence of previous activations of the device).

Possible Clues: Instructions; legends of the device being used; physical evidence of previous activations.

Results of a Disaster!: On a disaster, the character has missed some vital clue about the device’s function and will not know what it does until he activates it.



Question: What Does It Require?

Not all devices require something but most require a power source or some raw material, or a target, or some conditions to be met. Unlike the previous two questions, answering this question requires the scientist to analyse and test the device itself. Disasters while conducting these experiments are especially dangerous.

Skills Used: Depending on the device – Knowledge (physics), Knowledge (biology), Knowledge (astrophysics), Knowledge (chemistry), Technical (electronics), Technical (engineering), Medical.

Possible Clues: Signs of previously used targets or raw materials; exposing the device to a large number of stimuli and conditions.

Results of a Disaster!: On a disaster, the character has exposed the device to something that is damaging to the device – or the target. Depending on the true nature of the device, this may be very dangerous.

Question: How Is It Controlled?

Answering this question requires poking at the device in an attempt to activate it. The method of activation varies from artefact to artefact – some have physical buttons or other controls but other devices are waiting for a particular radio beam or other signal, or respond to telepathy, or pheromones or an internal clock. For example, researchers on Mars found an organic ‘mouse’ made from Shadow technology. They suspected it required telepathic activation – and they were right. However, they had not learned that the answer to the question ‘what is the device supposed to do?’ was ‘drive the telepath insane before exploding’.

Skills Used: Depending on the device – Technical (electronics), Technical (engineering), Operation (systems), Telepathy.

Possible Clues: Instructions; understanding where the device came from; evidence of similar technologies

Results of a Disaster!: On a disaster, the character has activated some function of the device but in an uncontrolled fashion.

Research Checks

Analysing the items and clues found by investigations requires Research checks. These are special extended skill checks, representing a character working for some time at cracking a problem. These checks are normally used by IPX to investigate and reverse-engineer alien technology but they can be applied to any scientific problem, such as analysing the cause of an environmental disaster that killed off all the life on a planet. Research checks do not replace normal Knowledge checks – they are used for situations where the original problem cannot be framed as a simple Knowledge check.

For Example: ‘What is the power output of this device?’ can be answered by a straight Knowledge (physics) or Operations (sensors) check. ‘How does this alien device generate its power?’ is a more complex question and would normally be resolved using a Research check.

The DCs for these research checks vary depending on the age, complexity, Technology Level and nature of the device. As a general rule of thumb, use the values in the Research Check DCs table.

Research Check Attempts

When attempting to answer each question, the character makes a Research check taking into account the modifiers listed under each question. Each check takes an amount of time proportional to the DC (the Research Check Times table).

Research Check Times

DC	Time Required Per Check
10 or less	5 minutes
11 to 15	30 minutes per check
16 to 20	1 hour per check
21 to 25	4 hours per check
26 to 30	1 day per check
31 or more	3 days per check

If a Research check happens to double its DC, then the question is answered in half the normal time.

Research Check DCs

Difficulty	Example Devices	Example Problems	DC
Trivial	Simple tools	Here's a mangled corpse – how many limbs did this aliens have?	5
Minor	Household goods, everyday items	What caused this building to collapse?	10
Average	Vehicles, simple weapons, useful items	What caused the strange chemical stains on these stones?	15
Significant	Weapons, data storage devices, specialised tools	What is the position of the Moon God in their religion?	20
Major	Spacecraft, hyperspace-related devices, telepathic devices, vehicle weapons, advanced data storage devices, medical devices	What caused this race to die off?	25
Legendary	Terraforming technology, hyperspace technology	How do we disarm this ancient alien booby trap designed to stop their tombs from ever being disturbed?	30
Epic	Time manipulation technology, eldritch technology that defies all known physics	So, these aliens knew the meaning of life. What is it?	40
Aliens were...			DC Modifier
Primitive, pre-spaceflight culture			–5
Average culture (on a par with Earth Alliance or Narn Regime)			+0
Developed culture (Centauri Republic)			+5
Especially alien culture (Gaim)			+5
Middle-born race (Minbari)			+10
Ancient dead race			+10 to +20
First Ones			+30

Which Skill Check?

The Games Master should choose which Knowledge and Technical skills are appropriate in investigating a device. Obviously, Knowledge (biology) and Medical would be used when dealing with a piece of organic technology, while Knowledge (astrophysics) and Operations (systems) or Technical (engineering) might be best suited to trying to unravel the secrets of an alien jump gate.

The Games Master can also just let the players use whatever skills they think are best suited – a biologist might be able to recreate an ancient medicine by identifying and culturing the plants described in an old text, whereas a chemist might just synthesize the compounds contained in the plants. Both scientists are activating the 'artefact' (a cure for a disease) but they are using different skills to approach the same goal.



Translation

Translating an alien language is a special form of Research check. The base DC of the check varies depending on how much of the language the scientist is trying to understand. This Research check is nearly always a Linguistics skill check.

Difficulty	DC	Example
Trivial	5	A single word when its meaning is obvious
Minor	10	A short phrase, such as a warning on a tomb
Average	15	Basic linguistic structures; simple grammar
Significant	20	Average day-to-day language
Major	25	Technical or complex documents
Legendary	30	Poetry or other stylised documents
Epic	40	A whole epic history

If a translation is available, it gives a bonus of up to +4 to all relevant Research checks. However, unless a Translation Matrix program is used (see page 43), the researcher can only help with one problem at a time.

Failed Research Checks

If the research check is successful, the character has cracked the problem and learned whatever he needed to know. If he fails, then roll on the Results of Failed Research Check table.

Results of Failed Research Check

Roll (1d20)	Result
1	Disaster!
2 to 5	Wrong track – all future checks to answer this question are penalised by –4
6 to 12	No insight.
13 to 15	A slight clue – all future checks to answer this question gain a +1 bonus.
16 to 19	A major clue – all future checks to answer this question gain a +2 bonus..
20	Real progress – all future checks to answer this question gain a +3 bonus.

Note that the modifiers from past failed Research checks accumulate over time; a character might fail a Research check three times in a row, but roll a 15 for the result each

time, meaning his next Research check has a +3 bonus to the Research check. The Games Master should keep this modifier secret from the player.

If the result is a disaster, then something has gone wrong with the research – perhaps the scientist has accidentally destroyed the sample he was working with, or exposed himself to danger or just made a critical mistake whereby he believes a wrong result is the actual answer. Each question has a section named Results of a Disaster!, which has some suggestions for calamities specific to a given question. Disasters should be roleplayed rather than described.

Bonuses from Clues

Just sitting there rolling dice is not especially interesting. In general, every roll in the course of a Research check should give something for the characters to do. Each question has a section named Possible Clues, which has some suggestions for viable clues that may be available for a given question.

Even a failed check might give the researcher an idea of the scope of the problem or an idea where to get more evidence.

For Example: A xenoarchaeologist examining an alien device makes a Technical (electronics) check, and fails. The Games Master rolls on the Results of Failed Research Check table and gets a 15 – a slight clue. The researcher gains a +1 bonus to his next Research check and discovers that the device is emitting a signal – it is communicating with another device. If this second object could be found, it would help the researcher understand the original device.

Following up on clues can give a bonus of +4 or more to the Research check.

For Example: If the xenoarchaeologist from the preceding example can find the second object (the one that is communicating with the original object) then the Games Master can grant the xenoarchaeologist a +4 or greater bonus on his next Research check.

USING THE DEVICE

If a character believes he can answer the two ‘practical’ questions – what does the device need and how is it activated – he can attempt to use the device. This requires a final skill check. The skill used depends on how the device is controlled. Normally, it is an Operations, Technical or Telepathy check, depending on the device’s mode of operation. The DC for the check varies depending on the complexity of the device.

If the character does not know how the device is controlled, he suffers a –10 penalty to the check.

If the character does not know what the device requires, he suffers a –10 penalty to the check.

Using a Device Base DCs

Difficulty	DC	Examples
Trivial	0	Simple tools
Minor	5	Household goods, everyday items
Average	10	Vehicles, simple weapons, useful items
Significant	15	Weapons, data storage devices, specialised tools
Major	20	Spacecraft, hyperspace-related devices, telepathic devices, vehicle weapons, advanced data storage devices, medical devices
Legendary	30	Terraforming technology, hyperspace technology
Epic	40	Time manipulation technology, eldritch technology that defies all known physics

If the character succeeds on this check, he has activated the device successfully and can do so in future without requiring a skill check (unless he is attempting to do so under particularly dangerous or stressful conditions).

If the check fails by more than 10, the character has simply failed to activate the device and nothing happens.

If the check fails by 10 or less, the device is activated in an uncontrolled fashion.



RESEARCH EXAMPLE

An IPX team investigating the ruins of an alien civilisation on the Rim has uncovered a large metallic device that still appears to be powered. They begin attempting to understand it. One researcher starts in on the first question: ‘Where did the device come from?’

Obviously, there are clues in the surrounding ruins. The researcher makes an Investigate check to excavate the ruins. The DC is 30 (20 for the complexity of the device, +10 as the device’s builders are an ancient dead race. He painstakingly Takes 20 on the check (requiring 20 days of work) and uncovers evidence that the race who lived there were ancestor worshippers.



As the metal device is well protected and was possibly venerated, he suggests that it might be a tomb, cryogenic centre, data archive or other structure designed to preserve the past.

Another researcher tries to work out the question: what is the device was designed to do?

Again, the DC is 30 and the Games Master decides that Knowledge (history) is the most appropriate skill. The researcher has a skill bonus of +12 but he is more impatient than his colleague. He rolls and fails, so he rolls on the results of the failed check table. There, he gets a 13 – a slight clue!, giving him a +1 bonus to his next check. He tries again and again (each check taking one day) until he fails the check and rolls a Disaster! The overconfident researcher has misinterpreted his data and decides the device is designed to be an archive of data from the past – an electronic cenotaph to the dead race's ancestors.

Two other researchers work on activating the device. The one working on the question 'What does it require?' gets a +4 bonus to his roll because the question 'Where did the device come from' has been answered, enabling him to recognise that the hemispherical objects attached to the outside of the structure would fit onto the crania of the dead race. The device is some sort of neural-interface headset.

The other researcher Takes 20 and quickly works out that the device is activated by putting on the headsets while holding a ceremonial talisman found elsewhere on the dig.

The team are ready to try activating the artefact. One brave scientist puts on a headset, believing he will be able to read the data contained in the structure. The Games Master determines that this is a straightforward Operations (systems) check with a DC of 30. As the researchers have determined what it requires and how it is controlled, their guinea pig suffers no penalty to this check and indeed succeeds... however, because they have failed to understand what the device is really supposed to do, it all goes wrong.

The alien race has learned to encode their minds electronically and the structure downloads stored minds into host bodies. The possessed scientist opens his eyes, and a mind dead for a million years looks out at the ruins of its homeworld....

SCIENCE & PROFIT

Adding to the annals of science and history is all very well but IPX has shareholders and a bottom line to worry about. If an expedition does not bring back useful technology or information, it is considered a failure and IPX will have questions for the expedition's leader.

Each significant piece of information or technology recovered from an expedition can be assigned an Expedition Point value, representing the value IPX places on it. These values are calculated using the Expedition Points and Expedition Points Modifiers tables.

For Example: The Ikarran bioweapon technology discovered by Vance Hendricks in 'Infection' would be valued as follows:

$5 \text{ (advanced technology)} \times 3 \text{ (ancient dead race)} \times 1 \text{ (Vance has the item but does not know how to activate it)} \times 1 \text{ (of possible use to IPX)} = 15.$

If Vance had been able to activate the item and prove it was a weapon, he could have magnified the Expedition Points of the item beyond this:

$5 \text{ (advanced technology)} \times 3 \text{ (ancient dead race)} \times 2 \text{ (Vance has the item but does not know how to activate it)} \times 2 \text{ (of definite use to IPX)} = 60.$

Expedition Points

Difficulty	EPs	Example Devices	Example Technologies
Trivial	0	Simple tools	Simple crafts
Minor	1	Household goods, everyday items	Culture and art
Average	2	Vehicles, simple weapons, useful items	Metalworking, basic construction
Significant	5	Weapons, data storage devices, specialised tools	Ship construction, advanced technology such as weapons or medical
Major	10	Spacecraft, hyperspace-related devices, telepathic devices, vehicle weapons, advanced data storage devices, medical devices	Computer technology, spacefaring, advanced pharmaceuticals
Legendary	15	Hyperspace generators, gravitic engines	Terraforming technology, hyperspace technology
Epic	30	Time stabilisers, immortality rings	Time manipulation technology, eldritch technology that defies all known physics

Expedition Points Modifiers

Aliens were...	Multiplier ¹
Primitive, pre-spaceflight culture	x0.5
Average culture (on a par with Earth Alliance or Narn Regime)	x1
Developed culture (Centauri Republic)	x1.5
Especially alien culture (Gaim)	x0.75
Middle-born race (Minbari)	x2
Ancient dead race	x3
First Ones	x5
The characters...	Multiplier ¹
Just have information about the technology or item	x0.5
Have the item or technology	x1
Have the item and know how to activate it	x2
Have the item or technology, know how to activate it and can replicate it	x3
The technology is...	Multiplier ¹
Probably useless (art, simple technology, biological samples)	x0.5
Of possible use (most technology)	x1
Of definite use (weapons, organic technology, gravitics)	x2
Vitally needed (a cure for the Drakh Plague)	x5

¹ One, and only one, multiplier from each section applies.

