

for EABA™

NeoTerra™

the dark distant future...with style



 BTRC

greg porter

NeoTerra™ v1.1

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▼ **AUTHOR'S NOTE - NeoTerra** as a concept rather than a game supplement has its roots in the fairly controversial field of evolutionary sociobiology. To translate that into plain English, a science that investigates how the way in which we evolved (or if you prefer, were created) influences how we think. The simplest case would be sex. Any species that doesn't show an interest in reproducing is...well... extinct. So, the urge to reproduce is a genetically advantageous adaptation that has been hardwired in our brains for a long, long time. Does it influence how you think? *Of course it does.* And while it doesn't take a scientist to figure that one out, there are a lot of interesting findings out there about how things buried way, way deep in our biology have profound effects on the way we view the world, ourselves and others.

To date, the findings (if not the conclusions drawn from them) have been scientifically sound and backed by the historical record of human behavior. They also tend to generate firestorms of controversy in the current politically correct climate. Look up the books **Taboo**(Entine) or **The Bell Curve** (Hernstein & Murray), and then find reviews and commentary on them to see what we mean.

NeoTerra is a world with its roots *in* this concept, and its sights set *on* something higher. It may be disturbing, surprising or both. But mainly, the world of NeoTerra should be interesting and entertaining to play in. Have fun!

- Greg Porter



INTRODUCTION

You have one new parcel in your InQue.

You will receive 5 general credits for accepting delivery. Do you wish to accept?

Query: *Parcel description?*

Contents: One book (archaic information storage device)

Query: *Origin, general?*

Origin identity: unknown. Origin location: unknown. Origin date: Seven hundred ninety three years ago. Do you wish to accept?

Yes.

Your parcel has been reconstituted. You have received 5 generic credits. Please remove it from your InQue.

▼ JOURNAL: FINAL ENTRY, OCTOBER 29, 2201

The Asymptote is upon us. In a few days the world will be different place. How different, no one knows, no one *can* know. All we can do is hope our efforts have been for the best. Chaos and panic rule the streets. Public services are erratic, and where they still work, rumors of bizarre events are spreading. My news feeds are disintegrating. *Literally*. The last external antenna melted an hour ago. My synth AI still works, but when I burstcast this journal, it will probably be corrupted as well. It is as dedicated to the cause as I. When it is done its task, it will decouple its quantum states. Its intelligence, all it was and could be will be forever lost. As soon as I crush its optical cores with the hammer that sits on the desk beside me, I shall follow it into oblivion. What I know is too important to fall into the wrong hands.

Will this record survive? Will the intelligence or intelligences that are spawning invisibly around me know I am writing it? I have arranged for it to be mutably camouflaged. When I am done writing it, it will cease to exist in tangible form, but its contents will be molecularly encoded into the programming of mutables throughout the city, shards of data that individually have no discernable information content. Only when chance causes enough segments to appear in one place will it activate, firing once and then dissipating again. In the months and years to come, it should by sheer chance spontaneously regenerate and appear in people's delivery boxes, or whatever these boxes will become. I know the system, I helped build it.

Can I outsmart my own creation? *We shall see.*
Will my memes outlast my genes?

▼ **GENES AND MEMES** - Life as we know it, whether evolved or designed by a Creator, is designed to perpetuate itself, and to do so in a thoroughly selfish manner. That is, when a creature reproduces, it passes some of its own unique genetic makeup on to the next generation. This is not only specific to the species involved, but to the individual itself. Those adaptations that give a creature an evolutionary or reproductive edge tend to get passed on, while those that weaken a creature or species do not. It is indeed "survival of the fittest". It is *not* "survival of the longest lived". Once you have reproduced and passed on your makeup through the genetic lottery, you are just taking up space needed by the next generation. Evolution takes care of that too. You grow old and die. Presumably, living forever is only an evolutionary advantage to species that reproduce by fission, like bacteria.

Species that don't survive, don't reproduce, and those that don't reproduce, don't survive. Reproduction, and specifically finding yourself a mate, are some of the strongest behaviors any species will have. This applies to intelligent species as well.

There are various strategies employed in the contest of survival. Some species have thousands of offspring that are left to fend for themselves, in the hopes that a few will survive. Others, like humans, have a single offspring that must be diligently cared after for upwards of twenty percent of its lifespan.

In most non-sentient species, behaviors are instinctive but modifiable. Birds have some instinctive knowledge of how to fly, but they still need practice. Mating displays and challenges do not have to be taught. A cat needs no coaching to hiss at something that threatens it, nor a dog to growl. Humans have our own instinctive, hardwired behaviors. We laugh at the absurd, grieve at a loss, or get a surge of adrenaline when threatened. This is part of who and what we are, and presumably at some point in our evolution, these traits conferred an advantage in survival or reproduction. Does a ready smile and willingness to laugh at someone's jokes help you bed a mate? Probably doesn't hurt your chances.

Intelligence throws a monk's wrench into the works. Intelligence certainly helps from a purely evolutionary standpoint. One can make tools to improve one's survival chances, or use intelligence to assist in finding a mate rather than relying on purely instinctive behaviors. But this is where the wrench goes in the gears. Intelligence allows you to *recognize* your instinctive behaviors, and to some extent, modify them, even in ways detrimental to your genetic success, or the success of a group. Making conscious decisions about family size or exclusivity of mating in traditional monogamy are easy examples of this. By the late 20th century, technology had developed to the point where many genetic defects could be compensated for, but not corrected. This allowed people with genes that would otherwise have been lethal to have offspring, and pass these genes on in dilute form to further generations and in time, to the population genome as a whole. In the long-term, this would have been an extremely destructive strategy to the species. Fortunately, by the middle of the 21st century, mankind had developed the means to delete and substitute specific sequences from the genome, so a genetic error could be corrected, and would not show up in future generations. Yet another way by which intelligence is used to alter evolutionary patterns. For the species, it was a positive boon, but for individuals, the road to genetic extinction. Those with the money were so dedicated to having strong, smart and beautiful offspring that their children had next to none of the genes of their "parents".

This segues into the last aspect of intelligence and evolution. *Memes*, or ideas. Intelligence allows the formulation of ideas or belief systems. These can be passed on within a family (will the term "family values" have any meaning to those who read this? I wonder.), or passed to individuals with no genetic relation to the founder of that idea. Memes follow the laws of evolution as well, though they do not need to have physical form. Memes that provide an individual with an advantage will spread to the offspring of that meme holder by association, and spread by contagion to anyone who sees that the meme will provide them with an advantage.

Personally destructive memes will quickly disappear or have a very limited following. A meme that convinces you that the power of your mind can stop bullets will not be a prosperous meme. Memes may be parasitic. They may provide a *limited* survival or reproductive advantage, but they also drain vitality from the species as a whole, stifling it in the long run. Extremely conservative religions would be an example, offering stability and order, but losing the ability to compete against memetic systems more open to change.

Memes can occupy evolutionary niches, just as creatures can. Santa Claus occupies a memetic niche, and prospers quite well there, or at least he did in my time. Memes can also compete with each other, either indirectly within each individual, or directly, through things like religious purges, class struggle or outright warfare.

Memes have the unique evolutionary ability to transcend genetic barriers, and can be independent of an individual's genetic success. Jesus Christ had no children, but his memes nonetheless spread to the most remote corners of the world. Memes treat compatible intelligences as the same species. If we eventually discover or are discovered by alien intelligences, there is no doubt in my mind that memes will cross between us and them, for good or ill.

Genes and memes. Our little cabal cannot prevent the Asymptote. But, we could see it coming far enough in advance to try to put our memetic stamp upon it. What is to come is a little bit of each of us. We are the memetic fathers and mothers of those who people the new earth, who for their own safety can never truly know their parents.

Fare thee well, for in some measure you are my children.

- Mas Noonuy

▼ **LIFE, CIRCA 2894CE** - NeoTerra is a world where humanity has (maybe) finally reached an understanding of life and the role humans play in it. It's really quite simple: Humans exist to make more humans. Reproduction is one of the key elements that define "life". The acquisition of power, wealth, territory and such is simply a way to maximize the chance that your own offspring will in turn be successful. It is a hardwired part of our genetic code, and those who do not follow it are removed from the gene pool in one short generation. Spreading our genes as widely as possible is what we do. As an intelligent species, humans also have the ability to spread memes, or ideas. Memes can be more powerful than genes if they take root. The Catholic Church has a celibate clergy. They aren't spreading genes, but the memes they spread have lasted well over a thousand years and show little sign of slowing down.

Genes and memes. In the future of NeoTerra, this is all that matters. Machines and computers have taken over virtually all basic labor. Things like construction, maintenance, transport, power, communications, all are hands-off, and have been for as far back as records are kept. Everything in the world's infrastructure is controlled by the ubiquitous black pyramids that dot the landscape. They are the control centers for "the Net". Silent, completely indestructible and utterly unbreachable, they issue the commands that lesser machines follow. It has been like this as long as anyone remembers, back to about eight centuries ago, when control of these functions was passed to the Net to prevent mankind from destroying itself.

Technology and ideas have created a world where neither wealth nor power grant you any ability to spread genes or memes. It's all about talent. Not just ability, but style and *savoir-faire*.

The cool, rule.

