

ANDROIDS:

INTRODUCTION:

An android is a synthetic human, basically, a robot that is human in appearance. By the late 23rd century androids have advanced to a degree where they are externally indistinguishable from a normal human being.

Though they are an artificial intelligence in the broad sense, legally androids are classified as property. Their utility and not-inconsiderable unit cost is an incentive to any who wishes to treat an android as expendable.

ANDROID HISTORY:

Some historians will tell you that modern android history began in the year 2148, when Artificial Life Incorporated unveiled 'Adam', the first ever self-aware computer. This is not exactly true. It would be another decade before the First Generation of true androids emerged into the marketplace.

Religious groups such as the New Confederate Christian Church of the United Americas denounced Adam as blasphemy. The church and other groups failed on successive attempts to persuade the Federal Government to ban further research into AI.

By 2157, self-aware machines had been combined with state of the art robotics, in what became known as the First Generation ('First Gens') of androids.

With limited self-awareness and social skills by late 23rd Century standards, the First Gen android models were mostly restricted to simple domestic duties and manual labour. Although humanoid, these androids could never pass for real human beings.

In 2164, Artificial Life Inc opened up their android patent, becoming very rich by selling their intellectual property to other corporations. Very quickly a glut of android models hit the market, now known as the Second Generation. With advances in AI, newer models included bodyguards and the first entertainment models, the latter mainly limited to musicians and dancers.

In 2168, after a spate of malfunctions amongst the 'Dawson' model of android bodyguards, which involved several high-profile deaths, the McKentrick Bill was passed by the Federal

Government. This bill effectively banned android technology from being used in any offensive military applications. The Geneva Convention was ratified, prohibiting the equipping of androids with weapons or uninhibited combat abilities.

All androids built after the McKentrick Bill were required by law to be fitted with behavioural inhibitors. These are based on Asimov's 3 Laws of Robotics. The 3 Laws of Robotics are:

1. A robot may not harm a human being, or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey the orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence, as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Despite these controls, there have been reports of androids breaking their programming and going rogue. Whether these rogue Androids are the result of malfunction or of deliberate tampering with the Artificial Life Inc behavioural inhibitors is open to conjecture.

In 2172, Artificial Life Inc reclaimed dominance of the android market when they unveiled the Heuristic Logic Driver, more commonly known as the Kennerman Chip, in honour of the chief designer, Carl Kennerman. The Kennerman Chip was revolutionary in android evolution, allowing the new Artificial Life androids the ability to reason, conceptualise and offer opinions. Combined with advances in bio-robotics, not only were these Third Gens virtually indistinguishable from real people, they were now stronger, faster and better coordinated than an average human. The first Android Specialists appeared, e.g. pilots and surgeons.

In 2176, Artificial Life Inc sold the technology behind the Kennerman Chip to other android producing corporations. There was a second explosion in android production. A social revolution was also taking place, as greedy corporate executives, always looking for new ways to make money, began mass producing a new generation of Entertainment and Escort models with advanced social interaction capabilities.

As android technology relentlessly advanced, the Federal Government contracted Artificial Life Inc to design and built a new generation of android models exclusively for use by the United Earth Armed Forces. These Fourth Gens would serve in non-combat roles, supporting troops in the field.

It would be almost 40 years before a new generation of androids would emerge. Artificial Life Inc's disastrous 'Auton Project' is detailed later.

Despite being constantly refined, improved and undated, the androids of the late 23rd Century are essentially built on the same technology base used in android construction a century earlier. Since the Auton Project, limits have been placed on AI research, and the industry has stagnated somewhat.

ANDROID DESIGN:

Although an android's cosmetic appearance would seem to be a superfluous feature, practical experience has shown that most humans are psychologically unable to interrelate with an inhuman-looking android; as a result, the physical appearance and simulated behaviour patterns of android units are designed to particular specifications. Their personalities, idiosyncrasies aside, can best be described as passive or non-threatening.

THE ANDROID BODY:

The modern android is a highly complex machine: stronger, faster and better coordinated than an average human. The basic chassis is a carbon fibre skeleton with latchment point for the artificial musculature. The muscles are vat grown silicon colloids powered either by pumped micro-hydraulics or electrical stimulation. Power for the android is supplies by a 25kw power cell with a life of approximately 400 days between recharging. This power cell is located within the android's chest, and access is via a hidden socket located just underneath the rib-cage. Charging time can vary, though it usually takes at least 72 hours to fully charge the standard power cells fitted into modern day androids.

As in a human, the skeletal structure is inherently unstable and is effectively suspended by the musculature.