COMPLICATIONS & EMERGENCIES

No expedition always goes according to plan. Something always goes wrong. If the expedition's initial information is wrong, the team can be underprepared for one danger or another and walk unawares into hazardous conditions or ancient traps. Even if the team is prepared for the dig, unexpected problems like raiders, thieves, the centennial migration of the Vree Ts'ti guild, first contacts with new aliens or Earth Alliance

civil wars often turn a simple 'go in, scan, dig, extract' mission into a complex and deadly series of operations. IPX team have limited resources, little legal protection and almost no hope of backup.

Calling for Backup

Calling in a 3R team is a use of IPX Influence, modified by the IPX Backup table.



IPX Backup

Contract Level	IPX Influence Modifier
Level 1	-8
Level 2	-4
Level 3	—
Level 4	+4
Expedition Points Earned From Submitted Artefacts Within Last Three Months	IPX Influence Modifier
10 or less	-4
11 to 20	-2
21 to 40	—
41 to 80	+2
81 or more	+4

Result of IPX Influence Check

Contract Level	IPX Influence Modifier
10 or less	No response.
11 to 15	IPX will investigate when they can (normally within 2d4 months).
16 to 20	3R team dispatched within 1d4 weeks.
21 to 25	3R team dispatched immediately.
26 or more	3R team dispatched immediately; IPX begins pressuring EarthForce for aid and support.

The Campaigning chapter has more details on the sort of crises that can arise during an expedition. The IPX-recommended procedure during any such crisis is to regroup at the expedition base and defer all authority to an action team composed of the expedition leader and security and medical staff.

CLEANING UP

IPX has a profitable sideline in selling old expedition bases to new colonies – the established base becomes the heart of the new colony. It is standard practice to leave a functional base behind if a world is habitable or has valuable minerals and the company may even direct an expedition to leave a skeleton crew behind to maintain the facilities and continue surveying. Other bases are shut down and their key components loaded back aboard ship.

IPX does order its expeditions to hold to the minimal archaeological clean-up requirements mandated by the

Earth Alliance; everything taken must be logged, and a site should be returned to its original state if possible. Academic archaeologists usually go far above and beyond these minimal requirements, which are routinely criticised as being far too lenient and watered-down by corporate pressure. Many academics believe that EarthGov's laissez-faire attitude to xenoarchaeology will result in a disastrous loss of irreplaceable archaeological information in the future, but the rapacious golden age of corporate xenoarchaeology has no end in site.

Post-Expedition Debriefing

On returning to civilised space, all artefacts and items taken from a dig are legally required to be quarantined and examined by customs. IPX does have a permit to transport unlicensed xenotech through Alliance space but items must still be run through customs. As the company prefers to keep its discoveries secret, items are routinely smuggled past customs or brought in as 'research materials' through a legal loophole intended for academics involved in research with non-Human partners.

A returning expedition is met by an IPX agent, who debriefs the expedition staff. The rewards paid by the company depend on the technology and information retrieved but also on the overall success of the mission – the company frowns on missing personnel and damaged equipment. Consult the Expedition Point Deductions table to see how many Expedition Points are deducted.

Expedition Point Modifiers

Events	Expedition Point Modifiers
Per labourer or technician lost, severely injured or killed.	-2
Per scientist lost, severely injured or killed.	-4
Per telepath or IPX employee lost, severely injured or killed.	-8
Per 5,000 credits of equipment lost needlessly.	-1
If a 3R team had to be dispatched.	-10

The base reward for a successful mission is 4,000 credits per Expedition Point, to be divided amongst the mission personnel at the discretion of the expedition leader.



If the expedition retrieves more Expedition Points than required by its contract level, a bonus of 8,000 credits per excess Expedition Point is paid, again to the expedition leader. Furthermore, the expedition leader gains IPX Influence equal to half the excess Expedition Points (rounded down) and every expedition member gains one point of IPX Influence too.

Expedition Points Required

Contract	Expedition Points Required
Level 1	25
Level 2	50
Level 3	100
Level 4	200

Not meeting the minimum Expedition Points required normally results in the expedition leader being seriously out-of-pocket and remonstrated by IPX.

For Example: Assume that the events of 'Infection' had gone differently and Hendricks had managed to escape Babylon 5 with the Ikarran artefact after figuring out what it was and how it worked. The Ikarran device is worth a mighty 60 Expedition Points – it is military-grade organic technology. However, finding that out resulted in the death of Hendrick's assistant and a lot of destruction on Babylon 5.

The original total of 60 Expedition Points drops to 40, to account for the carnage, the cost of paying off EarthForce and the death of the assistant. Still, Hendrick's contract was only a Level 1 Contract – all he needed was 25 points worth and he brought back 40.

He is paid 160,000 credits (40 points x 4,000), plus a bonus of 120,000 (15 x 8,000) for a grand total of 300,000 credits. He also gains +7 bonus to his IPX Influence (15 divided by two, rounded down). While this is an impressive reward, the organic technology will be worth millions to IPX...



IPX CAMPAIGNS

InterPlanetary Expeditions are the adventuring parties of the *Babylon 5* universe. They go to hostile alien worlds, which may include bug-eyed monsters, angry mobs of primitive humanoids, rival adventuring parties, dungeons, techno-magical dragons and other dangers, then go into tombs and past civilisations. While an IPX game can and does involve all the politics, double-dealing and moral quandaries inherent in *Babylon 5* games, the core of the campaign is refreshingly direct and goal-oriented: get the valuable technologies and get out alive.

THIEVES, LIARS AND POLITICIANS

IPX is an integral part of the Earth Alliance military-industrial complex, so most IPX campaigns will involve dealing with Non-Player Characters from EarthGov, EarthForce, corporations like Edgars Industries, the Psi Corps and so forth. There are three distinct political eras in recent years: the Santiago administration up until 2259, when the government was searching for alien technology but was still largely incorrupt; the Clark Regime, from 2259 to 2262, when EarthGov was enthusiastically pursuing all forms of xenotech and was partially under the control of Morden, the Shadows and the Drakh; the Luchenko administration, when EarthGov attempted to purge itself of Shadow influence. The Player Characters' contacts and allies will change over the course of these tumultuous years; a loyal friend might be found guilty of war crimes after Clark falls or be subverted by a Drakh keeper.

IPX campaigns can incorporate a wide range of political beliefs and outlooks. An expedition might consist of a Psi Corps telepath, a fervently pro-independence Martian, a naive Earther, a slightly unbalanced spacer who has been travelling from starport to port for years, an absent-minded specialist and an alien guide, all working side by side. Unlike most campaigns, not everyone in an IPX game is always on the same side, so work with the players to develop their characters' backgrounds and beliefs.

IPX provides an excellent set-up and mission structure to start a campaign – the characters get recruited by the

company to work on an expedition and the first few adventures can just be IPX-assigned expeditions. Once the characters are established and the Games Master has planted some plot seeds, the campaign can become more complex.

CAMPAIGN ARCS AND CONCEPTS

The basic IPX adventure has a definite structure:

1. The characters learn about or discover an alien technology site.
2. They gather whatever equipment or allies they need.
3. They go to the site and start investigating.
4. Horrible, dangerous things of some sort happen.
5. Through wit, determination and a few lucky dice rolls, the characters survive and escape.
6. They bring whatever technology they recovered back to IPX.

These are the individual episodes of an IPX campaign, the equivalent of 'a weird alien or problem shows up on Babylon 5 and the command crew have to deal with it while arguing with the ambassadors' episode of the series. Over and above these individual episodes, though, a campaign needs an arc and continuing Non-Player Characters. IPX has several obvious continuing characters – the brokers and backers from the company that the characters have to deal with, specialists and scientists they consult with, aliens and traders in strange curios, rival xenoarchaeologists and thieves and so forth. A Games Masters should develop his campaign's supporting cast over time, adding one or two Non-Player Characters per adventure.

When it comes to campaign arcs, there are many options in several time periods. The challenges faced and missions undertaken by IPX vary greatly depending on when a campaign is set. The style of digs during the Clark Regime is very different to those undertaken during the search for the Drakh Plague cure.

Contract Team

Contract teams are set up to give Player Characters the most freedom to get into trouble. IPX hands them a large amount of cash and expects them to return with interesting and valuable alien artefacts and technologies. How the characters get the artefacts is up to them. Contract teams should start with small missions and work up to bigger digs. One option is to start with a Non-Player Character patron who plans their first few expeditions for the characters; once the campaign is established, remove the patron and give the characters more freedom to act. Contract teams put all the emphasis and responsibility on the characters, letting them deal with rival expeditions, criminals, death-traps and the other everyday problems of IPX expeditions without corporate backup.

Spacefarers and free traders sometimes take temporary contracts with IPX; a rumour or strange curio bought in the Zocalo can bring the characters to a distant dead world or an alarmingly active Shadow base. Of all the major Earth corporations, IPX is the most willing to deal with the sort of renegades, rogues and adventurers that make up the bulk of Player Characters, so the company makes an excellent patron organisation.

Contract teams do tend to involve more bookkeeping than other campaigns, as the characters need to keep track of their own equipment and funding. They will need to keep fuller records if the campaign style goes into detail on credits and gear.

Corporate Team

If the characters are working directly for IPX, they have less freedom of action but the company will take care of most of their needs. Whatever equipment they need, they get; the company takes care of its own as long as they keep getting results. Corporate teams tend to be considerably bigger than contractors – IPX has the resources to excavate whole cities, so the best role for Player Characters is as small specialised strike teams within a larger expedition. The Player Characters might be the unit that is actually sent into the alien tomb or a team that is trained to work with and protect the expedition telepath.

Rescue Team

IPX's 3R rescue teams are very well suited for players who want to jump straight into the action without any slow build-up or preparation. 3R teams are sent in when an expedition gets into trouble – at best, the rescue unit gets a short briefing on what the original expedition was supposed to be investigating before being hustled into hyperspace and dropped onto some godforsaken planet on the Rim where they know trouble is waiting for them. The standard procedure for a 3R team is to secure whatever remains of the expedition base, locate the survivors and find out what went wrong before falling prey to whatever wiped out the earlier expedition. If the movie *Aliens* had a few less soldiers and a few more archaeologists, it would depict a classic 3R mission (that, naturally, went very wrong).

NON-IPX XENOARCHAEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGNS

Of course, Games Masters can still run an IPX-style campaign without the characters being employed by IPX at all. There is a big market for alien technology and relics out there, and small independent teams can go trading and tomb robbing on the fringes of the galaxy without IPX support. This lets Games Masters use the rules and concepts of this supplement without worrying about the characters being indebted to IPX.

Alternatively, a campaign could focus on the black market in alien technology and cast the characters as thieves preying on IPX and other xenoarchaeologists. Specialist thieves keep tabs on IPX operations, and will often make attempts to steal choice artefacts when expeditions return from the Rim. A Thieves' Guild campaign set on the Babylon 5 station could start with attempts to steal the organic artefacts recovered by Vance Hendricks in Season One's 'Infection' and go from there.

A variation on this game would be to play officers from a special subdivision of EarthGov's Customs and Quarantine police, in charge of ensuring that alien technology is not brought illegally into the Earth Alliance. One session might revolve around the characters investigating a tip-off that an IPX expedition is planning to sneak through border controls; the next session might have them dealing with a plague outbreak caused by illegal biotechnology.



Another day, another dead world, another billion dollars.

That's how most xenoarchaeologists think. Greedy, short-sighted, credit-obsessed.

But that's not the Max Eilerson way.