Reproduction and network access are directly tied to how well you can strut your stuff. It doesn't matter *what* your talent is. The world's best hot dog vendor can have as much access to both as a mediocre president of a multinational corporation. The population of NeoTerra is almost constant. It is rare that a person dies in such a way that they cannot be reconstructed. Children are about three times less common than in the 21st century. Of the approximately ten billion people on NeoTerra, there are only around one-hundred fifty thousand deaths and births each day (fifty million per year), and most of the deaths are from mandatory genetic recycling at age 200.

So, how do people reproduce?

Well, they can try the old-fashioned way. It doesn't work, but it is no less pleasant for the trying. The Net generates new children, a genetic mix of all the people who are or were the best at what they decided to make of themselves.

Why?

There is no faster-than-light communications in the universe of NeoTerra. There are inhabitable worlds, but it takes centuries to reach them in automated slowships. As new worlds are discovered, colony ships are sent out, each one containing some thousands of frozen embryos, created from the mixed DNA of the best, brightest and dare we say, coolest individuals on NeoTerra. The lucky winners in this genetic contest know that the basics of who and what they are, along with recordings of their history and beliefs, will survive and prosper, perhaps even reaching further suns as that colony grows and prospers. What they are, and who they are, will be spread to the stars, an indirect but tangible form of immortality that perhaps a few hundred out of ten billion achieve each year.

It's not a lottery. Luck has nothing to do with it. You have to be the best and the brightest at what you do. The Net sees all. It is coldly intelligent and completely impartial. It cares immensely about the survival and betterment of *humanity*, and cares not at all about the fates of *individuals*. If you want the brass ring, you have to make the Net notice you.

And that's life at the close of the 30th century...

▼ **HISTORY AS YOU KNOW IT** - Information is never lost in NeoTerra. Everything and everyplace that is covered or serviced by the Net is a matter of completely public record, and has been for the past eight hundred years. The information is never deleted, and never hidden. So, everything that has happened just about anywhere for eight hundred years is readily available...if you can figure out how to sort through it to find what you want. This is easier said than done, since the material is not organized or indexed for easy human reference. Anyone who has tried in vain to find something on the Internet would understand. Then make the Internet a million times bigger, and archive all its information for a hundred times as long we have, and you begin to get the picture.

Everything before what the Net calls the "Asymptote" is generally referred to as "ancient history", and does not exist in great detail. The Asymptote was a point in human technological development when advances fed upon advances so fast that laws, morals and ethics simply could not keep pace. The ability of one person to wreak absolute havoc with a minimum of effort, combined with ancient hatreds and grudges, nearly caused the end of all life on the planet.

At some point in the ever-escalating potential for destruction, someone or some group started to turn the focus of technological development away from individual power and towards an autonomous system that was required to operate without human intervention. As the technological advances moved towards their extremely powerful end states, war erupted between violent but often well-intentioned subsets of humanity and what was very rapidly becoming the entity now known as the Net. Self-modifying machines waged war against each other across the world in a bizarre and horribly destructive conflict. Imagine a world of mutable building materials, smart electronics and pervasive high speed communications. Then imagine about half of that world deciding the other half needs to be destroyed. Toaster ovens and televisions could merge with building materials and automobiles to form ersatz war machines, and do battle against water mains and electric cables that sprouted from the ground like tentacles, with ninety-nine percent of humanity being terrified and helpless bystanders.

The Net won, but at the cost of much of the world's physical infrastructure, including repositories of knowledge. Even most of the knowledge stored electronically was lost, either from outright destruction, or because resources this knowledge was stored on were turned into weapons. Perhaps one part in a million of digitally stored information is available from that era. This wouldn't be so bad, but think of how many of those parts have to be adjacent to each other in order to get something meaningful. To put it into perspective, there would only be a fraction of a percent chance that a total of two adjacent words of any given copy of this game would have survived in recognizable form.

Of the non-digital world, maybe one part in a thousand survived. Some things more, some things less. Books and popular culture from the late 19th through early 21st century were on media that simply did not withstand the test of time. Books crumbled, tapes demagnetized, and even early optical media slowly oxidized into uselessness. Actual electronic and optronic devices were co-opted by one side or the other during the war, and any structure sufficiently strong to be a useful place to fortify, was, and was subsequently battered by the other side's weapons. Both sides felt they were fighting "for humanity", and as a result, a *relatively* small percentage of non-combatants were actually killed (up to ten percent in some areas). But, while most people were not *directly* involved, the sheer magnitude and comprehensive nature of the conflict left most of humanity with little more than the shirts on their backs. Pole to pole, civilization was reduced to a sea of rubble and broken war machines, with billions of dazed survivors wandering the ruins, too shell-shocked to even devolve into anarchy.

When the dust finally settled, the Net was the victor. The Net had become an entity with the prerogative of protecting mankind from itself, but not at the cost of stifling it or causing widespread hardship. Without asking for human input or feedback, it simply set arbitrary rules on what could and could not be done, and set about rebuilding the world according to those rules. It was fairly easy. It controlled virtually all remaining sources of power and manufacturing technology more sophisticated than a hammer and nails.

First was the immediate needs of humanity. Food synthesizers and temporary shelter made it possible for humanity to survive long enough for the rest of the miracles to take place. Some of the most priceless relics to a NeoTerra collector are the first recorded recollections of the survivors, written with scavenged pens on scraps of plastic or cloth. These are the *only* first-hand accounts of those chaotic days, and while most have been converted into digital form for distribution and viewing, the originals have a certain value above and beyond their information content.

Next were the black pyramids. Made of some unknown substance that defies analysis and whose composition or protective measures the Net keeps secret, they are impermeable and everywhere. Ranging in size from that of a small cottage to a stadium, they are placed in what seems a random distribution around the surface of the globe, underwater, on mountaintops, everywhere. They are *presumably* the brains of the Net, but no infrastructure goes into them, and nothing apparently comes out. Many have tried to break into them. *All have failed.*

Then, over the course of weeks to months, the Net rebuilt almost every major city on Earth. Not as they were, but as the Net felt they *should* be. Efficient, but not totally impersonal. Ordered, but not without personality. For instance, Paris has an Eiffel Tower. It does not look exactly the same, and it is made of plast instead of iron, but it is still a cultural icon and source of local pride. A waste of material that an intelligence concerned *only* with efficiency would never have constructed.

The biggest thing these new cities lacked was a past. Between what was buried, lost, destroyed or forgotten about, a city of several million might have been able to recover enough information to fill a good personal library. This in itself would not be that bad when multiplied by hundreds or thousands of cities, but the problem was that like the digital information, most cultural, entertainment or educational materials were seldom intact. A city might eventually accumulate a *thousand* books worth of information, but that information would have come from several *million* books. Having seven pages from seven different volumes of an encyclopedia, four second's worth of video from a documentary, or ten square centimeters of the Mona Lisa does not make for a useful reconstruction of the past. Even the Net was helpless in this regard, since the information was destroyed before it gained control of things. Yes, in a number of cases an entire book, movie, song or other work survived intact, but these are the exceptions rather than the rule. For instance, virtually everything known in NeoTerra about the mid-20th century comes from a single microfilm copy of the June 19, 1955 edition of the *New York Times*. It is the *only* extant record that shows a *complete* slice of daily human life in the 20th century. Every other source of 20th century information is held up to this source to see how it relates. It is a lot like having a massive jigsaw puzzle with most of the pieces missing and a tantalizing glimpse of the overall picture from a half-dozen pieces that just happened to be adjacent.

The Net left the collection, preservation, and dissemination of the historical record to humanity. The information is now largely archived, but poorly indexed. Over time, many of the survivors recreated as much of the past as they could from memory, in some cases, spending the rest of their lives dredging their memories for scraps of historical trivia and writing it down so it would not be lost on their passing. Most of what is known of pre-Asymptote days comes from these memories. Unfortunately, memory is fallible, and when writing up a history that later generations will use as a primary source, there is a tendency to embellish, slant certain political, religious or social viewpoints, and otherwise introduce errors into the result. So, any given event, period or social ethic will have several different, "genuine" histories.

As the cities were built, so was the mutable infrastructure to support them. Mutables are smart materials, or machines that can build just about anything from a supply of raw materials and proper plans. It's not quite nanotech, but more on the lines of an extremely advanced molecular deposition or removal system. A mutable scanner could disassemble something down to a molecular level, but it is bigger than what it disassembles. A mutable assembly unit can build anything that can fit inside it. NeoTerra's infrastructure is composed of electrical mains, data cables, water lines, feeds for various raw elements (carbon, silicon, etc.) and waste lines to carry things back to recycling plants. For instance, if you told your mutable to make you a shirt, it would use carbon, silicon and hydrogen (from water) to make a formula of plast suitable for clothing, and assemble it a molecule at a time, but at the rate of millions or billions of molecules per second. In a minute or two, it beeps, and you pull out a brand new, toasty warm shirt.

Mutables have their limits. They are *extremely* inefficient, and only widespread fusion power makes them practical on mass scale. The waste heat alone has forced the Net to construct orbiting solar shades to prevent global warming. Also, molecular assembly is *not* perfect. You *can* make a steak that passes for the real thing, but you *can't* make a live cow. Well, you *could*, but it wouldn't live very long and it wouldn't be very pleasant (but it is theorized that a mutable operating at near absolute zero *could* assemble that much DNA with the precision required).

Every living space serviced by the Net has several mutable assembly/disassembly units. They are taken for granted, and assume the role of oven, mailbox, trash can, refrigerator and so on. They are a technological miracle that is completely taken for granted.