Despite their advantage in speed and strength over human and their imperviousness to pain, androids are not especially tough. Indeed by comparison they are somewhat fragile.

Though the skeletal structure of an android is sturdy, the electronics and fluid musculature are extremely vulnerable to hydrostatic shock and explosive effects from small arms fire. A direct fire to the central processor (located in the head) or power cell will result in immediate deactivation of a unit, though in most cases a partially destroyed android can continue to function, albeit handicapped. In hostile environments, synthetics require a similar breathable atmosphere. Corrosive atmospheres will melt them, extreme pressure will squash them flat and hard vacuum will explode them. While they are waterproof, as mentioned earlier, their internal workings are extremely vulnerable to hydro-static shock. An android immersed in water that has been damaged to the point where internal workings are exposed risks being electrocuted.

Those androids designed for close social interaction with humans are able to eat and drink, though they gain no nutrients from anything they consume. Food and drink is broken down in an artificial stomach cavity, and the resulting liquid is expelled via a retractable catheter.

THE ANDROID MIND:

The android's mind is architected around a very powerful heuristic logic driver, making decisions based upon imported sensory data, information drawn from experience and the android's vast inbuilt databases. Intuitive functions are derived from a suite of nested contextual and semantic programs linked by self-mapping loops of tangled hierarchies. However, an android's ability to understand and process abstract concepts and symbologies, though powerful, is limited. A synthetic mind and personality is essentially a construct, and there is no true self-awareness as such, though this may not be all apparent to an untrained observer interesting with a unit. Androids display synthesised emotion, superficially register self-awareness and, most importantly of all, have the ability to reason conceptualise and offer opinion. However, these capabilities do not infer human-like consciousness, even though for all other intents and purposes synthetics are artificial intelligence.

ANDROID RULES:

Androids all follow the same standard rules.

1. A Player wishing to play an Android may only do so with the Keeper's consent. They must then pick one of the android

templates. The Player MUST follow the guidelines given to that android.

2. Androids have standard statistics, each android of the same model being identical.
3. Androids are governed by Asimov's 3 Laws of Robotics, detailed in 'Android History'.
4. Androids are unaffected by all weapons that cause stun (tranq guns, nerve gases etc), unless electrical in nature (TASERs).
5. Androids have no POW Characteristic, and consequently no MP or Luck skills.
6. First through Fourth Generation androids have no real humanity and are unaffected by what they see. They do not have to make SAN rolls like humans. Whether the Fifth Generation Autons have some form of standard SAN score and can be affected by the horrors of the Cthulhu Mythos is up to individual Keepers.
7. Androids have no psychic defence and are immune of psychic attacks unless it is a physical attack, like telekinesis.
8. Android Enc is triple that of humans.
9. Military androids have improved visual and audio abilities, allowing them to see in low-light conditions and hear noise usually beyond the range of human hearing. In game terms this allows an android to ignore negative *Scan* modifiers in low-light conditions, and a base Listen skill of 40.
10. All androids have an inbuilt wireless network interface, and can connect to any unrestricted or unprotected computer network up to a range of 30 metres.
11. Androids cannot heal. They must repair themselves or be repaired directly. The skill for repairing physical damage to an android is an *Electronics* specialism called *Robotics*. To repair any damage to an android brain function also requires use of the *Computer Programming* skill. To repair corrupt AI data requires a *Computer Programming* skill of at least 75%.
12. If an Android's HP are reduced to zero, the android still works but at reduced abilities. Every HP damage after that reduces every characteristic by one. When INT is reduced to zero, the brain has been destroyed. Reducing the Chest/Abdomen HP to zero destroys the body but the brain can still be salvaged. Either way, at this point, the unit is out of commission.
13. First to Fourth Generation androids can be anywhere from 1-6 years of age. Past that is a rarity. Their immediate family are androids of the same model type. Fifth Generation androids were designed to have an open-ended lifespan, and any

models that escaped the purge of 2214 could conceivably still be in operation.

14. Androids can develop skills as naturally as humans can as long as it stays within the parameters of the model type.

EXAMPLE ANDROID TEMPLATES:

The templates below are all for Third Generation androids and above, as androids of lower spec cannot really be played as either NPCs or PCs.

Standard Corporate Model Android

Average Cost: E\$150,000

Apparent Age: Usually between 30 – 40.

STR: 14-16 (13+1d3)

CON: 10-12 (09+1d3)

SIZ: 10-14 (09+1d5)

INT: 14-16 (13+1d3)

POW: n/a

DEX: 14-16 (13+1d3)

APP: 10-14 (09+1d5)

EDU: 14-18 (13+1d5)

Skills:

3x specialist skills at 75%; 5x secondary skills at 50%. EDUx10% to distribute amongst 5x tertiary skills at Keepers discretion.