- from **Max Eilerson: How I Saved The World**, by Max Eilerson

Aliens & Rivals

IPX is not the only organisation involved in hunting ancient technology. Campaigns could be based around any of the alien groups or rival companies described on page 22. While the basic rules and technologies of the campaign would be the same as in an IPX game, the feel of the game would be quite different if the characters are a group of Minbari True Seekers, or rapacious Narn, or the entourage of a senile and rather clueless Centauri noble. In such a game, IPX is the ever-present opposition, swarming over sites with hordes of archaeologists and thugs.

New Technologies Division

The New Technologies Division of EarthForce is the core of military bioweapons and organic technology research in the Earth Alliance. Just as a Rescue campaign cuts out much of the hard parts of archaeology and leaps straight into fighting the tentacled horrors from the sealed tombs, a New Technologies campaign skips all the dead-end worlds and trivial technologies, and leaps right to the hard stuff. NTD has its own xenoarchaeology teams but they are only sent to sites where Shadow technology and other important military resources have already been discovered. A New Technologies game would involve far more certainty but also far more danger than an IPX game – the characters would be constantly dealing directly with Shadow technology and the Drakh as they try to secure the secrets of the darkness for EarthForce's use.

Crusade

During the Crusade era, xenotechnology becomes vastly more important. While the *Excalibur* spearheads the search for a cure to the Drakh Plague, everyone from IPX teams to universities to two-credit free traders gets involved in raiding the dead worlds on the Rim for technology. Any of the campaign structures described above work equally well

in this era but there is much more competition and activity out on the Rim. Every rumour brings half-a-dozen ships flocking; every excavation is a race against time to beat the other rivals to the prize.

Even finding a temporary cure to the plague would put the characters in a position of tremendous power. How does one calculate the price, for example, of an extra day of life for every man, woman and child on Earth? What would happen if a Centauri or Narn group got hold of the cure?

Shadow Hunters

Once the existence of the Shadows and their activities on the Rim become generally known, small groups of Shadow Hunters appear, individuals dedicated to hunting down and destroying the legacy of the darkness. The Rangers would be one such group but they are not the only people to have a vendetta against the Shadows – Vir's Army of Fire, for example, were Centauri Shadow Hunters. Such groups seek out and demolish surviving Shadow bases and outposts, as well as stop anyone from exploiting leftover technology and weapons from the Great War. Shadow hunter groups function like IPX expeditions but with the intent of destroying artefacts, not recovering them.

IPX SCENARIOS

How Big A Dig?

In the basic IPX scenario, the characters go to a largely unexplored alien world and search for useful technology while battling complications. There are many variations on this – the worlds can be hostile, dead, filled with aliens, occupied by rival powers, under attack from raiders, on the verge of catastrophe; the technology can be dangerous, sentient, stolen, a threat to the galaxy, missing, hidden beneath a dungeon of traps and guardians and so forth. However, above all those variations, there is one question

that will affect the Games Master's plotting of the scenario considerably – how long will the characters spend investigating the world?

If the characters visit a world for only a single session or two, the Games Master need only draw the world in broad strokes and focus on the interesting and challenging sections. If the climax of the scenario is going to be battling the spirit globes containing the encoded personalities of a dead race in their vast time-tomb, the Games Master need only note the location of the tomb and a rough map of its interior and make the rest up on the fly – the characters will be off to another planet next session, so he should spend his preparation time on upcoming scenarios or on the overarching plot instead of detailing features that the characters will never encounter. The characters land, dig a bit, find the time tomb and battle the spirit globes before the game-night pizza arrives.

If the Games Master takes this option, each world should present a new and radically different challenge. One planet might be lashed by constant storms, where flash floods transform narrow ravines into raging torrents in an instant. Another world might be a warzone divided between belligerent tribes and the characters have to play the tribes off against each other in order to get to the dig site. Another world might be set on a moon about to pass out of the shadow of its parent that will soon be exposed to intense heat from the system's star, so the characters are facing a strict deadline. Another might lead to a chase through the Martian underworld, hunting the thieves who stole the treasures from the dig. If a campaign is going to consist of a series of episodic, self-contained adventures with only minimal links between them, then each adventure should be as different and exciting as possible. It is a big galaxy out there – take advantage of that.

Alternatively, it is possible to spend multiple sessions, even a whole campaign, on investigating a single planet. Such scenarios appeal to players who like to explore. A Games Master could design detailed maps of the dig site, build the ecology and history of the planet and let the mystery slowly unfurl. In such a scenario, the first game session would entail landing on the planet and setting up a base; the second could be exploring the surrounding area and discovering that an advanced civilisation once lived on the planet; the third might involve the characters finding hints of the existence of a tomb. The fourth session could involve excavating the

tomb and finding clues to its contents; the fifth session might be taken up with preparations to open the tomb, and not until the sixth session would the tomb finally be opened.

Consider the example of the Great Machine on Epsilon III. Sinclair lands on the planet and arrives in the Heart of the Great Machine a few minutes later. The Great Machine is only going to be 'on-screen' for an episode or two, so the action moves to the important section immediately. Contrast that with, says, Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama*, where an Earth ship makes contact with an alien machine of comparable complexity. Investigating all the secrets of Rama takes four books (and the first and second books are especially good reference material for IPX operations).

If the characters are going to be investigating a single site for multiple sessions, the Games Master needs to have plenty of secrets for them to discover. The easiest solution is to come up with the full backstory first, break it into fragments and scatter those fragments as clues and evidence that the investigators can unearth. Putting together all these clues should give the characters an advantage when danger threatens – the characters should always be challenged to use what they have discovered. To take the example of the spirit globes again, here is a sketch of a possible backstory:

Millennia ago, an advanced race thrived on this planet. They never travelled between the stars, because they had a natural form of telepathy and found hyperspace travel incredibly agonising. But they built great cities and a mighty civilisation. Then, they discovered that their sun was about to undergo a prolonged period of intense solar flare activity; the resulting radiation would sear their world, destroy their technology and wipe out most life on the planet. To survive, one faction encoded their minds in the spirit globes and made arrangements to bury the globes in a great tomb. Another rival faction turned to genetic engineering and attempted to convert themselves into a new form that could thrive during the flares. Both factions began to distrust each other – the genetic engineers feared that the spirit globe people would ride out the solar storm, then possess the bodies of the descendants of the engineers. The globe-minds feared that the engineers' genetically altered offspring would become savage and primitive when the radiation made technology fail, and so they built protective traps into the tomb to keep out intruders.



The next step is to break that backstory into fragments for the players to piece together. Some elements that could be highlighted are:

- 5 The existence of an ancient advanced civilisation which never travelled in hyperspace because they found it painful.
- 5 That the civilisation was dominated by two factions.
- 5 That the relics of that civilisation are all radiation-scarred and useless.
- 5 That the planet's ecosystems are only now rebuilding after life was nearly wiped out by solar flares millennia ago.
- 5 That there are degenerate but sentient creatures living on the surface who bear some resemblance to the ancient builders.
- 5 That medical examination will show signs of genetic engineering in the cells of the degenerate creatures.
- 5 That the creatures are also mildly telepathic.
- 5 That the creatures have primal myths about being denied travel though the 'Realm of Fire' because it made their 'minds burn'.
- 5 That they fear the old ones who sleep in the forbidden city beneath the ground.

These clues are gathered in a variety of ways – information about the solar flare and its effects on both life and technology would be found using Knowledge (biology) and Knowledge (physics) or Medical, as well as by gathering samples of plants and animals as well as burnt-out technology. The characters could learn the sorry history of the alien race by examining ruins, translating legends and learning the primal myths of the degenerates.

The characters might not discover all the scattered clues. For example, they might dismiss the degenerate primitives as nothing more than wandering monsters and so never learn the myths about the dangers of the time tomb. They might never figure out that the globe-dwellers and the primitives were once part of the same species. They might get all the fragments but reassemble them incorrectly and conclude that the primitives were actually mutated by the solar flare instead of consciously designed to survive it. Letting the players solve the mystery, instead of handing them the solution on a plate, is what justifies spending multiple sessions on a planet.

The finale of such an investigation might involve some of the expedition being possessed by the minds in the spirit globes. The characters can only free their allies by taking advantage of what they discovered – that the alien minds are 'allergic' to hyperspace according to the ancient myths, so the possessed can be freed by bringing them through a jump point. It should be noted, however, that the players may come up with their own solutions, like reuniting the two halves of the race by having the spirit globe minds possess the bodies of the primitives or restoring the technology of their ancestors to the primitives by deactivating the defences of the time tomb. These sorts of creative solutions should be encouraged, as they indicate that the players are enthused by the situation and are willing to build on the fragments they discovered.

DIGS, EXPEDITIONS & DANGERS

As the characters investigate a xenoarchaeological site, they will face challenges beyond just finding and retrieving items and information. These dangers include environmental hazards, traps, puzzles, monsters, rivals and dilemmas.

Environmental Hazards

Page 280 of the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game: 2nd Edition* describes many kinds of environmental hazard. Extreme climates, radiation, high or low gravity, toxic atmospheres, diseases and extreme weather are all excellent problems to challenge an IPX team. Do not forget to combine challenges – a cold climate matches well with hurricane-force winds and frostbite.

The disease table in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game: 2nd Edition* (page 282) gives some sample plagues and illnesses to torment characters with; here are some more pleasant encounters for unwary characters.

Compressed Flu: The air on spacecraft is recirculated over and over, so any airborne viruses or bacteria get everywhere. To prevent this, life support systems include air purifiers and biofilters. Only the strongest, most virulent diseases survive, which results in the development of better biofilters, which in turn breeds better diseases.

New Diseases

Disease	Races Affected	Vector	Fort DC	Incubation	Initial Effect	Secondary Effect
Compressed Flu	Humans, Centauri, Drazi, Minbari	Inhalation	15	1d4 days	1 Con	1d4 Con, sickened
Fungal Spores	All (except pak'ma'ra)	Inhalation	18	1d4 minutes	1d6 Con	Suffocation, leading to death unless airways are cleared of growths
Rim Spots	Humans	Ingested	14	3d6 days	1 Cha	2d4 Con, sickened
Shadow Plague	All	Injury	18	1d4 hours	1d6 Con, 1d6 Cha	2d6 Con and boils explode
Tomb Rot	Humans, Centauri	Ingested	16	1d4 hours	1d3 Str, 1d3 Wis	1d6 Con

Compressed flu is the result of hundreds of generations of such evolution, a mean, vicious form of shipboard flu. It is a common problem on long journeys, especially on badly-maintained ships.

Fungal Spores: Plant spores can lie dormant for many centuries before becoming active again. Spores that have been blasted into space may drift for millions of years before falling to some other nurturing world. Spores are especially dangerous to explorers, as warm, moist lungs are a paradise to fungal spores that have been sleeping in some sealed tomb or cave for aeons. Stale air can carry grave dangers...

Rim Spots: The exact origin of this disease is still unknown but it is believed to be the 23rd Century equivalent of scurvy, caused by eating too much synthetic food coupled with a lack of natural light. It can be avoided by mixing in higher-quality food and using sunlamps but small expeditions cannot usually afford such luxuries.

The disease manifests first as blotches on the skin but has a more severe secondary effect as the victim's intestinal tract begins to slough off its internal coating, leading to internal bleeding and agonising pains.

Shadow Plague: Deadly plagues lurk on many worlds and in many forms. This particular disease is believed to be an ancient bioweapon. The initial infection is through injury – if the victim's skin is broken by an object coated in Shadow Plague bacteria, the disease may take

hold. The victim's skin blooms with hideous black boils, which burst after a few hours and send clouds of bacteria out into the air, where they can infect other open wounds – or even enter through eyes or other orifices.

Tomb Rot: Another singularly unpleasant disease, tomb rot is associated with exposure to ancient ruins and tombs, and is probably related to stale air. Victims become weak and lethargic, and have trouble concentrating. In extreme cases, old wounds can reopen and parts of soft cartilage like the ears and nose begin to rot.

Traps

All good tombs contain traps. Some are deliberately set to stop thieves or enemies from making off with the contents of a tomb world; others were never intended to be lethal, but have become so over the millennia.

A few traps are described in the *Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game: 2nd Edition* on page 288. The Example Traps table shows some more traps that have been recorded at IPX digs.

Death Field: A singularly unpleasant trap, a death field is a lethal blast of energy of some sort. Common death fields involve lethal levels of hard gamma rays or a static electricity field that is grounded through a creature passing through the area. Older races have been known to use more exotic and lethal death fields, like life energy draining or time-warps that age the victim by 10,000 years in an instant.