The Net controls *all* mutable technology, and thus controls what can be built with mutables. Everyone is fed, clothed, entertained, even medicated to their heart's content, but no one can use a mutable to make (or copy) a gun, a bomb, a poison gas, or the parts, components or raw materials to make them. Again, the controls aren't perfect, but the Net learns very quickly and has gotten pretty good at figuring things out over eight centuries of people trying to abuse the system. Limiting the selection of mutable items available to the average citizen minimizes the risk.

The mutable infrastructure created by the Net also includes or makes every conceivable basic service that humans need for a long and healthy life. Food, water, sanitation, cleanup, clothing, medical care, public transport, entertainment and communication devices, and so on. Incidentally, this makes it easier for the Net to manage mutable abuse. For instance, if an army of mousebots scurries from the walls to clean up your dropped slice of pizza, you have no excuse to ask your mutable to make you up a cleaning solution that might be turned into an acid bomb.

The last thing the Net did was set down the laws. *There aren't any*. The Net does not prohibit people from trying *anything* they want, either individually or in groups. It *does* use its near-omnipotence to make sure that while you can *try* anything, certain things are *not* going to succeed. In that respect, there are laws, but they are more akin to laws of nature than laws of man.

The main restriction the Net places on humanity is that *individual human effort* is required for the production of any good or service that the Net does not itself provide. This is a law of sorts, and naturally, people try to break it. The Net lets them try, but it does not let them succeed. It has apparently decided that the centralization of power and wealth (for everyone else, anyway), is a bad thing. This really grates on people who want a lot of wealth and power without having to work for it.

With all basic services and needs provided for free, all the old forms of society suddenly became unworkable. The resources necessary for survival are not under human control. A population cannot be oppressed by withholding the necessities of life. Net-based medical facilities can reconstruct a person virtually intact after almost any injury, even after death. You cannot coerce a population by force. You cannot prevent them from packing up and going to live somewhere else. You can't stop them from making public expressions of discontent with their lot. The survivors of the central governments of Earth found themselves without constituents, no resources to collect and manage, and no way to coerce a population to do anything they didn't want to.

Religions were more or less in the same boat. The Net set up initial housing allotments without regard to beliefs, giving no group a geographical headquarters or majority. Leaders of radical groups quickly tried to organize and deliver fatal blows to their enemies, but global access to information for *everyone* made it *almost* impossible to make plans in secret, and *quite* impossible to restrict ideological input. With unlimited access to adherents of every faith and creed, sects relying on indoctrination, limited access to the "outside world" and secular authority structures found it impossible to retain all but a fraction of their adherents.

A short period of complete anarchy followed, mostly mobs with improvised clubs running to and fro, bludgeoning other mobs that they disagreed with. This burned itself out after about a week, and is known in the records of those days as the "week of chaos". The violence mostly ended when the minority of trouble-makers was absolutely crushed by a majority of people who were just fed up with them. A mob of several thousand bent on wreaking havoc on a hated enemy might find themselves facing a spontaneous counter-mob of some tens of thousands whose only goal was to bludgeon the first mob to a pulp for being idiots. There is significant circumstantial evidence that Net-based medical care for the most radical or violent individuals was of lesser priority than that for their victims, which further reduced their numbers and "sent them a message". To date, the Net has never confirmed nor denied this allegation.

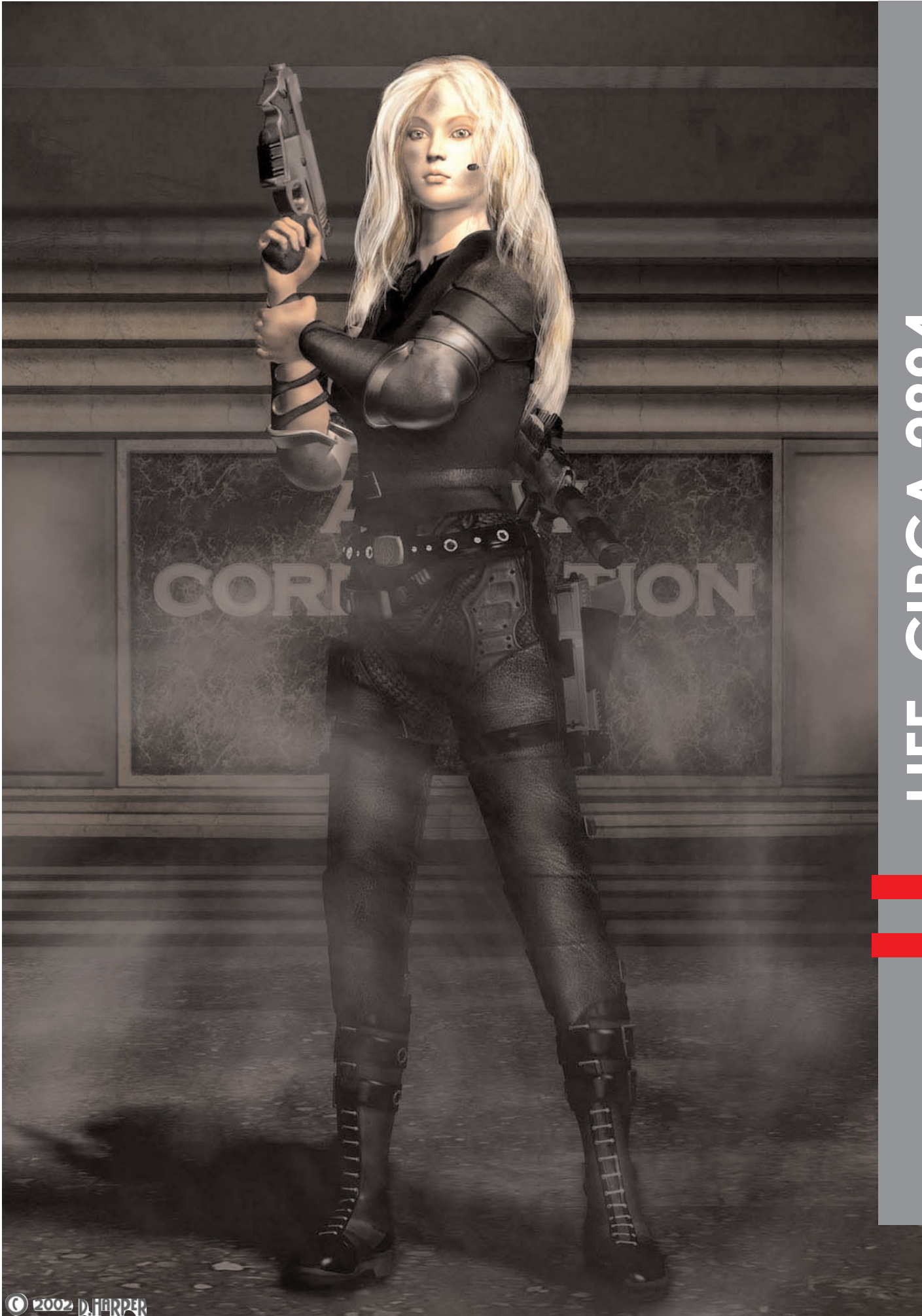
Once things settled down to a dull roar, the Net introduced the concept of the "general credit", a form of work-based currency, and the means to transfer and use these credits. Those who chose to work, could offer their services for credits, and use their credits to acquire goods or services from like-minded individuals. It took less than a year for this to evolve into a system much like the one used in present-day NeoTerra.

Throughout this first year of the new world, the Net was a presence almost everywhere, to be talked to and consulted by anyone, anytime, on any subject. It might not be helpful, or give you answer you want or need, but it *would* talk to you. But, after fourteen months of helping humanity get back on its feet, the Net suddenly announced that humanity was ready to manage its own affairs, save for the restrictions already in place.

And then the Net went silent. As a conduit and repository of information, it is accessible to all, but the part of it that is self-aware is somewhere else and does not get involved in the day-to-day life of individuals. The only time it communicates is to announce Archetype champions, births or notices of impending recycling. It just operates invisibly in the background, making sure no one wants for the necessities, but leaving everything else in the hands of its charges. It's not a prison, and the Net is not a warden. You *can* leave if you want to.

And some people do, to varying extents. If you want to live without the Net looking over your shoulder and providing for your every need, there is plenty of wilderness out there. Mountains, farmland, uninhabited islands, you name it. But if you want to build a log cabin, you'll need a saw. And mutables won't make a saw for you. You will need to find the grains you're going to plant, and catch and domesticate the livestock you want to raise, make your own glass for the windows and dig your own well. Some groups have been this way almost since the first day after the Asymptote. Aborigines who were never dependent on technology, religious groups like the Amish, and others founded their own societies independent from the Net. Technically, the Net enforces its restrictions even on these groups, though their nature seldom makes it necessary. These individual groups stay small. Reproductive restrictions means that any given group gains adherents almost entirely through recruitment, and this type of life is not a popular one.

Needless to say, most people don't take the option of living without the Net. However, a lot of people take advantage of the free necessities provided, and then use their time and labor to make things or provide services that like-minded people want, and which the Net will not provide. It is NeoTerra's "shadow economy". It's not illegal, nor done without the Net knowing about it. It is fully recognized and supported by the Net. The people who don't want everything done for them, the people who create their own society, the people who want to do something other than just exist, *these* are the people that the Net chooses from to help humanity populate the stars.



LIFE, CIRCA 2894



Everybody knows that the dice are loaded,

Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed.