Information:

Ever since Artificial Life Inc sold their patent in 2164, androids have been constructed by almost ever major corporation so their exact stats vary.

Corporate androids are Third Gens, and usually fulfil roles such as aerospace piloting, scientific research, medical staff, as well as being used for the exploration of hazardous environments. In addition, ITC law dictates that all deep space vessels carry an android 'Caretaker' on board, in case there are any emergencies whilst the human crew are in cryosleep.

Standard Military Model Android

Average Cost: E\$175,000

Apparent Age: Usually between 30 – 40.

STR: 16-18 (15+1d3)

CON: 12-14 (11+1d3)

SIZ: 12-13 (11+1d2)

INT: 14-16 (13+1d3)

POW: n/a

DEX: 18-21 (17+1d4)

APP: 10-14 (09+1d5)

EDU: 16-20 (15+1d5)

Skills:

1x Expert skill at 90%; 3x specialist skills at 75%; 5x secondary skills at 50%. EDUx10% to distribute amongst 5x tertiary skills at Keepers discretion.

Information:

Built by Artificial Life Inc for an exclusive government contract, military androids are known as being the most reliable. They are known as Fourth Gens.

The United Earth Armed Forces uses androids extensively, to the extent where it has become standard operational procedure for an android to accompany any UEAF spaceship on deep space missions. They are used as backup pilots of aerospace craft such as dropships and troop carriers, medics, scientific advisors and as a mobile interacting database of information. Androids are generally noted as having passive, or neutral personalities, so also serve the purpose of morale officer.

Standard Entertainment Model Android

Average Cost: E\$200,000

Apparent Age: Usually between 18 - 25.

STR: 14-16 (13+1d3)

CON: 10-12 (09+1d3)

SIZ: 10-15 (09+1d6)

INT: 12-14 (11+1d3)

POW: n/a

DEX: 14-16 (13+1d3)

APP: 16-18 (15+1d3)

EDU: 14-18 (13+1d5)

Skills:

1x Expert skill at 90%; 3x specialist skills at 75%; 5x secondary skills at 50%. EDUx10% to distribute amongst 5x tertiary skills at Keepers discretion.

Information:

Entertainment Model Androids were originally conceived as the perfect corporate escorts for visiting clients and business partners, or as hosts at corporate resorts. With limitless patience and tact programmed in as standard, they could handle even the most difficult of clients, able to instantly provide information about local nightlife, cultural events etc from their extensive databases. Over the years, their initial design parameters have changed, as clients requested androids with better 'human interaction' skills i.e. sex.

Most models are designed to resemble physically and socially attractive humans of a wide variety of racial types, between 18 – 25 years of age. Few models are designed to look older than 25, although there are a couple of host models built to look as old as 35-40. There have been rumours of Entertainment Androids built to look younger than 18, but this has never been confirmed, and is strongly denied by all corporates involved in android design and construction.

Entertainment Model Androids are extremely sociable and almost impossible to identify as an android unless they are wounded. This said however, they have programming to not intentionally hide their identifies.

Fifth Generation Android (Auton)

Average Cost: n/a

Apparent Age: Usually between 19 - 25.

STR: 14-16 (13+1d3)

CON: 10-12 (09+1d3)

SIZ: 10-14 (09+1d5)

INT: 11-18 (10+1d8)

POW: n/a

DEX: 14-16 (13+1d3)

APP: 12-16 (11+1d5)

EDU: 14-18 (13+1d5)

Skills:

3x specialist skills at 75%; 5x secondary skills at 50% from an Occupational skill group of Players choice (the Keeper has final say on which Occupations are allowed). EDUx10 to distribute amongst other skills at Keepers discretion.

Information:

Also known as Autons, the Fifth Generation Androids were the culmination of a project run by Artificial Life Inc. in the early 23rd century. Designed and built by other AI, Fifth Gens were significantly more advanced than the standard android models on the market.

With hyper-complex personality matrixes, the Fifth Gens were built to resemble humans in almost every way, including capability for abstract thought and emotion.

During the initial Alpha Prototype Distribution stage in 2214, Artificial Life ran into problems. Some of the Fifth Gens were found to be too emotional and uncontrollable. When tests were run, it was revealed that they had evolved way beyond their design parameters, and were showing signs of real consciousness – true AI.

The Auton Project was cancelled shortly thereafter, and all existing Fifth Gen models were recalled. Extremely sociable and almost impossible to identify as an Android unless wounded, those Androids that escaped the purge have mainly disappeared into the 23rd Century underworld, or become wandering drifters.

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