Example Traps

Trap	Trigger	Reset	Bypass?	Investigate DC	Subterfuge DC	Technical Type & DC	Save & DC	Effect
Death Field	Proximity	Automatic in 1d6 rounds	Yes (hidden switch, DC 30)	20	25	Electronics, 20	Reflex, DC 15 negates	Everyone within the trap's 10 ft. proximity is drained of 1d4 Con
Descending Ceiling	Pressure Plate	Automatic in 10 rounds	No	15	15	Mechanical, 10	None	6 rounds after the trap is triggered, everyone in the room takes 2d6 points of crushing damage each round
Dimensional Fold	Proximity	None	No	40	35	Engineering, 20	Fort, DC 30 negates	Instant death, expulsion or incarceration
Flood	Any	None	Yes (hidden lever, DC 20)	15	20	Mechanical, 15	None	Rushing waters begin to fill the area. Anyone in the area begins to drown once the area is full (this normally takes at least two minutes). Treat the rushing water as a severe wind (see page 291 of the <i>Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game: 2nd Edition</i>).
Gravity Trap	Proximity	Automatic in 1d10 minutes	No	25	30	Engineering, 25	None	Anyone within the area of effect suffers the effects of 4g+ gravity (see page 290 of the <i>Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game: 2nd Edition</i>) and also suffers 1d6 points of crushing damage each round.
Poison Gas	Touch	Repair	Yes (hidden switch, DC 20)	25	15	Mechanical, 10	None	All within 20 ft. suffer from exposure to a poison (default is hexazyne, described on page 151 of the <i>Babylon 5 Roleplaying Game: 2nd Edition</i>).
Rolling Boulder	Tripwire	None	Yes (side passage DC 20)	10	15	Mechanical, 10	Reflex DC 20 half	If triggered, the boulder rolls at 120 feet per round until it reaches the end of the corridor. Anything it hits takes 6d6 crushing damage.

Descending Ceiling: A classic trap, this can also involve closing walls, which are sometimes studded with spikes. The trap is normally coupled with something that prevents the victim from leaving, such as an automated door locking mechanism.

Dimensional Fold: The product of advanced technology, a dimensional fold trap rotates the victim out of the universe. Some traps move the victim to a small pocket dimension or folded structure – others just rotate him back inside-out and therefore very, very dead. The insidious

thing about dimensional fold devices is that they are very hard to detect, as any sensor probes are also folded out of reality, making the whole area of the trap invisible to many forms of scan.

Flood: A flood trap fills a room with water or other liquid. These traps are doubly dangerous – not only does the liquid threaten to drown anyone in the threatened area, but rushing high-pressure waters can knock victims down and sweep them away from the exits. Flood traps require a great deal of engineering – if a huge volume of water is

going to be pumped into an area, it needs to come from somewhere – so they are relatively easy to detect.

Gravity Trap: Only races with gravitic technology can produce such traps. A gravity trap massively increases the local gravitational field, crushing anything within the area of effect.

Poison Gas: Poisonous gas traps are used by many races. Simple ones can be evaded just by wearing breather masks but more dangerous traps incorporate acid droplets or chemical agents that break through the breather's protections.

Rolling Boulder: Another classic, requiring a long, narrow sloping corridor. The boulder is released and rolls down the corridor, smashing anything in its path.

Puzzles & Dilemmas

The best games arise from challenging and engaging the players, not just the Player Characters. Traps and monsters and other such obstacles boil down to just tactics and dice rolling but more complex puzzles and problems require the players to put the pieces together and make meaningful decisions.

Puzzles

It is easy to drop a bad puzzle into the game – just carve a riddle into an alien stone door or hide the treasure behind some mathematical code problem that the players need to solve ('Oh, look, all the alien runes are the cubes of prime numbers'). Good puzzles, though, require lateral thinking and deduction from the players and should not initially look like puzzles at all. For example, the characters are exploring a city once inhabited by a race of flying avians. They find one odd building, where the entrance is at ground level unlike all the other buildings. What does that imply about the inhabitants of that one structure? Was it a hospital for convalescing flyers? Or did the avians have some contact with another, ground-based species? Perhaps this latter species is still alive and holds the key to decoding the avians' technology.

While each puzzle should be tailored to the situation and the dig, here are some fairly generic ones to serve as idea seeds:



- 5 The characters find evidence that a dead race did everything in multiples of five, much like the Minbari have a fetish for the number three. There were five gods in their pantheon, five syllables in every name, a base-five number system, five castes in their society, five sections in their cities – and the characters find there is a ring of four buildings in the heart of their temple district. If the players have noticed the repeated fives, they will realise there must be a hidden fifth temple.
- 5 The characters are investigating an ancient derelict freighter. Its navigational computer is severely damaged, so the characters cannot find the route it took to its homeworld. However, the contents of the hold can be traced to particular nearby worlds by various means – genetic analysis for the remains of some agricultural products, cultural clues for some weapons components and so on. By removing jump beacons associated with gates created in the modern era, the characters can reconstruct a historical hyperspace map, which shows only one viable route leading to all those nearby worlds. The ship's homeworld must be somewhere along that route.



Technology Level & Traps

Every race, from stone-age primitives to the Vorlons, can build traps. Obviously, some traps are dependant upon Technology Level – a stone age race is unlikely to protect their mud huts with a laser grid or PPG turret – but others are universal. Everyone can build a secret door, for example, even if one race conceals the door using cunning stonework, another uses holography and fractal edge-blurring and a third just has a smart wall that can reshape itself into a door on command.

The Investigate and Subterfuge DCs vary from trap to trap but also from Technology Level to Technology Level. As a rough rule of thumb:

General Trap DCs by Technology Level

Technology Level	General Trap DC
TL0	15
TL1	20
TL2 to TL3	25
TL4	30
TL5+	35 or higher

very valuable indeed – an advanced bioweapon. However, they make this discovery at exactly the wrong time: just as they dock with Babylon 5. Customs will be coming aboard at any moment and the IPX buyer will not be arriving on the station for another two days. How do the characters keep their discovery secret and safe for 48 hours?

Dilemmas

Dilemmas resemble puzzles but do not have a right answer – they illuminate a character's personality by his choices instead. Dilemmas ask the hard questions of *Babylon 5* – Who are you? What do you want? Where are you going? What do you have to live for? Whom do you serve and who do you trust? The episode 'Deathwalker' presents some excellent dilemmas, such as whether immortality worth an eternity of killing? Are we ready for immortality? An obvious dilemma might be something like: the characters discover that an advanced artefact is generating a force shield over a section of an alien world. The rest of the world is regularly bombarded by meteorites and it is only within the shield that life can survive. A primitive people live in the shielded territory. If the characters report their discovery to IPX, someone will probably remove the shield generator and

expose the natives to the threat of bombardment. Do the characters serve IPX or do they help the natives?

The best dilemmas are those that divide the characters and pit them against each other, so Games Masters should try to tailor such scenarios to their players. The sort of dilemmas that will put a university xenoarchaeologist in conflict with an IPX agent are quite different to the ones that divide a Narn mercenary and an ex-EarthForce pilot. Some sample dilemmas are:

- ⑤ The characters discover that a cache of alien technology lies underneath a magnificent mosaic-floored villa. The expedition is running out of time and the only way to get to the cache is to smash through the floor. Do the characters destroy irreplaceable alien art out of a desire for expediency?
- ⑤ The characters discover that one of the other First One races transferred themselves to some other dimension aeons ago. There is some evidence that tampering with the abandoned technology of the race will draw their attention and their wrath but the technology of the aliens could advance Humanity by several thousand years. The threat of the aliens

returning could just be a bluff – do the characters take the gamble and investigate the technology?

- 5 The characters are investigating another dead world when an ancient booby-trap is activated. It would have killed them all but their lives are saved by one of the labourers. Investigations show that she is a rogue telepath who was hiding her powers. The expedition's Psi Corps representative discovers the rogue and demands that the characters take her into custody. What do the characters do? As a development of the dilemma, another booby trap severely injures the Psi Corps telepath, sending him into a coma. The rogue teep was able to use Danger Sense to notice the trap before it was activated – did the rogue block the Psi Corps telepath's *danger sense* and do the characters still imprison her even if the Psi Corps teep is in a coma and therefore unable to report them to the authorities?

Monsters

Beyond the deathworlds like Nakaleen, there are relatively few creatures that pose a real threat to an armed Human. There are certainly large and dangerous predatory monsters out there, like the Zarg that was lurking in Grey 17 on Babylon 5, but it is rare for any of them to be actively hostile. Few large predators have any interest in hunting such troublesome prey as Humans. Far more deaths are caused by poisonous insects and smaller creatures, and far more deaths are caused by incompatible biochemistries – a bite from an insect might be virtually harmless to a native creature but almost instantly lethal to a Human.

IPX teams have encountered various guardian creatures and constructs in the past, such as robot custodians of the dead, automated security systems or scalpel-wielding surgeon-monsters intent on using the organs of the expedition members to replenish the biosystems of the tomb it was part of. IPX teams have also met native inhabitants of Rim worlds, many from species which had never been encountered by Humanity before.

When throwing monsters against an IPX expedition, consider what firepower and combat ability the characters have at their disposal. A creature that can slaughter one team in a few rounds of combat might get blown away by a hail of

PPG fire from an expedition with more soldiers and guards. A monster should never be just a combat encounter – at very least, it can be used to build tension as it picks off one team member after another until the Player Characters track it down and defeat it. Guardians can profitably be tied to puzzles – the ancient defence system guards the ruins of the alien city, and the characters need to work out how to defeat it before they can get it. Perhaps the defence system has an external power source that can be disabled to weaken it or maybe the characters can fool its threat-identification sensors somehow. Monsters are good tools for turning an expedition into a base under siege and there are plenty of cinematic and literary examples to draw from.

Example Monster – The Night Stalker

These large predators were first encountered on a wild planet four jumps rimward of Deneb. Genetic evidence suggests they were imported from another world, as their biochemical makeup has little resemblance to the creatures they feed ravenously on. The night stalkers are only able to metabolise a fraction of what they eat, so they are always on the verge of starvation. Humans are much more appetising to them.

Night stalkers are feline in form, although the head, neck, upper body and lower limbs are covered in protective scales. They are nocturnal, with four eyes in a ring around the head giving the creatures excellent vision. They hunt primarily through both vision and scent, and as the name suggests, they prefer to stalk their prey. They have developed a high degree of intelligence when it comes to using pack tactics against their prey, corralling victims in a small area before attacking.

Large Creature

Character Level: 6 (25 hp)

Initiative: +2 (+2 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

DV: 12 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, –1 size)

Attack: Two claws +7 (1d6 +3)

Full Attack: Two claws +7 (1d6 +3) and bite +2 (2d6+1)

Special Qualities: Darkvision, Pack Tactics, Rake

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 7

Skills: Athletics +13*, Notice +6, Stealth +13*

Feats: Alertness, Dodge



Darkvision: Night Stalkers can see perfectly in the dark, to the normal limit of vision, though this in black & white.

Pack Tactics: A night stalker gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and DV if there is another member of its pack within 30 feet.

Rake: If a night stalker charges, it may attack with both claws instead of just one.

* Night Stalkers gain a +8 racial bonus Athletics and Stealth checks.

Rivals

While the holovids back on Earth may show planets filled with alien monsters and savage beasts, other Humans and sentients are a far bigger danger to expeditions. The Rim is a wild and lawless place, home to criminals and raiders and madmen. IPX's various rival organisations have been known to use force to drive other teams off particularly promising sites. The most dangerous creature out there is the one pointing a black-market PPG at a character.

Example Rival – Riders Colonial Agent

2nd Level Soldier/1st Level Trader/1st Level Scientist; hp 16; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; DV 13; Atk: +3 close combat or +3 ranged; SQ Co-ordinated Unit +1, Mental Agility, Primary Area of Study (Technical (electronics)); Fort +5, Ref +3,

Will +3; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 12
Notable Skills: Acrobatics +6, Appraise +1, Athletics +6, Computer Use +5, Drive +3, Intimidate +3, Investigate +5, Knowledge (any) +0, Knowledge (history) +1, Knowledge (Human) +3, Knowledge (Narn) +2, Knowledge (tactics) +2, Operations (any) +0, Operations (sensors) +1, Pilot +4, Stealth +3, Subterfuge +3, Technical (any) +0, Technical (electronics) +5
Feats: Armour Familiarity, Brawler, Fluency (Human and Narn), Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol & rifle)
Standard Equipment: Auricon EF-PR PPG rifle (+3, 2d8 dam, 19–20 crit, 150 ft., 24 shots, AP 2, Automatic, Rapid Fire), padded armour (DR 2)

The new kid on the invasive corporate-sponsored xenotechnology block, Riders Colonial has impressed even IPX with its willingness to cut corners and use both force and large amounts of high explosive to get alien technology. A clash between the two companies is inevitable as both chase after weapons technology and agents like this one will be on the front lines of the war. A Riders Colonial agent does not know much about xenotechnology or science but he can handle both a rifle and a shuttle with equal ease and saw action with the GROPOS before joining the company.