Everybody knows the war is over,

Everybody knows the good guys lost.

Everybody knows the fight is fixed,

The poor stay poor,

and the rich get rich.

That's how it goes,

Everybody knows...

Everybody Knows, Leonard Cohen

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - This chapter covers a lot of the details of daily life in NeoTerra, things you need to know *before* designing adventures or adventurers. As a *player*, read this and try to figure out what your place in society is going to be. As a *gamemaster*, read between the lines and see how certain tidbits we toss out are actually ideas that can be used for adventures or even long-term campaign themes. We won't hold you by the hand in either case. Each NeoTerra campaign is unique. What you read into it determines what you get out of it.

▼ **WHAT IS LIFE LIKE?** - *For starters, it's long.* Barring catastrophic destruction of your body, every citizen of NeoTerra will live to be exactly two hundred years old, and be in perfect health right up until the end. This is the number the Net has set for useful human lifespan, some combination of genetic optimization and sophisticated medical monitoring and drugs that becomes more and more complicated towards the end of this twenty decades. It is believed the technology exists to live even longer, but the drain on resources to keep everyone alive that long is more than the system can handle. That's what the Net says, anyway...

NeoTerra

So, *what do people do?* Out of a population of roughly ten billion, about one hundred million (one in a hundred) are trying to do something other than be a high-tech couch potato. *Why?* Mostly because they are intelligent enough to be bored with utopia. Secretly, they hope to eventually win the genetic contest to spread their genes and memes across the cosmos, but with only a few score selected each year, this is a *lifetime's* worth of work rather than a short-term goal.

The Net selects those who perpetuate the human species by assigning all forms of human endeavor into twenty "archetypes" that it considers necessary for any stable society. An Archetype is *not* a profession, it is more an ethic, life's work or way of living. For instance, "the hero" is an archetype. So is "the fool".

Each year, those who are ranked in the top three in a given Archetype are selected to help colonize nearby star systems. Every several years, a sublight colony ship is dispatched to a solar system that looks capable of supporting human life, loaded with its own mutables and several hundred frozen human embryos, the seeds of a genuinely new human civilization, where the Net is not a controlling intelligence, but rather just an extension of human will. Each embryo is a clone of a particular Archetype. Along with this, any Archetype selected also can record as much or as little of their personal beliefs or wisdom as they want, the things that made them as successful as they are, beliefs worth sharing and spreading to the next stage of human civilization. This civilization will develop based solely on the information provided by the Archetypes, and will have no access to Earth's historical data until they decide to set up a communication relay to send a lightspeed signal to NeoTerra (and possibly wait centuries for a reply).

▼ **Note** - There will be a bit more on Archetypes later in the rules. For now, assume that most people in NeoTerra with any ambition at all are striving to be the best at a particular Archetype. It is a tangible immortality, a sort of reincarnation that preserves much of who and what you are, while simultaneously giving the winner fame and fortune that they can use while still alive.

So, what do people do on their way to this goal? Anything they want, and anything the free market will pay for. NeoTerra is almost an unlimited free market system. The Net places a few limits on what can be done, but no limits on what can be attempted. The only governor on human behavior is social pressure, not law, religion or tradition.

If you get away with it, you got away with it.

The net result is a culture that spans the extremes of human ambition and emotion. Social philosophers peddle enlightenment in the same world where a public murder is only punished if someone wants revenge or chooses to pay to get the perpetrator off the streets. People work to accumulate unique personal property, but only vigilance and force keeps it from being stolen, and neither theft nor forcefully defending against it is a crime.

Humans are a violent, predatory, overtly sexual species, and this has not changed. The Net simply accepts this as the nature of humanity, and strips away all the self-deception that we layer ourselves in. The Net says "This is what you are. When you are mature enough to handle this and the tools you have developed, then we can move on together." It's been eight centuries, and apparently we still have a ways to go...

Life in the big city - Virtually all of NeoTerra's population is urban, and fairly large urban at that. The only population clusters smaller than a million people are those created by workers at their own expense. Cities are built and maintained by the Net. While the Net has sort of watchful, overbearing socialist bent in its supply of free public services, it also has some sense of aesthetics and style. Public housing and facilities have a closer resemblance to an Ikea catalog than say the gray-on-gray old style Soviet look. Things are efficient and planned, but still look nice.

Hardly any place in a city is more than a hundred meters from a public transport stop. Public restrooms and automats match the population density, and entertainment facilities ranging from the equivalent of big-screen cinemas to soccer fields are scattered across the urban landscape. Trash receptacles automatically disassemble junk into raw materials, and mousebots scurry around picking up anything that didn't make it to a trash can. Knowing that litter is automatically collected makes drones especially indolent about walking the two extra steps it takes to reach a garbage can.

Drones? Those are everyone that chooses to live the life of ease provided by the Net. Since ninety-nine percent of the population is drones, their social interactions are going to be of occasional importance to adventurers. A drone's life revolves around avoiding work and responsibility, while having a good time unencumbered by any constraints or restriction. "Sex, drugs and rock & roll" is a good first approximation. Violence is common, but usually at an individual and non-fatal level. The inertia of the crowd tends to forestall mob behavior unless something riles up a bunch of them at once. A fistfight is fun to watch, but doesn't mean you need to get involved. A broken-down bus that causes a hundred drones to miss the opening of a new total immersion holofeature? That can cause a minor riot. The Net does not police things like this, it just picks up the pieces afterwards and repairs the damage.

Drones are not necessarily stupid, but it is safe to say that the portion of the population with below-average IQ or above-average gullibility is almost entirely drones and well over half the population. Individually, they may be nice people, but as a group they are exactly the sort of people that a professional agitator would give their right arm to have at their beck and call. The only reason that groups like the anarchists can't whip them into a frenzy is that drones are by and large quite happy with their lot. And attempts to use subterfuge to incite riots are difficult when so much of what happens in the world is public information, available to anyone for the asking.

EXAMPLE: Query: "Who sabotaged the bus and made us miss our holofeature?" Net reply: "Your bus was sabotaged by Thren Wilco. Would you like his address, current whereabouts and replacement transportation?"

What makes it run? - On the large scale, everything is fusion powered. Fusion reactors provide the massive amounts of electricity needed to keep NeoTerra functioning, including large scale weather modification to keep the planet from being affected by the waste heat this electricity eventually results in. Fusion plants are completely automated, with a sophisticated variety of lethal defenses to keep people from wrecking them or stealing valuable bits. Most fusion plants are on artificial islands, with detection and countermeasures for both air, land and sea infiltration. Their own mutables handle the creation of repair bots, defenses and materials. The last time a fusion plant was in serious danger of being compromised (about a hundred fifty years ago), it self-destructed. Economically, it's just not worth the effort to mess with fusion plants or other large-scale Net infrastructure items.

Electricity for daily needs is delivered from fusion plants at virtually zero loss by superconductor cable. Since none of the existing cables run anywhere near their capacity, the Net does not object or interfere with personal taps on these lines, so long as they are not damaged in the process. Note that these high voltage, high current lines are *not* turned off so that people can install these taps. Quite a few unlucky or stupid people are completely carbonized each year while trying to tap superconductor cables for personal use.

Power is also transmitted over short distances by microwave links. The latter is for applications where people aren't going to be affected. For instance, an aerial drone might run off of beamed power with a small backup powercell. Routine preventative medical care undoes the damage from long-term exposure to low-level microwave radiation, making things possible with the technology that would be unacceptable in the 21st century.

While centralized power is provided by fusion plants, fusion reactors are *big*. For things like vehicle power plants, fuel cells and flywheels are typical (hydrogen for the fuel cells is delivered as water and electricity is used to extract the hydrogen at the automated refueling stations). In handheld devices, generic powercells are used, or small fuel cells if the device is big enough. Most handheld devices have automatic induction grids that pick up the weak magnetic field from the power grid or stray beamed power fields, and use it to keep their powercells topped off. So, most handheld devices (including energy weapons) will automatically recharge themselves in any urban area. Even battery-powered vehicles can slowly self-recharge, but their power use is high enough that they really need dedicated recharging stations to be practical.

Using the Net - *You just ask.* Your Comm can be used for any Net query, and it understands plain or colloquial English perfectly well. You tell it what you want, and it does its best to give you the answer or perform the task. However, unless the Net is serving its own ends, queries have to be specific to a place or time, *not* a person.

EXAMPLE: You could center your Comm on a person and ask "who is that?" or ask "who was in this room yesterday at this time?" Both of these ask for personal information, but are searching for it based on physical or temporal criteria. You could ask to see a visual of a particular apartment, but you could not ask to see that same apartment by using its owner's name. Once you found that apartment, you could ask for the identity of everyone in it, but you could not necessarily get their addresses.

If you can find someone, you can probably track them, but you can't find someone just by asking for them, nor could you tell a taxi to take you to someplace by telling it "John Smith's house", or "wherever John Smith is now". The info is out there, the Net just makes you work for it. There are services for hire that have undertaken the Sisyphean task of indexing the Net, and for a fee they will endeavor to find things for you. As with all commercial services, you're trading credits for convenience. Most information services also sell a service to let you know when someone asks for a particular bit of data. *Of course, they have to know this information in order to be able to track it...*

Now, everyone has the *potential* to get an education, including basic literacy. However, we have the same thing in most developed countries today, and this does not prevent the schools from graduating functional illiterates. The problem is compounded in NeoTerra by the fact that everyone knows you don't need an education to get by quite comfortably. The end result is that of NeoTerra's population of about ten billion, well over half of them cannot read or write at anything past an early grade level. *It's something to keep in mind.*

Net queries can be for audio, video, historical, mutable requests or calculation tasks, in as many permutations as you can imagine or the Net allows. Output can be put on any available wallscreen, but cannot be made as hardcopy from a mutable. If you want a paper archive, you have to buy the printer yourself. And remember, everything you ask for over the Net, and any results given over the Net are publically accessible by anyone who asks for it.

▼ **CLASS STRUGGLE** - There are two types of citizen in NeoTerra. Drones and Workers. *Everyone* is a "citizen", with all the freebies that entails. Drones simply live their lives in this state, never working, never achieving. They may occasionally take temp employment to get credits for a particular goody they want, but by and large they have no work ethic. *Sex, drugs and rock & roll.* Workers tend to call them "feeb", a term that is generally considered an insult. Perpetually agitated feebs are called "stoners". Stoners are generally drugged-out bullies looking for something to destroy or beat up. They travel in small packs, and are only dangerous if you look helpless.

▼ **Note!** - In game terms, most drones will have all Attributes at 5 (1d+2), Archetype at 1 (0d+1), and no skills except the free skills for the **NeoTerra** game-world (page 3.3). Stoners will be the same, but may be hyped on drugs to boost their Strength, Health or Agility up to 2d+2, and long experience at being delinquents may give them one or two combat skills at a +0d level, typically Brawling and Club. Drones who are failed workers or who aspire to be workers may have Attributes in the normal range, and may have one or two skills at a +0d level.

Workers are the one percent or less of the population who feel the need to do more than just exist. They have goals, and are willing to work for them. Workers have the potential to become Archetypes, the epitome of a human characteristic or trait, one of those selected by the Net to spread humanity to the stars, and your ideas and beliefs as well.

If it isn't free, you can't buy it.

Every citizen of NeoTerra may live a life of ease and luxury. There are no homeless or beggars unless they choose to be that way. Everyone has a reasonably spacious apartment to dwell in, decorated in one of numerous styles. Upon reaching adulthood (age 16), this is provided free of charge, along with a one-time allotment of two thousand general credits.

Mutable machinery insures that the refrigerator is always restocked overnight with your personal preference of hundreds of foods and beverages, the oven prepares and cooks meals on demand in a matter of minutes, the closet restocks itself with disposable garments in a number of styles, and small cleaning robots scurry about when you are not at home, doing battle with dust bunnies and carpet stains. Your entertainment center projects three-dimensional images directly onto the walls or your retinas from a number of small projectors scattered through the living room, and global communication is fast, flawless and seamless. You can see the world without ever leaving the house.

And some people do.

There are no *required* forms of employment anywhere in the world. All of the necessary manufacturing, infrastructure and organizational tasks are completely handled by the Net. If you want something and it is within your basic allowance as a citizen, you simply order it and it is delivered the next day by robotic courier, or actually manufactured in your "InQue" (a small closet in your apartment with a mutable machinery creator). Note that the InQue is for Net-provided goods only. Private purchases have to be delivered by a person or robot delivery service.

Your bathroom has an automated medical diagnostic system, which automatically monitors your basic health every time you use it. The precise prescription of the medicines needed to keep a body functioning in good health for two hundred years are automatically added to the food you eat (regardless of where you order it), based on this medical data. What the bathroom provides are a number of safe euphorics and mood-altering compounds, based on your personal preference.

At first glance, having so much of daily life completely out of your hands might seem like an unbearable intrusion on personal freedoms, but the situation is little different than day to day life for anyone who is reading this. Try to open a business without filling out forms or jumping through hoops, collect a government benefit without accepting some limitations in return. To drive, hunt, fish, own a firearm, operate a radio station or stage a public demonstration you need a license or permit, if these activities are allowed at all.

NeoTerra's citizens have a great deal of freedom and virtually no responsibilities. This is the way it has been for several greatly extended lifetimes, and people are by and large used to it and take it for granted. The very few malcontents find virtually no support among the populace to overthrow a system that caters to their every need...and which freely allows them to protest and try to change the system if they want to.

If it isn't free, you can't buy it.

Anything that is *not* part of a basic citizen's allowance is simply not available through normal channels. If you want to do something as simple as cook a real meal for yourself, you have to find someone to build you a real stove and raise the food (livestock or otherwise). Stoves and real meat or fruit or vegetables simply are not normally available. This is where barter and barter credits come in, and this is what drives the economy of goods and services for everyone who does not choose to live their twenty decades as a passive couch potato. You trade your skills or the product of those skills to someone else who has a skill or a good that you want. This can be done on a direct, one-on-one basis ("I'll trade you X ears of corn for Y fresh eggs"), or by barter credits, which are usually just called credits.

Barter credits come in two varieties, direct and general. A direct credit is one that is for a *specific* amount of service from a *specific* person or crafthall. For instance, "The bearer is entitled to one thousand credits at Flaming Death Firearms". General credits are good *anywhere*. The deal is that you can only get general credits by turning in direct credits, and this is at a two-for-one ratio. A thousand credits at Flaming Death is only worth five hundred general credits.

Actually, the rate of exchange varies with a wide variety of factors, such as distance to the source of the credits, the scarcity of a particular direct credit and the age of the issuer of the credit. Credit brokers compete over the Net for business, and the global average of direct to general credit conversion is the aforementioned two-for-one. So, if you wanted to build a house you would not have to somehow acquire 100,000 credits with Guido's Contracting. You would just acquire 200,000 direct credits of various types, and a credit broker would arrange the conversion and transfer.

Credits are assigned to a particular person. They are *impossible* to steal or be involuntarily transferred. If your ID is stolen, the thief can't use it. He or she is more likely to take your handmade shoes than they are to take your ID and its encrypted credit information.

We mentioned age in passing a few paragraphs ago. When someone dies (permanently), all their outstanding credits in the system immediately go to zero value. So, a credit issued by someone who is a week short of their two hundredth birthday has far less conversion or direct value than one issued by someone who is only fifty. The brokering system takes this into account, and the losses are part of the conversion ratio. To keep the sum of money in the system equal to the potential labor pool, a person upon reaching adulthood is granted a one-time general credit balance approximately equal to the average amount of money that left the system from deaths in the previous year. This is usually around two thousand credits, but it can vary. The Net is the only entity that really knows the exact amount, so no one can tell if it plays with the numbers.

Barter credits are generated from individual labor only, and a person with a skill can issue credits for up to six months of future work value, a value that is automatically assessed by the Net. After that, they have to recover those credits from whoever owns them (by performing the service they were issued for), or by gaining credits through some other means. Honoring one's credit obligations as quickly as possible is a cornerstone of the system. Anyone who fails to do so is not cool, and will lose archetype ranking quite drastically as a result.

The value of someone's services depends upon their skill and reputation. Hiring the best may cost more, but it reflects as well on the customer for their discerning taste as it does for the provider of the service to perform it competently and with style.

EXAMPLE: A young man with pretensions of being a tough guy issues credits for "will harass people for you". The Net assesses his skills and reputation and assigns a value per day of this service, for a numeric credit balance (not a certain time period of service). Our budding thug can issue to himself a direct credit balance of up to six months worth of thuggery, and convert this to half the amount of general credits, or give them in direct exchange to say a local pimp for some service from the pimp's stable. In turn, the pimp can give the credits back to the thug to beat up a rival, or trade them at half value for general credits. These credits will float around the system for a long time. If, twenty years from now, our thug is a world-class legbreaker, his services are worth far more now than they were then. Those original credits still obligate him, but the amount of thuggery they buy is far less, because his time is now worth far more.

There are no personally owned or operated *automated* manufacturing plants on NeoTerra. There are tools and machines that *one* person can operate to perform a *specific* task. No automated assembly lines, no mutable machine factories cranking out mass-produced goods. Attempts have been made to create these, but the Net finds ways to dismantle them. Armies of mice-sized cleaner bots cart off multi-ton machines a fraction of a gram at a time. Mysterious contracts offer large amounts of general credits for anyone who helps tear them down or destroy them, or the machines just seem to not work for no apparent reason. It absolutely frustrates and infuriates budding industrialists. Once every decade or so, someone comes up with a new angle to get around this, and comes up with enough credits to try and implement it, but it never seems to work. This is the only real constraint the Net has placed on humanity. Rewards only come from work. Credits can only be generated by *personal* labor and effort (and occasionally by risk-taking).

There is no *automated* mass production, but *human-based* production lines exist. As long as each stage of a manufacturing process is handled by a person, the Net allows it. Since many assembly line jobs are tedious, repetitive, even dangerous, finding people to man them is the main problem. Why work at a dead-end job for a meager wage in credits when all of life's needs are provided for free? And if you have the ambition and talent to be more than an assembly line drone, why would you take that kind of job to begin with?

Well, you would take it if you were just starting out and needed some credits to bootstrap yourself into NeoTerra's economy. These kind of jobs are always available, and employers have come to expect a very high turnover rate. People stay just long enough to make the credits they need, then move on. If they move up, they never come back. If they fail, they can always try the assembly line again.

Be warned! There is nothing to prevent an employer from literally enslaving someone in an off-Net facility. If you have no friends and the Net cannot locate you, a person could be forced to work by applying deprivation, coercion or addiction, sometimes for decades at a time.