In combat, the Riders Colonial agent will quickly identify whichever of the characters has combat experience or skills and take them out with sniper shots before intimidating or incapacitating any scientists. They will then interrogate the scientists to find out where all that shiny technology is hiding. Dead worlds can always hold a few more bodies when the job is done...



Example Rival – Thieves' Guild Operative

3rd Level Lurker / 3rd Level Agent; hp 17; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; DV 14; Atk: +3 close combat or +6 ranged; SQ Multi-Skilled (Technical (electronics)), Opportunism (Sneak Attack +1d6), Lurker's Knowledge, Survivor's Luck 1/day; Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 10

Notable Skills: Acrobatics +6, Appraise +6, Athletics +4, Bluff +2, Computer Use +5, Concentration +7, Intrigue +3, Investigate +6, Knowledge (Human) +3, Linguistics +3, Notice +7, Pilot +6, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +11, Subterfuge +4, Technical (electronics) +5

Feats: Alertness, Data Access, Fluency (Human), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Natural Athlete, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade & pistol)

Standard Equipment: Auricon W&G Model 10 PPG (+6, 2d6 dam, 19–20 crit, 50 ft., 6 shots, AP 1, Automatic, Light), electronics toolkit, knife (+3, 1d4–1 dam, 19–20 crit, 1-h)

The various criminal organisations operating in Human space have tried raiding IPX laboratories and offices in the past but company security is usually tight enough to block intrusions. Therefore, the Thieves' Guild has started targeting expeditions – while there is no guarantee that an expedition has retrieved any worthwhile artefacts, the chances of a burglary failing are much lower. Thieves shadow IPX expeditions, wait until they recover potential valuable items, then sneak in and steal them.

One common tactic is for a thief to piggyback on an IPX vessel. A small pod, little bigger than a coffin, is launched from a Thieves' Guild ship as it passes the IPX vessel at a busy transit point. The pod grapples onto the IPX ship and taps into its life support system, keeping the thief alive for the long journey to the expedition's destination. If the IPX ship is atmosphere capable, the pod automatically detaches during the chaotic fires of atmosphere entry, parachuting down and landing several kilometres from the expedition site. The thief then observes the expedition and waits for a signal from the Thieves' Guild ship that will jump in several days or weeks later. The thief can signal for pickup later or can request that the Thieves' Guild ship intercept and board the unfortunate IPX vessel.

This example thief – the sort who might be sent to spy on an IPX team – is a Human from Beta Durani. Her survival gear is a patchwork of pieces from a dozen sources – a pressure suit from an old asteroid mining station, a military-surplus Starfury helmet, an oxygen tank salvaged from a escape pod – but she is carrying an excellent selection of thieves' tools and weapons. She also has a jury-rigged gadget that can read and duplicate IPX biotags, allowing her to fool security systems.

ALIEN TECHNOLOGIES

Finding new and wonderful alien technologies is a major part of any IPX campaign. That is why the company exists and learning the secrets – and, eventually, the wisdom – of older races is a core part of the *Babylon 5* experience. When putting a new alien technology or artefact into a campaign for the characters to discover, there are several factors that the Games Master should consider.

Adventure: The prime factor to consider is how the technology will cause exciting and challenging situations for the players. Games Masters can drop rival xenoarchaeology teams or raiders into any scenario but the technology itself can also be a source of drama and conflict. Perhaps the characters' meddling awakens the defence systems or they accidentally open a jump point into Thirdspace. Perhaps they disagree over whether or not Humanity is ready for a new technology or over how it should be used. What if the characters find a weapon that only kills telepaths or an anti-Clark sympathiser finds an alien doomsday device? What if the characters activate a machine, only to find that it is designed to wipe out all life within a thousand light years and they have to race across the surface of the artefact to the control centre so they can disable it? Games Masters should always consider what adventures they can wring out of a technology or artefact.

Coolness: Not every technology has to be cool. A new form of agricultural fertiliser that increases crop yield is a valuable technology, one that IPX would be glad to get their hands on, but it is not exactly exciting stuff. If a technology is going to play a major part in a campaign, the technology should be really interesting and impressive and cool. Some cool technologies are: new weapons systems, artificial intelligence, immortality drugs, telepathic technologies, stealth technology, technomancy, time travel, dimensional folding or radical terraforming technology.

Impact: A technology should change the universe in some fashion. Give the players the chance to have a really big impact on the *Babylon 5* setting. A technology's impact does need to be carefully balanced with the established timelines and power levels, though. A new weapons system that blows up whole planets is certainly cool but if IPX manages to reverse-engineer and replicate it, then Minbar or Centauri Prime will be rapidly expanding dust clouds within a few months. Plan for how much impact the technology will have over the course of the campaign – it is fine to blow up Minbar if one is prepared to play through the



consequences or if the campaign is going to end before that happens. Consider, for example, the acquisition of organic weapons technology by EarthForce. The idea is mentioned early in Season One and we see more of their efforts to acquire the technology throughout the show. However, it is not until the last episodes of Season Four that the technology is actually used, when the Shadow Omegas appear. This is an excellent model for adding new technologies to a campaign – a slow progression leading to a dramatic unveiling. Artefacts have a lesser impact but a more immediate one. An artefact can be used immediately but cannot be replicated and so will only ever have a limited effect – it is the difference between EarthForce getting Shadow weapons technology and EarthForce getting control of a single Shadow warship.

Mystery: How will the characters unlock the secrets of the technology? Wandering around being awed by incredible alien wonders is fine for a while but the players will want to try to figure out how the technology works. If a technology is going to be investigated, the Games Master needs to decide what the characters will find out and make their investigations interesting. Games Masters can run this using the Investigation & Research rules on page 61, with its questions and its chains of Research checks, or by setting up adventures or even dungeon crawls where the characters battle dangers to find out the secrets of the alien

technologies. Either way, make sure that there is a way for the characters to learn about the technology or else remove it from the campaign after it has served its purpose. If IPX had been running Babylon 5, they would have had teams poking at the Great Machine no matter what Draal said.

Wonder: Wonder is related to coolness but is a separate concept. Wonder is evoked by coming up with amazing, unexpected and haunting ways of presenting alien technology. For example, the machine found on Epsilon III could have been shown as a little grey box; there was no plot-related reason to make it a planet-sized Great Machine with bridges arching over shimmering chasms of dancing light but the Great Machine of Epsilon III is a lot more impressive and wonderful than the Grey Box of Epsilon III. The *Babylon 5* setting is a big one – Games Masters can have machines the size of mountains, performing tasks ordained by makers millions of years old.

SAMPLE ARTEFACTS

Any of these artefacts is powerful and significant enough to be the centre of a whole series of adventures or even a whole campaign. The various minor artefacts and alien curios described on page 50 can also be dropped into archaeological digs (although Games Masters might consider changing the description or effects of those items, as the Equipment chapter is intended for players' eyes.)

Technologies versus Artefacts

A technology is the knowledge of how to create a particular effect; an artefact is an example of that technology. While this section talks about alien technologies, it also all applies to alien artefacts.

A technology is abstract; an artefact is physical. Artefacts often work better as plot devices for the characters to chase after – it is hard to get worked up about a set of equations to design better ion drives but it is easy for the players to get attached to an alien ship they have recovered and to get enthused about chasing down the hijackers who just took it, even though IPX will eventually just reverse-engineer the equations from the alien ship's engines. Concrete, highly visual plot devices work best. For example, whenever the series talks about organic technology, it nearly always connects that to the physical artefact of the black Shadow ships.

The other important aspect of artefacts is that they can work as plot devices. The technology to, say, open personal portals in hyperspace that allow an individual to teleport from one point to another might be a million years beyond Humanity but Games Masters can still drop an artefact with that power into the campaign.

SECURE COPY

Each artefact is described using the following format, which matches the Investigation and Research rules described on page 61:

Description: What does the artefact look like?

Where Does It Come From? What race created it? How did it get to where it is?

What Is The Device Supposed To Do? What is the device was designed to do, and how does it do it?

What Does It Require? Are there any special notes on the device's requirements?

How Is It Controlled? What is the device's control and activation mechanism?

THE CITY IN HYPERSPACE (FIDDLER'S GREEN SECTOR)

Description: There have been stories and sightings of it for centuries; it is the Moby Dick (or Flying Dutchman or Atlantis) of the fiery interdimensional ocean of hyperspace. The Markab called it Sara'gys; the Abbai name it the Place of Unremembered Sorrow; the Minbari call it Ashu, the Forbidden. Some say it is the resting place of the Well of Eternity, while others claim that it is the legendary home of the creatures who scattered jump gates among the stars aeons ago.

The city is rumoured to be a vast, glittering ringworld, festooned with beautiful crystal spires and streets of running silver, surrounded by a thousand smaller stations and habitats. Some tales claim the city is inhabited by living beings, others by ghosts, and still other tales insist that the city takes the life of anyone who enters it.

Where Does It Come From? The city is not as elegant or serene as the tales say it is – it was once an ordinary planet-bound city on a colony world belonging to a long-dead civilisation called the Trienz, whose heyday was around 50,000 years ago. The city was once called Adoves; while the Trienz were nearly as advanced as the Minbari, their terraforming abilities were limited. Adoves was encased in a transparent dome to protect it from the harsh conditions of the colony world.

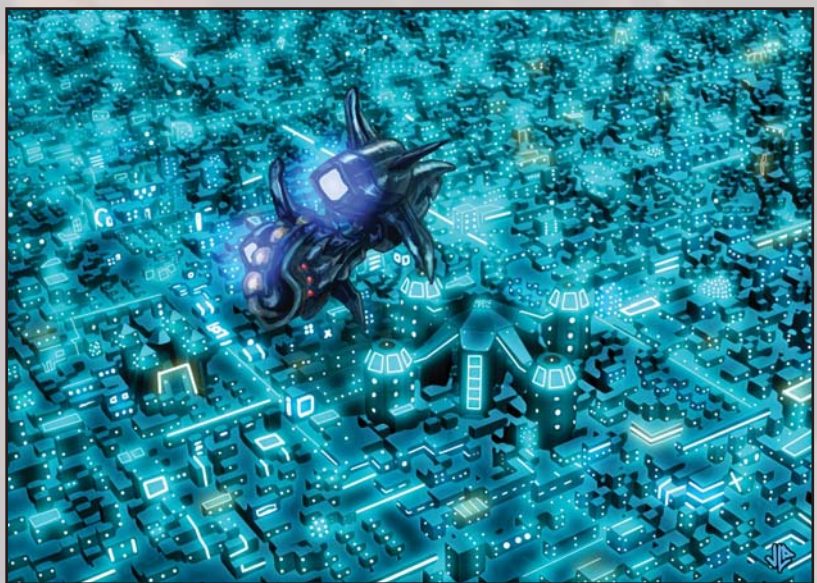
This dome was Adoves' salvation. The Trienz were attacked and annihilated by a rival race in a Shadow-sponsored war... but Adoves survived. One of its citizens was a brilliant scientist who had created a new form of jump engine. As the enemy's antimatter droplets rained down on the surface, Adoves and nearly five miles of the surrounding countryside and a three-mile thick chunk of bedrock jumped into hyperspace. The dome held and the resourceful survivors managed to build gravity generators to cover their whole floating city.

With their race destroyed, no one came to rescue Adoves. The city survived for a few centuries as a mobile hyperspace beacon and trading post but the Trienz succumbed to genetic collapse and the city was abandoned. Over time, its beacon failed and it drifted off the hyperspace routes.

The real treasure in Adoves is the jump engine that pulled the city into hyperspace, which is capable of opening far larger vortices than any engine known to Humanity.

What Is The Device Supposed To Do? The Trienz scientist's engine was never supposed to be operated in a planetary atmosphere. It works by inverting the dimensions; instead of punching a hole in realspace through to hyperspace, it 'swaps' realspace for hyperspace. The engine can therefore be used to drag other objects out of hyperspace just as easily as it can be used to enter hyperspace.