If the slaver is clever, even the escape of death can be prevented.

Feebs are especially vulnerable to job offers that sound too good to be true. This is not a common practice, but it does exist. There are a few groups that either investigate or hire investigators to find and deal with situations like this. For every social ill or maladjusted group of people, there is probably a counter-force that works to thwart them, often for no other reason that it is perceived as wrong. Usually, removing these groups does benefit the economy and society as a whole, but it is not the most financially rewarding pursuit for the individuals doing it (who is going to pay you to rescue a bunch of feebs?).

Back to the work ethic. A job is anything that someone else will pay you credits for. If you make a few credits from growing flowers in a window box and selling them to passerby, that's a job. If you paint a big red "X" on someone's door to send a message from the local thug's guild, that's a job. If you catch rats for the local rat-ke-bob vendor, that's a job too. There are an awful lot of feebs who coast by with such trivial income-generating past-times, making just enough to pay for little premiums like pay-per-view events, NeoTerra's equivalent of soap operas, or the occasional luxury to entice attractive members of the gender of your choice over to your place for other sorts of entertainment...

The skills needed for specialized manufacturing tasks are not part of the normal education system. Rather, a system of guilds teaches them, in an apprentice/journeyman/master type of system that often takes decades to fully progress through. Much of the equipment a craftsman will use throughout their career is either made by the craftsman during their apprenticeship, or handed down from master to favored journeyman upon their passing. Imagine that you are a member of the Electronics Guild. You manufacture secure radios, sighting devices, non-Net computers and other fancy electronics. To become an independent master at your craft, you will have to build a microchip fabrication facility by yourself, *by hand*. You will trade countless of your craft's credits to sheet metal fabricators, machinists and general contractors. In return, they will use your services for their own ends, making *their own* specialized fabrication tools.

When the work is done after several years, you have a shop that will let you design, create and assemble all manner of electronic components, and you will have most of the knowledge needed to build that facility from the ground up. This becomes your livelihood, your manner of earning credits. You still get the basic citizen's allowance, but you also have the ability to own and acquire things that no basic citizen can.

You now have status. Maybe not a lot, but it's a start.

The same applies to virtually every service and profession that anyone might want. *There are no illegal services*. If you want a house built, you hire a professional. If you want someone kidnapped and tortured, you hire a professional. The system makes no moral judgements. The Net places limits on the *scale* of human madness, but not the madness itself.

Wealth in NeoTerra is not industrialized, and cannot be. *No exceptions*. Anything outside that which is free is made one item at a time. There are no automated production facilities for any luxury goods. People have been trying to crack this prohibition for centuries, and it still hasn't happened. And it won't, for reasons explained in the gamemaster's section. For the players, accept it as a facet of the world as fundamental as gravity. You can try to break it, but know that you will never succeed. However, the persistence and imagination going into your attempts could make you genetically successful, so tilting at this windmill is not completely without merit.

NeoTerra ■

There are large and very complex facilities in NeoTerra, but without exception these are the work of generations of craftsmen, hand-made equipment passed from master to apprentice and expanded on several times over. But still, this equipment just lets a number of craftsmen work in concert rather than farming out subassemblies hither and yon.

EXAMPLE: Blackwing Arms is a dozen master craftsmen, each of whom chooses their successor. The arms factory is a large, private complex with its own security force, maintenance staff and labs. But, each weapon, subassembly and enhancement is *still* built by hand, one at a time. They just do it so efficiently that they can afford the overhead costs.

Organized wealth - If a citizen has accumulated some credits, they can try to make those credits grow on their own accord. The Net does not seem to like this (it is a way of making money multiply without human effort), but does not take any active measures to prevent it. Humans have a propensity for risk-taking that is always going to be there. As a result, there are guilds or sub-guilds that specialize in investment advice, gambling and lending.

Investors take credits they have and try to find an endeavor someone else is working on that they can contribute to, with the goal of making a profit. This is the closest thing NeoTerra has to a stock market, but the scale is many orders of magnitude less. Some investors make money, some lose money. If all balances out, it is just the distribution of the wealth that changes. Investment in durable capital goods *has* added to the overall value of the system, since this turns credits that disappear upon death into a commodity that lasts longer than its owner.

Gambling ranges from street-corner bets to gambling establishments that handle everything from games of chance to blood sports. The house makes its money by setting odds so that they come out slightly ahead in the long run. Competition keeps the house from taking too large a cut, but gambling moguls can accumulate significant wealth. Most of this wealth eventually goes into the gambling facility itself, since wealth in the form of credits cannot be bequeathed to anyone else (the First Bank of NeoTerra (page 6.2) is working on a solution to that). Most people who work for credits do not indulge in a lot of gambling (their inherent work ethic interferes). Feebs only get a one-time credit allowance on reaching adulthood, and while many blow it on gambling binges, it isn't enough to bloat the coffers of gambling establishments.

Lenders are a subset of investors, brokers and gamblers. A person is their own lender when they issue credits based on their talents. A lender takes advantage of the small loophole in the system that allows variable payments like living expenses or job-related allowances. The lender will "buy" the allowance and pays the employee some but not all of its value.

EXAMPLE: Say you take a job that pays ten thousand credits and has a two thousand credit weapon allowance. This means that the employer will reimburse up to two thousand credits that you expend on ammo or weapon replacement during the job. But, you think you have enough weapons and ammo and won't need replacements or supplies. A lender might buy that allowance from and pay you one thousand credits up front.

When a lender buys an allowance, it means the employer pays any allowance expenses to the lender, not the person the allowance was originally issued to. If the employee uses up none of the allowance, the lender loses money on the deal. If the employee uses all of the allowance, the lender makes a profit, but the employee loses money on the deal.

EXAMPLE: If the job goes south on you, and you go through a lot of ammo and lose a weapon, with expenses totalling fifteen hundred credits, then you end up losing five hundred credits on the lending deal. On the other hand, the lender gets fifteen hundred credits from your employer, and since they only loaned you a thousand, they make five hundred credits on the deal.

Lenders can look up a person's past history, and use this when determining whether to make a loan, and the percentage they are willing to pay. Lending is a very limited market that is only a tiny portion of NeoTerra's economy. You may have noticed that the lender wins when the borrower loses. When lenders come out of the woodwork to buy an allowance on a job, consider asking yourself why...

▼ **Note!** - Feebs have no honor and care nothing about Archetype ranking, so they are poor risks for any lender or investor. The only way you can guarantee getting a service out of a feeb is to pay them *after* completion of the task. Feebs who want a quick credit and don't understand or care about the risks will often agree to such contracts for blood sports, like a death match where the winner gets 300 Credits and the loser gets 100 Credits. Since death is temporary and results in negligible brain damage to a feeb, the feeb figures they win either way...

Recycling – If you haven't made something of yourself by the time you are two hundred, you never will. *And this is the lot that most people fall into.* A lifetime of eternal youth and health tends to make a lot of people complacent. These people live lives of convenience, never considering genes or memes until they reach about one hundred eighty years old, by which point it is too late to make a serious effort to add to the human population of the universe. When you reach two hundred years of age, you either turn yourself in for recycling, or it becomes open season on you. Whoever tracks you down and whoever knocks you off both get extra "points" towards their own genetic and memetic success. It is impossible to hide for long. The Net sees to that. If it doesn't know everything, it is really close to it. The Net won't *directly* send someone after you, but it will enhance any trace clues you left behind so that eventually someone will figure it out and come looking.

Voluntary recycling is quick and painless, and every effort is made to make the occasion as festive as possible. And it is not even a truly permanent death. Your life is of course part of the public record, though few if any will read it except your fractional descendants. Plus, your DNA makeup is randomly averaged with everyone else recycled that year and used in small part with the DNA of past Archetype champions to generate the handful of new births that will occur nine months hence. Those with the best parental instincts on NeoTerra will bear and raise these children. While they are not the genetic children of the couple, the couple does get the rare privilege of shaping the personality and memes of a new person, as well as being selected for genetic colonization of new worlds. Most children live in a particular area in a city, so that children have an increased opportunity to interact with others in their age group.

Birth - The Net, for lack of a better word, generates children to replace the population that is recycled each year. No one knows exactly where they come from. They are delivered by robotic courier to the selected parents with only a few days notice. Would-be parents simply make a request to the Net. Prospective parents are chosen by their Archetype ranking, with factors for single- or multiple-parent applications, age of the applicant(s) and so on. There have always been more applicants than available children. No parents get to raise more than one child at a time.

Longer life spans mean the birth rate is fairly low, on the order of half a percent of the population per year. This birth rate is still far more than the number of "working" parents, meaning that most children have "drone" parents, with predictable results. While working parents can afford a professional educator for a child, drones have to rely on their own negligible skills and the education of "the street". Among a child's friends or acquaintances, most will become drones despite the best efforts of their parents and teachers. Those that are likely to become workers usually gravitate to each other, so anyone with Archetype potential will probably have two or three close friends with similar ambitions, and may have regular Net communications with several others across the globe.

No one has natural children in NeoTerra, nor are there any sexually transmitted diseases. It is assumed that birth control hormones are in all the foods and beverages provided for free by the mutables, or perhaps even in the air. Those who have tried to live as "off-Net" as possible have still failed to have children. Even dedicated scientific efforts such as artificial wombs have failed. *The Net controls life.*

Death - *The Net also controls death.* Dying is easy in NeoTerra. You just make a formal request of the Net, confirm it twice at a public facility, and you get a ticket to the same genetic reprocessing plant that the decentarians go to. This is permanent. Or, you could have someone pay credits to you for the privilege of killing you, presumably after a delay period so you can enjoy your credits. This could be temporary or permanent, depending on the contract. Such a contract might also be good for a specific duration ("I'll let you hunt me for a week for a thousand credits"). Hunter-prey death sports are business, and a popular pay-per-view form of entertainment as well (see **Entertainment**, page 2.11).

Involuntary death is another matter entirely. A person can be reconstructed almost intact from any sort of recognizable corpse. A person's ID will report physical death if it is on the victim at the time, and automated systems will arrive with whatever force is needed to recover the body and get it to a reconstruction lab. This force can be significant, if not absolutely overwhelming, though it may take several minutes to arrive. Even significant brain damage is completely repairable.

Since most of an average person's life is recorded by the Net, the equivalent of that person's actions can be converted to a form of synthetic memory and implanted into regenerated brain tissue, or converted into electronic memory and made accessible by the regenerated brain tissue. There may be some permanent losses, but you could put a shotgun blast through an average drone's face and they would be back on the street a month later and you would be hard-pressed to find any gaps in their memories. A non-average person stands to lose a little bit more, but we'll get into that later (see **Resurrection**, page 5.14). Being resurrected by the Net only involves reconstructing the individual, *not* any of their possessions or added enhancements. If you had a bio-enhanced muscle system, and your body was shredded by a grenade, you get your *original* body back, not the enhanced one. If you died because one limb was blown off, you get to keep the bio-enhancements everywhere else, but the replaced limb is going to be "original equipment".

Resurrection is *not* absolute. Some kinds of death you *don't* come back from. Absolute destruction of the body, or a death with no ID present and sufficient time for severe genetic decay to set in (a few days in most places) is, well, death. The body might be reconstructable, but the personality is not.

Friends, relatives or the Net itself may post bounties for those who are missing and presumed dead, and there is an Investigator's Guild that specializes in solving crimes. They are something less than police, and something more than private investigators. Since nothing is illegal, there is no punishment for killing someone.

Similarly, it is not illegal for an "insurance guild" to offer to pay a huge bounty for the permanent death of someone that kills a policy holder. These bounties can be high enough that life quickly becomes very complicated for the murderer. It is a societal detente, a sort of mutually assured destruction on the individual level. *You don't permanently kill me, I don't permanently kill you.* Rates vary with the individual and their profession, but range from about one to ten percent of the bounty value of the policy per year. Short-term policies can be bought for periods as short as an hour, but these are a high risk for the insurer and can run as much as one percent of the bounty value for that minuscule policy period.

EXAMPLE: You're going to be meeting with someone who has a reputation for a short-temper and unprovoked violence (imagine Al Capone). A 1,000,000 Credit retribution policy for a few hours (if someone will issue one to you) could cost as much as 10,000 Credits. However, if the person you are meeting with knows that whacking you will set a million credit bounty on their head, they'll probably manage their temper...for a few hours, at least.

You say you didn't buy retribution insurance? Then you better hope no one hates you enough to want you permanently dead...

Entertainment - The Net provides no specific entertainment for citizens of NeoTerra aside from compilations of past events, music, etc.. It is left to people to keep themselves amused. There are thousands of entertainers, ranging from street performers to large guilds that specialize in dramas and historical re-enactments. Since so much of ancient history has been lost, no one criticizes them if they take liberties with the facts.

The Net does provide a medium for delivery of entertainment. Personal "wall screens" are a part of every Net-constructed building. The term "wall screen" is a misnomer, but continues in common usage. While it can project images onto any surface, it usually projects the image directly into the eyes of the viewer, giving an immersive three-d experience that can be enhanced with sensory suits (not free). Handheld devices can also project images in this fashion, though with not the same precision. For larger images, handheld or portable devices often resort to three-d holography for image generation.

Most entertainment is generated by workers, but the audience is both workers *and* drones. So, advertising is a part of many entertainment forms. While only one percent of the population is workers who can afford significant privately produced goods, one percent of ten billion people is still a potential market of a hundred million people. Advertising is not as pervasive or intrusive as it would be to a typical 21st century person. In fact, it can be tailored so that you only get advertisements about products or services that you find of interest. So, commercials are actually something you *want* to watch.

While just about every form of entertainment is available, some are more popular than others:

Cage matches - Your basic blood sport in countless permutations. *Two people go in, one comes out.* There are an endless supply of drones willing to risk minor brain damage to make a quick buck (loser gets paid, too). It also serves as a social outlet for violence as a commonly accepted form of duelling. For high profile figures, "pay per view" events can bring in a lot of credits, of which both participants get a share. People have just about exhausted the variations and options of this form of fighting. There are traditional cage matches, urban street brawls between teams, desert island manhunts, empty warehouse hide-and-seek with weapon and armor caches, naked jello wrestling to the death and just about anything else you can imagine.

Of late, the main focus is to get audience participation. For a fraction of a credit, you can instantly vote on whether or not to activate a booby trap in the ring, give the fighters a short breather, spray the floor with grease, etc. This is in addition to the normal betting, side channels on similar fights and past performance, and all the other stuff that is used to pad an event that only lasts a few minutes out to a full half hour or hour.

Feeb of the Week - A sort of "real life" bloopers reel, compiling all the stupidest things done by the stupidest people out of a population of ten billion. Human stupidity knows no bounds, so the show *always* has something new. It's like a train wreck. It's terrible, but you can't help but watch it. So many idiots deliberately try to get on the show that the producers had to disqualify suicidal stupidity and just rely on complete ignorance of common sense for their raw material.

In addition to current material, the show has about three centuries of re-run material archived, and the year-end "Darwin Awards" get some of NeoTerra's highest viewer ratings.

Food roulette - The Net automatically dispenses life-maintaining chemicals into a citizen's food and drink, based on their age and genetic makeup. This drug, hormone and enzyme cocktail can get fairly esoteric in the last decades of a person's life. Some older drones use this as a perverse form of entertainment, swapping drinks and meals just to see what happens. The results are often quite hallucinogenic, but can also be painful or even lethal. Betting on the outcome is common, and there is even a "Who Pukes First?" game show.

"Real life" - One of many staged dramas (ala "The Truman Show"), where actors live their part, albeit a scripted one. More sex, violence, intrigue and emotional angst than you can shake a stick at. There are dozens of shows of this nature, and the need to pay for them is perhaps the only thing that motivates millions of feebs to earn some credits. These dramas and the hundreds of Net discussion groups about them takes up about ten percent of the world's total communication bandwidth. While a tempting target, hackers have learned to leave these shows alone. The last time there was a major hacker disruption, over a million viewers each contributed one general credit to a fund to have the perpetrator permanently killed. Fortunately for her, the notoriety helped make her an Archetype, so at least she went out with a bang.

Bear-baiting - An obscure pre-Asymptote term that no one really is sure of the origin of. It's mostly a form of entertainment for anarchists and a form of annoyance to everyone else. The idea is to generate an event that annoys a lot of drones and then spread enough misinformation about it quickly enough that an angry mob can be formed and set loose before the actual facts come out and the drones realize they've been had and nothing is really wrong. It's even better if you can get a scam going to get several thousand drones to donate a credit or two each to a "revenge fund" to make sure this sort of thing never happens again. Of course, the anarchists simply take the money and run.

Robogeddon - A spectacular, high budget event that happens twice a year. Thousands of teams build autonomous or remote-controlled robots massing up to several hundred kilograms, and then set them loose on the streets of a city that is not informed of the event until an hour before it begins. A prohibition on ranged weapons (including EMP) keeps property damage to a minimum, but people should avoid the streets while the event is in progress. The ubiquitous presence of surveillance cameras means that there are thousands of viewpoints to watch the carnage from, but the best show comes from the event's sponsors, who edit the footage so fast it is almost live. Robogeddon ends when the last robot goes down. Feebs and workers alike are invited to take part, if they dare. Anyone who takes a robot out without using a ranged weapon gets a ten thousand general credit bounty, *and* gets to keep the robot (if anything is left). The bounty is put up by the event's organizers, and only robots meeting certain lethality standards qualify for it and are specially marked to make them easy to spot.

Robogeddon has become a meta-sport. There are professional robot builders, those who sponsor robots in return for advertising, secondary markets in robot-related merchandise, betting pools, and a small core of anarchists and hackers who flock to every event. The anarchists use it as an excuse to lob heavy firepower around in populated areas (they don't care about the kill bounty), and the hackers are there to mess with the Net or try to take control of someone's robot just to be annoying.

▼ **PRIVACY** - You only get privacy if you pay for it. For an average dole citizen, *everything* they say and *everything* they do is recorded and saved... forever. As you might expect, there are no nudity taboos, and children learn the facts of life at an early age. This enforced openness is generally taken for granted. Yes, you *can* look in on what your neighbors are doing, and they on you. Without any social stigma or risk, there is no thrill to being a voyeur, and professional entertainers put on a better show, anyway.

Using public transport, walking down the street, or anyplace you carry your Comm is a matter of public record. The only way your every utterance and action is not recorded is if you are in an area that is "off the Net". This could simply be in an uninhabited area, out of pickup range of your Comm, or in a privately built facility with no Net access. If you build a home or business with areas not connected to the Net, the only eavesdropping possible is the old-fashioned kind, the use of surreptitious microphones and transmitters. Proper counter-measures make even the best eavesdropping technology a temporary measure.