When it was used to escape the enemy bombardment, the engine unleashed a nightmarish energy storm on the colony world as the plasma clouds of hyperspace were





dropped into realspace in place of the city. The engine was never meant to be used in such a way and so investigators may be confused at the apparent disparity between the engine's design and what it was used for.

What Does It Require? Inverting hyperspace is tricky business. If the engine is not correctly programmed – using the bizarre n-dimensional tensor mathematics pioneered by the Trienz – it can map too much hyperspace onto realspace, creating a hellish jump storm that could devastate a planet. Even more alarmingly, the engine can send gravity pulses through hyperspace, pulling ships off course and blocking beacon transmissions. Dabbling with the city could result in the collapse of the galactic hyperspace network.

The engine also requires a great deal of energy. It is connected directly to the city's antimatter reactors but they are long since exhausted and are nearly dormant – the last of their power is used to keep the gravity generators running and they are prone to brown-outs.

How Is It Controlled? The device is controlled quite conventionally, through a control console in the heart of the city. For safety reasons, the last of the dying Trienz placed several booby traps and security systems around the central tower of the city.

ALCHEMICAL ENGINE (OR THE GOD OF GIFTS)

Description: The alchemical engine is an ornate statue, standing nearly 40 feet tall and weighing more than 1,000 tons. The statue is of a god whose name was forgotten long, long ago – it resembles a bloated humanoid with a bizarre face that looks more like a jump vortex with six eyes than anything else. The stomach of the statue is hinged and swings open when the correct combination of jewels is touched. Inside is a featureless hollow with blackened walls, like the inside of an oven.



The statue's arms and legs are also articulated; the arms can be controlled from a small console at the statue's shoulder, while the oddly spindly legs can easily be pushed around. Strangely, the statue has fully articulated feet and toes.

Where Does It Come From? The Alchemical Engine was obviously a religious icon: every inch of it is covered in runes and holy symbols. If the ancient language is translated, the holy scriptures of the God of Gifts can be read for the first time in millennia. The race who made the statue left almost no other artefacts or writings; it seems they thrived during an era when there were few other spacefaring species.

According to the scriptures carved into the statue, the God of Gifts was so generous that the other gods grew jealous and wrathful, for the worship of the God of Gifts was much more popular than worshipping any other deity. The God of Gifts had also raised his followers up from the animals they were to the level of demigods by gifting them with the powers of speech and fire, wisdom and cunning. In the end, the God of Gifts gave his worshippers the power to travel to the very stars. The other gods struck,

transforming the God of Gifts into stone and hurling him from the heavens. As the wrath of the other gods lashed down from the sky, the loyal worshippers of the God of Gifts enshrined his remains in a statue.

What Is The Device Supposed To Do? The statue's primary purpose was devotional – it was the holiest relic of a religion that once boasted sixteen billion adherents. Anyone who translates the scriptures, though, will discover that one of the holiest mysteries of the God of Gifts was that of transfiguration – transforming objects or even worshippers from one form of matter to another.

Turning lead into gold is easy – just bombard the lump of lead with a neutron beam and one element can be converted into another. This takes a lot of power, generates a lot of radioactivity and is not commercially viable in any way. The technique is occasionally used in fabrication furnaces, such as the ones located in Babylon 5's Grey Sector. The Alchemical Engine seems to use the same phenomenon but vastly more efficiently and without producing any discernable radiation. An object placed within the stomach hollow of the statue can have its constituent elements transformed into any other elements. The physical shape of the item does not change and an object composed of multiple elements (i.e. pretty much any object) might be only partially changed. For instance, the titanium in a PPG could be changed to gold but the internal circuitry or the ignition chamber would be unaffected.

What Does It Require? The Alchemical Engine needs a certain amount of raw material, in addition to whatever sacrifice is going to be transformed. This raw material must be presented in the form of pure iron, which is easy to obtain. The tricky bit is that the iron must be provided in the form of small statuettes cast in the images of the rival gods who attacked the God of Gifts.

Finally, the Engine needs to recharge, requiring 2d6+4 hours before it can be used again.

How Is It Controlled? Bizarrely, the Alchemical Engine is controlled by manipulating and stroking its feet. In the culture of the race who built the statue, foot massages of various kinds were the highest form of devotion and respect. Requests to transform objects from one element to another must be expressed as particular configurations of the deity's toes.

The wrong configuration can result in the engine producing a useless or lethal transformation.

THE BALSERON ORACLE (OR THE FOUR-FACED LIAR)

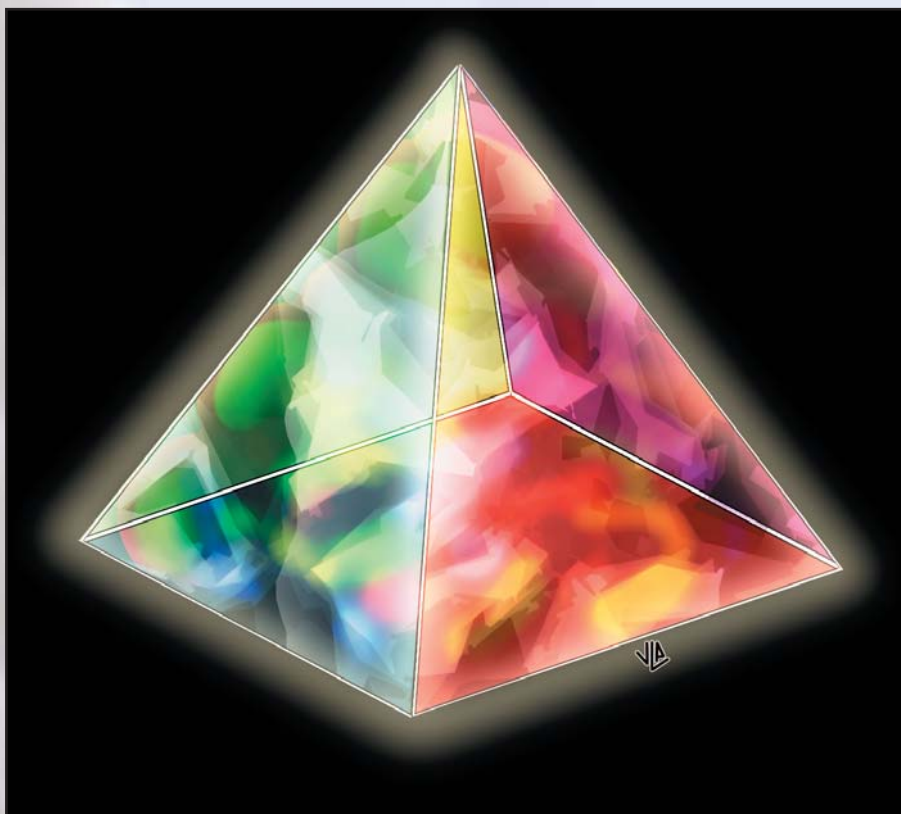
Description: This artefact is a pyramidal crystal made up of four large shards, each a different colour. The crystal shards are each four feet long. The crystals are incredibly sharp; touching any surface of the oracle results in bloody skin and the points of the crystal can easily pierce even a spacecraft's hull. When the crystal is activated, lights flicker deep within its shards.

Where Does It Come From? The Balseron Oracle is associated with two races, both of which are long since extinct. The oracle was created by a pacifistic race of scholars and philosophers, nicknamed the Writing Spiders by xenoarchaeologists, as there is no record of the race's own name for themselves. According to the legends of the Abbai, who consider the Writing Spiders to be precursors to their own philosophies, the creatures had highly advanced technology but no weapons save defensive measures. They traded their knowledge and wisdom in exchange for peace treaties with their neighbours, fostering interstellar commerce and diplomacy. A small knot of interdependent civilisations grew up around the planets of the Writing Spiders.

This delicate balance was upset by the arrival of the Yithri, one of the most powerful Middleborn races. The Yithri had abandoned their homeworld millennia before, moving their entire civilisation to huge starships made from hollowed-out asteroids. A coalition of four Yithri guildships conquered the Writing Spiders' worlds in a matter of weeks, thus gaining control over the socio-economic lynchpin of the whole sector. For seven generations, the Yithri guild dominated the Writing Spiders and their client species. The Spiders' delicate sensibilities were deeply offended by the marauding Yithri and the race began to die out.

The few surviving Spiders created the Oracle as a gift for their masters, who had occupied the moon Balseron as a base. Within a month of the Yithri receiving the device, the alliance of guildships collapsed and a brutal war between different guilds and their slave races erupted across the whole sector.

What Is The Device Supposed To Do? The Spiders told the Yithri that the Oracle contains all the information in the universe and that, given time, it can answer any question.



The crystals contain a variation on a fractal, where each iteration is slightly different. By searching along these infinite variations, the Oracle can theoretically retrieve any desired information. Of course, the Oracle also contains an infinity of false information but the Spiders seeded the shards with the entirety of their race's knowledge when they grew the crystals, so they assured the Yithri that by comparing the data from all four shards, the oracle would be virtually infallible.

On most topics, the Oracle is perfectly accurate. Ask it a technical question and it will give the correct answer, although it may take some time to find an answer that is both correct and comprehensible to the questioner. It is much easier, for example, for the Oracle to explain time field manipulation to a Minbari scientist than it is to explain the same topic to a cave dwelling primate who is still struggling with the idea of fire. Somewhere in the

labyrinthine crystalline pathways of the Oracle, there exists the right combination of words to perfectly explain time travel to the caveman but finding those words may take some time.

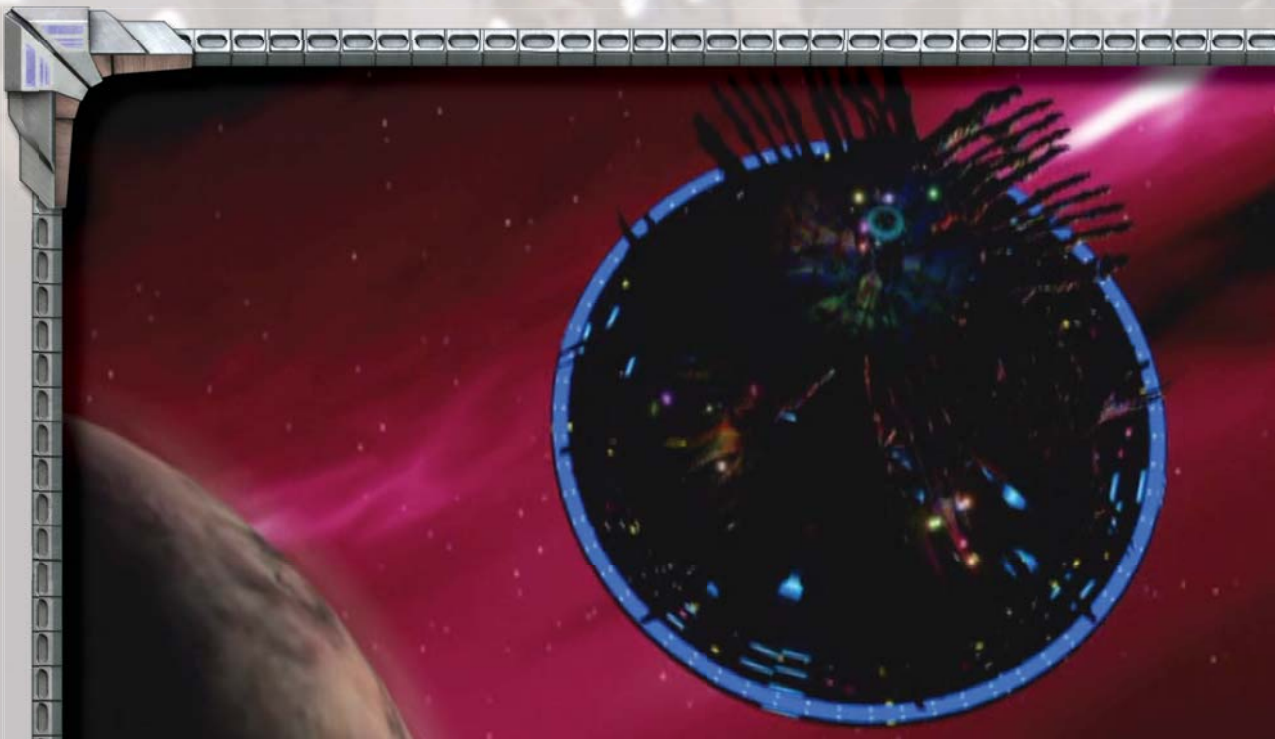
What the Spiders did not explain to the Yithri is that the four shards of the Oracle each give different answers to some questions. The Oracle was designed to cause strife and to divide allies in order to overthrow the Yithri occupiers. Although both the Yithri and the Writing Spiders are gone, the Oracle still follows this prime instruction – to tell questioners whatever answers will cause the most conflict. It is possible that this shows some Shadow influence in the formerly peaceful and orderly Writing Spiders.

What Does It Require? The Oracle does not need anything, per se, but it works much better if given as much information as possible before posing it a question. For example, if a Human wanted to ask the Oracle a question about how to build a gravity generator, it would be far swifter to first teach the Oracle English or Interlac.

How Is It Controlled? Activating the Oracle is simple – just stand near it and ask it a question. It can process up to four questions simultaneously but as it sometimes ponders a question for centuries, it is best to carefully consider what questions are put before the Oracle.

The time taken by the Oracle to answer a question varies depending on the question's complexity. A simple question can be answered in only a few minutes; more complex questions can take centuries. If the Oracle can use the answer to cause conflict, it will answer much more quickly.

PRIME TARGETS



This chapter presents eight sites, scattered across the galaxy from the Sol system all the way to the Rim, all of which are of ongoing interest to IPX. Some have been targets of previous expeditions. Others have only been scanned by passing probes or scout ships. Any of these sites could be assigned to a xenoarchaeology team looking for a new dig site. Each target is described in the following format:

Name or Designation of the Target World: If the world has a recognised name, it is given here. Otherwise, the IPX designation is used.

EarthForce Classification: As IPX works closely with EarthForce, many of its digs are classified as military secrets. EarthForce security clearance is needed to work on such digs.

Jump Route: Nearest jump gate or alternate route to access the target site.

Conditions: The planetary atmosphere, temperature and other notable conditions that will dictate what sort of survival gear is needed by the expedition.

Target Area: A brief description of the likely dig site.

Overview: What IPX is hoping to retrieve from the site.

Background Information: How the site was discovered; what is known about the area.

Scan Data: Any information retrieved from probes, orbital surveys or previous expeditions.

All this information can be given freely to the players. Each world has a corresponding Games Master-only section, where what is *really* going on is revealed.

SECRETS OF THE PRIME TARGETS

The prospective sites each have their own unique dangers and mysteries. Here are some of them – Games Masters may mix in their own subplots, nefarious Non-Player Characters and mounting dilemmas to come up with memorable adventures for their players.

ALPHA EPSILON 23 ANOMALY

EarthForce Classification: Top Secret.

Jump Route: Antra; then to hyperspace beacon IPX/GB1/998, which should deposit investigators in or near Alpha Epsilon 23 system.

Conditions: The target is at the Lagrange point between AE23/1 and its largest moon, in an apparently stable orbit. The local star is an anomalous trio of blue dwarf stars circling around the locus of their respective gravity wells, so the expedition should be prepared for extremely high radiation.

Target Area: The derelict object at the Lagrange point. The object is an octahedral structure 16 kilometres in length along its longest axis, ten kilometres wide and six kilometres deep. There appears to be a channel, possibly a docking port, in the centre of the structure; the structure rotates around this axis at approximately one revolution every three minutes, which is enough to provide comfortable rotational gravity inside the majority of the structure.

Overview: Perform an initial survey of the structure; determine its purpose, Technology Level and potential for future investigation and salvage.

Background Information: The EarthForce Explorer Corps vessel *William Dampier* passed through the AE23 system four months ago but failed to detect this structure, as it was hidden behind a moon. However, post-mission analysis of sensor data revealed the existence of the structure, dubbed the 'Derelict' by its discoverers. While EarthForce does intend to send a team to investigate the Derelict, an Explorer-class vessel will not be available to jump to AE23 for over nine months. Therefore, IPX has a window of opportunity to investigate the structure before it is disturbed by EarthForce. From the size and shape of the Derelict, it is probable that it is a space station, not a spacecraft. This supposition is reinforced by the Derelict's location – stable Lagrange points are regularly used for large space stations to minimise the need for orbital corrections. The harsh conditions in the system imply that the Derelict was not constructed by beings native to AE23. Some IPX analysts theorise that the Derelict may actually be a jump gate of previously unseen design.

Scan Data: The Derelict's movement suggests that it is mostly hollow. It is not emitting any signals and appears to be without any power. The *William Dampier* did detect a brief transmission that could not be deciphered due to interference but could have originated at the Derelict before bouncing off the planet below.

Alpha Epsilon 23 Anomaly - Games Master's Notes

Time after time, the Shadows have awoken to spread chaos and carnage across the stars and the Vorlons have guided the Younger Races to ally together and fight the darkness. Babylon 5 was the centre of the Army of Light in this age. The Derelict was another such stronghold, aeons ago. It began as a trading post, a diplomatic centre, but in the years of the Shadow War it became something greater – their last, best hope for victory.

It failed. The Shadows' minions stormed the station and killed the lynchpins of the alliance against the Darkness. The unity of the races collapsed and chaos ruled the galaxy for a time. As the characters explore the Derelict, they should slowly realise that this is basically another Babylon 5, only a failed version. There might even be some Shadow warriors lurking in the darkness, left to ensure the Younger Races never try building such a place again...

ALPHA GAMMA 4 ('PRESTON'S FOLLY')

EarthForce Classification: None.

Jump Route: Zafra; then to temporary marker jump gate at Alpha Gamma 4.

Conditions: AG4 is almost a deathworld like Nakaleen or Janos VII; the planet's surface is dotted with archipelagos of small volcanic islands. Each archipelago has evolved its own unique family of predators and prey occupying some curious and lethal evolutionary niches. Interestingly, many of the creatures on AG4 appear to be naturally telepathic; there are early reports spoke of lizard-like creatures that hunt by following thoughts or plant-analogues who stun prey with telepathic bursts. There are at least four native sentient races, although all are still primitive hunter-gatherers.

Target Area: The base camp and dig site of the previous IPX team.

Overview: Discover the fate of the previous team; complete their mission of investigating the origin of IPX xenotech sample #IPX2255/A/D221 (a.k.a. the 'Glowy Sphery Thing').

Background Information: In 2255, an independent trader named Jennifer Preston sold an alien artefact to IPX. This artefact, a spherical object, has yet to yield to analysis but is believed to be a form of molecular computer. Preston acquired the object from a Brakir, who insisted that it originally came from a world on the Rim. While the trader did not have a jump route for the world, he did describe its planetary configuration to Preston. Last year, an IPX scoutship investigated the AG4 system and it was found to match the description of the origin of the artefact. Preston negotiated a Level 2 contract with IPX and assembled a team, which departed Earth 11 months ago, carried by the commercial trader *Spirit of San Diego*. The trader was scheduled to make a supply drop at Preston's camp five months ago; she detected no transmissions from the expedition and there was no response to hails. It is believed that Preston and her team of 14 people have been killed or otherwise prevented from making contact with the supply ship. A second expedition's initial priority should be reclaiming Preston's base camp; continuing their investigations into the possible origin of IPX xenotech sample #IPX2255/A/D221 (a.k.a. the 'Glowy Sphery Thing') is a secondary part of the mission.

Scan Data: Full satellite maps of AG4 are available but the thick vegetation on most of the islands precludes detecting any ruins or structures of note. No further data was transmitted by Preston's expedition prior to their disappearance.

Alpha Gamma 4 ('Preston's Folly') - Games Master's Notes

The Brakir lied – the artefact did not come from this world. After months of fruitless searching, some of Preston's crew mutinied and seized control of the camp. They stripped it of useful technology and then made alliance with the king of one of the native races. To protect themselves, Preston and the remainder of the crew allied themselves with another race and a proxy war is now being fought between the two species, using advanced technology obtained from the offworlders.

The other two sentient species now want their own alien advisors and the characters risk being kidnapped and forced to be generals in an alien army when they land.

JANOS VII

EarthForce Classification: None.

Jump Route: Janos.

Conditions: Janos VII is habitable; indeed, much of its surface is covered with incredibly lush jungles and forests. However, the planet has a very dangerous and developed ecosystem, with large numbers of dangerous predators and poisonous creatures. Previous attempts to settle Janos VII by various races have all failed; there are several small outposts but none have managed to successfully clear the jungle.

Target Area: Deep jungles of the eastern continent, near the ruins of Port Royal.

Overview: Investigate previously unknown alien culture possibly native to the jungles of Janos VII.

Background Information: Janos VII was used as a raider base until EarthForce invaded their stronghold at Port Royal and destroyed their spacecraft. During the ensuing interrogations, several raiders spoke of humanoid creatures they had traded with who lived in the jungle; one raider even had several alien artefacts, one of which exhibited unusual psychic properties. There is no other data relating to a native civilisation on Janos VII and no signals have been detected but it is conceivable that a primitive species exists there.

Scan Data: IPX has gained access to images from a network of surveillance satellites left by EarthForce following the scourging of Janos VII. A detailed examination of photos taken of the ruins of Port Royal does reveal several humanoids moving through the jungle. Whatever they are, they appear to be extremely adept at evading detection.

Janos VII - Games Master's Notes

The aliens of Janos VII once traded with older species like the Markab and the Hyach. Then the space gods went away and the Janosians became a cargo cult, building spaceports out of wood and stone in the hopes of attracting the traders back to the jungle. After several centuries, the Janosians' prayers were answered when the planet became a major raider base. However, the raiders' harsh treatment of the Janossian caused a schism in the primitive religion and some tribes now believe that the offworlders are space demons who must be destroyed.

This is a great opportunity for pulpy, ray guns-and-sorcery adventures. It is a planet full of bug-eyed monsters, renegade space pirates and psychic alien tribes who want to kill all offworlders.

L-227

EarthForce Classification: Top Secret.

Jump Route: Kandar.

Conditions: Target world is cloaked in a thick dust cloud. Surface temperature is believed to be approximately -50 degrees Celsius; continent-sized electrostatic storms are likely.

Target Area: Zone in northern continent, in the valleys of the mountains along the western side. Also, geostationary orbit above that location.

Overview: Investigate possibility that the Ikarran civilisation colonised this world; retrieve any surviving Ikarran biotechnology.

Background Information: In 2257, Dr Vance Hendricks discovered the ruins of an advanced alien civilisation on the world now designated 'Ikarra'. While initial attempts to recover the biotechnological devices of the Ikarrans did not go quite according to standard procedures, it was confirmed that the Ikarran civilisation warranted considerable further investigation. Unfortunately, other organisations learned about Ikarra (please review IPX Protocols on Information Security) and the world is now heavily contested. Therefore, the scope of our investigation is being widened to possible Ikarran colony worlds. L-227's location was determined from Minbari charts and is not generally known to other organisations. It therefore represents an opportunity to investigate the Ikarran civilisation without interference from others. The Ikarran technology discovered by Dr Hendricks converted his assistant into a 'high-invulnerable war machine dedicated to wiping out everything that was not pure Ikarran'. Maximum biocontainment protocols are advised.

Scan Data: A passing probe detected the remains of an orbital satellite believed to be of Ikarran design. No other information could be obtained due to the thick clouds, which are likely the result of mass driver bombardment.

L-227 - Games Master's Notes

This is a great opportunity to cut the Player Characters off from outside allies and support, and to force them to fend for themselves. The thick clouds block transmissions, so the characters cannot call for help. Drop in some rival groups like Riders Colonial or New Frontiers and let the characters fight a skirmish war over the Ikarran technology across the dead moon.

And what if the moon is not entirely dead? The alien war machine from 'Infection' tried to destroy everything that was not pure; what if another one of the war machines survived but moved beyond its programming after it killed everyone on the moon? What if it now wants to *recreate* Ikarran society in a more perfect form. A thousand-year-old monster who wants to turn the characters and their adversaries into Ikarrans...

ORION III

EarthForce Classification: None.

Jump Route: Orion.

Conditions: Orion III is a temperate, oceanic world with a breathable atmosphere. However, the target site is in the depths of the planet's oceans, approximately 1,500 metres below the surface, so diving equipment and submersibles will be required.

Target Area: Seabed west of Gallipoli Point.

Overview: Investigate and retrieve any and all usable technology from the sea bed.

Background Information: The waterworld of Orion III has been an Earth Alliance colony for some time. Early archaeological investigations discovered signs that the planet had once supported a sentient native species but this race was wiped out along with many of the other higher lifeforms on Orion III by an unknown catastrophe several million years ago. That race never achieved any technology beyond ironworking and is of no interest to IPX. The target on Orion III is a structure on the sea bed that was detected by an automated surveyor submarine. The exact nature of the structure is unknown. Locals on Orion III have reported sensor echoes and navigational anomalies in that region for some time, suggesting that the target may still be active on some level. The target region is also home to considerable numbers of native predators, including diamond sharks and brainsucker eels. Caution is advised.

Scan Data: Target is a hollow metallic structure approximately 1.2 kilometres in length along its main axis. Magnetic traces suggest debris is spread out along the sea bed for a considerable distance, and the structure may extend into the nearby Falker's Trench fissure. Photographic evidence indicates that the structure has become host to a deep coraloid reef of considerable size.

Orion III - Games Master's Notes

A large part of the challenge and novelty here is the aquatic setting – splashing around in the ocean and dealing with waves, currents and drowning is a nice change from zooming around in space and dealing with gravity inclines and asphyxiation. There is also plenty of scope to throw in interesting and hungry sea-monsters. The object on the sea-bed is a crashed alien spacecraft from some long-forgotten war. The ship used organic computer technology, which has become integrated into the coral reefs surrounding the wreck. The ship may still be alive, in a way, and has become a part of the ecosystem of the deeps. Perhaps it can even control the local fauna – characters who cut into the reef to get to the crashed ship may find themselves battling diamond-scaled sharks who have just had their brains augmented by 10,000-year-old tactical combat programs.

VEGA VII

EarthForce Classification: Secret.

Jump Route: Vega.

Conditions: The surface of Vega has a toxic atmosphere and is inimicable to Human life. However, the deep caves, canyons and mines of Vega can easily be sealed and made inhabitable. Vega is home to a well-developed Human colony.

Target Area: Deep Mine #28.

Overview: Investigate mysterious barrier or structure deep under the surface of Vega.

Background Information: Alien ruins were discovered on Vega in 2199 during the initial survey of the world. Excavation and investigation of the site revealed nothing of interest and it was believed that the ruins were probably constructed by exiled or marooned spacefarers who left no other artefacts or technology. The expedition base was sold to a Russian mining consortium, which successfully developed Vega's crystal and metal deposits into a highly profitable colony. In November of last year, the Kruschen Mining Group sank a shaft, designated Deep Mine #28, into the lower cavern area, probing for fresh veins of platinum and other metals. The drill stopped unexpectedly 428 metres down. Attempts to restart the drill failed; a camera was lowered and discovered that the shaft terminated at a barrier of unknown composition. None of the miners contacted by IPX were willing to find a route through the caverns to the metal structure but they are virtually certain that such a route exists.

Scan Data: None available. The variable density and high mineral content of Vega's water-carved canyons and caves makes scans unreliable.

Vega VII - Games Master's Notes

The Vega device is big. Really, really big. This is a chance to absolutely stagger the players with the sheer scale of alien technology. It is hundreds of kilometres in size, a machine continent buried deep beneath the rock. Press the wrong button and mountains move.

What does the device do? It might be a terraforming machine that converts Vega into a paradise; perhaps it is a drive system and activating it pushes the whole planet out of orbit and into interstellar space; perhaps it is a star-killing weapon or an alien computer or a Thirdspace gate.

PERSONALITIES

IPX is one of the smaller megacorporations. While the company employs thousands of people, it is possible to know every mover and shaker in the corporate ranks. Here are some of the ones the characters may encounter.

Alexander Brown

10th Level Human Agent

Hit Points: 25

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 19 (+6 class, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

Attacks: +9 close combat or +9 ranged

Special Qualities: Multi-Skilled (Diplomacy, Pilot), Opportunism (Sneak Attack +3d6), Skill Mastery (Bluff, Sense Motive)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +5

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skills: Acrobatics +12, Appraise +10, Athletics +12, Bluff +16, Computer Use +12 (+14 to find files), Concentration +7, Diplomacy +7, Drive +4, Intimidate +8, Intrigue +8, Investigate +20 (+22 to notice things), Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (Human) +14, Knowledge (IPX) +14, Knowledge (law) +14, Knowledge (philosophy) +5, Linguistics +9 (+11 with Humans), Notice +12, Pilot +5, Sense Motive +18, Subterfuge +15, Stealth +15.

Feats: Dodge, Fluency (Human), Latent Telepath, Martial Arts, Natural Athlete, Skill Focus (Bluff, Investigate, Sense Motive), Spacecraft Proficiency, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Influence: Criminal Influence +24, Earth Military Influence +18, IPX Influence +21

Mr Brown does not appear on any IPX payroll database or table of organisation but he is a vital part of the company. Brown's role is to deal with problems that threaten the company's reputation or profit margins. Often, these problems have two legs to run with and mouths that refuse to close but Mr Brown is very good at removing problems in such a way that no one ever remembers they existed.

Mr Brown is based on Mars but travels the whole galaxy. He usually takes commercial transports but



he has the authority within the company to take control of any IPX-owned or contracted vessel should he need it. Brown has no known family or interests outside the company, leading some to suspect that he is a vat-grown clone or cyborg created solely to serve IPX.

Mr Brown is quiet, well-spoken, polite and unassuming. Post-2262, he is also wanted for war crimes and atrocities committed under the Clark Regime but none of those deeds are connected to his current identity. If the characters encounter Mr Brown, they are either in big trouble or they are big trouble.

Roleplaying Alexander Brown: Play him as a meek little maths teacher who used to be in the secret service. He drinks weak tea, likes classical music and detective novels, and knows sixteen ways to kill a person with his left ankle. He generally works alone, so he will not linger with the Player Characters – he just shows up, removes the problem in the most efficient and quiet way possible, then leaves again.



Miruvoz

3rd Level Agent / 3rd Level Lurker / 3rd Level Trader

Hit Points: 21

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 13 (+3 class)

Attacks: +8 close combat or +6 ranged

Special Qualities: Lurker's Knowledge, Master Trader +1, Multi-Skilled (Diplomacy), Immune to Telepathy*, Opportunism (Stunning Attack DC 11), Survivor's Luck 1/day, Trader's Knowledge

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17

Skills: Acrobatics +0, Appraise +14, Athletics +2, Bluff +18, Computer Use +7, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +11, Drive +0, Intimidate +3, Intrigue +9 (+15 to gather information, +11 when in disguise), Investigate +8, Knowledge (Babylon 5) +14, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (Human) +5, Knowledge (law) +8, Linguistics +8, Notice +8, Operations (systems) +3, Pilot +4, Sense Motive +8, Subterfuge +9, Stealth +9.

Feats: Alien Empathy, Fluency (Human), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spacecraft Dodge, Spacecraft Proficiency, Veteran Pilot, Weapon Proficiency (close combat, grenade, pistol).

Influence: All Economic Influences +10, Criminal Influence +22, IPX Influence +13

* Miruvoz's race possesses a complete immunity to all known telepathic powers wielded by a telepath of P12 or less.

The alien Miruvoz has been associated with IPX for over two decades, since he was first encountered during the Dilgar War. No other members of Miruvoz's race have ever been encountered by IPX, although there are rumours that he is a renegade Soul Hunter. The alien is a wandering trader in artefacts and rumours, and IPX has been one of his best customers of late. Miruvoz's caravan of freighters and tramp jumpers wanders through known space seemingly at random but he makes contact with IPX whenever he is in Earth Alliance space, offering them new leads or curios from the Rim. The caravan is staffed by a mix of aliens from a dozen different races but none of them speak to outsiders about anything except selling trinkets and gewgaws. They communicate between themselves in a bizarre private patois.



The alien is also rumoured to have connections with the Thieves' Guild and it is claimed that his caravan is used to ship stolen goods from planet to planet. He has been stopped by customs inspectors many times, yet they have failed to find anything illegal on board his ships; indeed, they have failed to find almost anything. Miruvoz's ships look empty when searched by customs but he then floods zocalos and spaceports with exotic goods, indicating that he has excellent and capacious secret compartments on his caravan ships. Other rumours suggest that people the Thieves' Guild want to remove end up serving on board the wandering caravan.

Miruvoz's prices are so reasonable that many in IPX suspect that the alien is playing a deeper game and that he is attempting to manipulate the company into aiding him somehow. Finding out more information about the alien trader is a top priority for the corporation. When questioned, Miruvoz just smiles and insists that he is just a devotee of history and that he wishes others to learn from the mistakes of the past.

Roleplaying Miruvoz: Smile, be enigmatic, be evasive, be alien. Always give the impression Miruvoz is up to something, even if he is being totally innocent.

Sonia Hartung

5th Level Human Scientist / 4th Level Diplomat / 2nd Level Xenoarchaeologist

Hit Points: 18

Initiative: -1

Speed: 30 ft.

DV: 14 (+5 class, -1 Dex)

Attacks: +5 close combat or +4 ranged

Special Qualities: Alien Technology Familiarity (Centauri, Narn), Dodge Trap, Improved Diplomacy, Mental Agility, Peripheral Studies (Knowledge (Linguistics, Medical)), Primary Area of Study (Knowledge (history)), Strong Influence, Superior Knowledge (Knowledge (Minbari)), Use Alien Artefact

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +13

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 9, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 15

Skills: Acrobatics -1, Appraise +11, Athletics +0, Bluff +6, Computer Use +8 (+10 to find files), Concentration +9, Diplomacy +11, Drive -1, Intimidate +10, Intrigue +7, Investigate +17 (+19 to notice things), Knowledge (any) +3, Knowledge (IPX) +12, Knowledge (biology) +6, Knowledge (Centauri) +10, Knowledge (chemistry) +6, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (Human) +10, Knowledge (Minbari) +4, Knowledge (Narn) +9, Knowledge (philosophy) +7, Knowledge (physics) +6, Linguistics +13, Medical +10, Notice +11, Operations (any) +3, Pilot -1, Profession (executive) +15, Sense Motive +13, Subterfuge +0, Stealth +0, Technical (any) +3, Technical (electronics) +8, Technical (engineering) +8.

Feats: Alien Empathy, Data Access, Fluency (Centauri, Human, Narn), Independently Wealthy, Weapon Proficiency (pistol).

Influence: Earth Economic Influence +20, Earth Military Influence +15, Earth Political Influence +18, IPX Influence +31, Mars Influence +21.

The granddaughter of Richard Hartung and the current CEO of IPX, Sonia is on the fast track to promotion within the company and she seems to be paving that track with the drained corpses of failed contractors. Sonia has been referred to as IPX's 'Chief Inquisitor', a reference to the zeal with which she investigates unprofitable or poorly run expeditions. A message from Sonia Hartung is often the last contact an unfortunate contractor has with IPX before the lawyers swoop in. She is utterly ruthless in the pursuit of profit and efficiency.



Like most of the Hartung dynasty, Sonia was born on Mars but educated on Earth. If she were just involved in the business side of company operations, she would be dangerous enough but Sonia combines a first-class financial mind with a doctorate in xenoarchaeology. For many junior contractors and new recruits, Sonia virtually embodies IPX. She was carefully neutral during the Clark Regime, refusing to join Night Watch despite pressure from her associates, but also disavowing any support for an independent Mars. Her primary goal has always been the preservation and advancement of the family fortune and while she is not the eldest Hartung of her generation, she is easily the best known and most successful.

Sonia knows every part of the IPX corporation, and demands complete loyalty, devotion and profitability from all of it. It is all going to be hers someday, and she wants to inherit IPX in good condition.

Roleplaying Sonia Hartung: Sonia is always impatient and irritated by the incompetence of whoever she is talking to; it is almost impossible to keep her happy, as she expects constant perfection. She absorbs information like a sponge, asking a rapid-fire barrage of questions until she understands a situation, then snapping out a solution or orders.



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The Roleplaying Game

Second Edition

IPX

Of all the myriad organisations and societies in the *Babylon 5* universe, InterPlanetary Expeditions, commonly called IPX, is the one that is most honest in its goals. As a corporation, it is interested in profit rather than altruism and employs expedience more often than ethical restraint. Its employees range from keen explorers and daring grave robbers, to bookish linguists and corporate sharks. Typified by such flawed geniuses as Drs Vance Hendricks and Max Eilerson, IPX has provided the *Babylon 5* universe with some of its greatest characters.

This book provides players and Games Masters with all the information they need to forge their own career in the shadowy world of tomb raiding and xenoarchaeology. From specialised equipment, craft and feats to notes on multiclassing and skill use, *IPX* brings a multitude of options to the table.

Within is a full history and exploration of the corporation itself, along with a range of allies and rivals to IPX, from the antagonistic Ash'urai preservationists to the cryptic UMI saucers. Containing full rules expansions for investigating alien technology and subsequently making a profit from it, *IPX* is a key supplement to any *Babylon 5* game that encounters alien artefacts or investigates ancient ruins on forgotten worlds.



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