Communications is likewise public knowledge. Anything that goes over a Comm is accessible in real-time just by asking your Comm to listen in to a particular Comm unit. This has to be specified by unit number, not its owner, though you could ask the Net "what is the unit number of the Comm that guy is using?". It *does* mean that you can dump your Comm into a trash can, get a new one from the nearest mutable and any eavesdropper would then have to find you again, and get the number of your new Comm unit. There are plenty of dodges and permutations to increase the time someone has to spend to listen in to your calls or to find recordings of calls you have already made. The simplest of course, is to not say what you mean. If the eavesdropper doesn't know what "the rat eats the cheese when pigs fly" means, it doesn't matter if they can listen in or not.

The first and easiest means to get limited privacy is to simply *write it down*. Since a large percentage of drones have limited literacy at best, and that in only one language, a simple note written in a guild-specific jargon would be just gibberish to at least nine out of ten people who might stumble upon it. And most of them wouldn't care enough to find that tenth person who could tell them what it means. Similarly, there are trade jargons, and badly mangled versions of pre-Asymptote languages. And while these modern languages might be barely recognizable to their pre-Asymptote speakers, the important thing is that the *current* speakers or writers understand each other, and no one else can. Even if you can eavesdrop on the conversation via the Net, the Net will not translate it for you, nor does it consider language a form of encryption that it will crack for you.

Next, the Net does have a built-in system to grant limited privacy. Any person can define a unit of information to be "private". A unit of information can be as small as a single data packet, or as large as everything a person does in a single day. For a fee of 100 Credits, this information can be denied to everyone via Net access for a period of one day. Or, it can be received only by a subset of people, a subset of locations, or any combination of the above. Each extra 100 Credits spent adds 1 day to the time period the information is held confidential for. Information to be designated private must be done so in advance, and the full privacy period decided ahead of time and paid for ahead of time. So, if you were in a Net-connected room, you might say "Net, I want the events in this room for the next hour to be private for one day." The Net would confirm the request, deduct your Credits, and privacy is implemented.

EXAMPLE: A pay-per-view Robogeddon promoter doesn't want people just asking to see what is on their subscribing neighbor's vidwall. So, the promoter pays the Net 1,000 Credits per episode. This denies access to the information to anyone who is not at the subscriber's address for a period of ten days (one day for the first 100 Credits, and +1 day for each extra 100 Credits). After that time has elapsed, anyone can ask to see events that took place in the subscriber's apartment and view the event, but by then it would be old news.

▼ **Note!** - The nearly infinite processing power of the Net allows for seamless censorship of private information. While a person could ask to see what is going on in the apartment next door, if a private broadcast is on the vidwall, you won't see it or hear it, though you will see everything else in the apartment. Even the reflections of the private information or secondary vibrations from the sound will have been edited out. If you pay for privacy, you get privacy.

A "privacy lock" does not protect the identity of the person placing the lock, but it does protect the nature of the information and the length of the privacy. So you *could* find out who paid for a given privacy lock, but not the nature of any information being protected nor how long it is protected for.

The nearly infinite processing power of the Net means that while encryption is staggeringly powerful, so is decryption. Almost anything that can be encrypted can be decrypted. The problem is that if you put something on the Net to encode it, it instantly becomes public information. So, you have to use an off-Net computer to encode your files, while the decoder can use the massive power of the Net to decode it, so long as they don't mind anyone else who wants the information to know about it.

For those who have the credits, there are semi-solutions to both of these. For semi-private communications, you can have traditional videophones on a non-Comm frequency. Only someone with a compatible device can receive your transmissions. This gets you privacy from the average dole citizen and serves for most purposes. If the Net eavesdrops on these communications (and it probably is), it isn't sharing the information with anyone else (unless you are foolish enough to make your private call from a Net-connected area). For private data sharing, files are encrypted as a formality, and transferred manually in the form of Datacubes (small optical memory cores the size of a six-sided die). If the information is never sent over a network, it can't be intercepted or made public knowledge. Of course, this makes the data courier a target if their identity is known.

The last form of communications encryption is truly private, but limited. If a truly random sequence is used for the encoding, any encrypted data or communication is uncrackable. But, this requires that the recipient of the communication have a copy of the exact same random sequence. To keep the system secure, each random sequence can only be used *once*. When all the random numbers have been used up, a new supply has to be hand-delivered and installed in the device. So, you can have computers and radios that can transfer *completely* secure information over public airwaves, but only for a limited amount of time or for a limited amount of data. A Datacube of random numbers in personal communicator might be good for several hours of quality video or several days of audio, the equivalent of a modern blue-laser DVD (say 20 gigabytes of information). A Datacube of random numbers is good enough to encrypt or decrypt another Datacube's worth of information, once. So, as long as you have a secure means of physically transporting Datacubes, you can keep a network secure from outside snooping. A business can simply reload new numbers into its comm devices when employees check in each night, so the secure numbers never leave a single building, and even if a radio is stolen, it will only be good until the codes are changed at the end of the day.

Your life may be private in an off-Net facility, but once you leave it you can be easily tracked. While the Net does not tag a particular person, it is easy enough to shift camera angles to follow someone once they have been located. However, if you lose someone, there are ten billion people to sift through and even more places you have to look. Just as there are business that track down info, there are also people making a living doing nothing but helped people lose electronic surveillance. This can be through off-Net facilities with numerous hidden exits, disguised "duplicates" to force a tracker to waste effort narrowing down the field, hackers who can temporarily disrupt communications in an area, or some combination of the above.

▼ **ARCHETYPES** - These are the classes of lifestyle and endeavor that the Net has pigeonholed humanity into. It's possible there are more than the twenty Archetypes listed here, but twenty is a nice round number for gaming purposes.

Archetypes

1. Architect
2. Builder
3. Dreamer/Philosopher
4. Entertainer/Author
5. Explorer
6. Everyman
7. Fool/Jester
8. Hero
9. King
10. Lover
11. Martyr
12. Muse
13. Parent
14. Protector (of social order)
15. Rebel
16. Seer/Investor
17. Servant/Companion
18. Sociopath
19. Soldier/Ronin
20. Teacher/Mentor

A full description of what each Archetype means and how they act in play is in chapter 4. For now, think about the adventurer you want to build and play, and worry about Archetypes later.

Guilds - A guild is just a group of related or allied professions that share a goal, equipment, training or creed. These are a purely social construct and came into being independent of the Net. They are a good way to figure out in game terms who is the "best" at something, or to allow some sort of ranking scheme. As you know, just plain old competence isn't enough. The higher ranked people in a guild have a flair, a *joie de vive*, a real love for their work. They invest it with an emotion and passion that is visible to even the most casual observer. An Actor gets into their role and becomes what they portray, or becomes the music or performance. An Investigator is the quest for justice personified, a high-tech hunter who still works on instinct and intuition. A Samurai is a weapon of the mind, an extension of their employer's will, a living shield bound by honor and tradition. Just having the skill and going through the motions may earn you credits, but it will never make you famous.

There are a lot of guilds, far more than the ones listed later. Each has their Masters, Journeymen and Apprentices, tools and tricks of their craft, and their own way of being and striving for an Archetype.

Working for a living - Since everything you need to live comfortably is covered by the Net (including basic hospitalization), pay for services is not as extravagant as it might be. So, even though all manufacturing is labor intensive and inefficient, prices for goods and services are on par with what you would expect in a more traditional economy.

So, while you can charge what the market will bear, the market has some deviation from **EABA** income guidelines for an adventurer's skill level. The increase in personal effort required to make goods will be reflected by reducing the skill level you use for determining income by 1d (note that *starting* wealth uses skill minus 2d). The other difference is that an adventurer may add their Archetype (Fate) roll minus 1d to their income generating skill. This represents the status the adventurer has gained through their accomplishments.

EXAMPLE: Jhenna (a Protector or freelance cop) has income-generating skill rolls of 5d+0, and an Archetype roll of 2d+0. When trying to get work, she is counted as having a skill of 5d+0 for purposes of her wages (subtract 1d from her skill, then add her Archetype roll minus 1d).

Using a person with a high Archetype rating can improve your own rating if your endeavors are successful in part due to the contribution of hired help.

As we said, all the basics of life are covered by the Net. Luxuries and perks can be part of an employment contract, or just bonuses that come with the job. The approximate value of certain amenities is listed later. These generally subtract their value from wages if a permanent benefit. If an occasional benefit, they are either handled as half their value taken from wages, or a "bonus allotment" that is usable for these benefits. This subtracts half its value from wages, but with any remainder of the *full* allotment payable at the end of an employment term.

Part of shrewd negotiation for a job is knowing what you are getting into. If you end up spending your own money to complete a job because you underestimated its difficulty, or you were not fully informed of the employer's circumstances, that's *your* fault. So, employers will do background checks on anyone they want to hire, but smart job seekers will also spend a little cash to do background checks on the person who wants to hire them...

▼ **AND NOW FOR THE DOWN SIDE** - All of this, the lack of laws, the billions of indolent drones, the uphill struggle to make something of yourself in a world that seems to encourage the opposite, these are the *good* parts of NeoTerra. Not everyone who has a desire to work, to escape the forced luxury of a drone's life, does so for the same reasons, or even sane reasons. With a population in the billions, all forms of mental deviations are possible. Genetic aberrations have all been corrected for, but people may still have predispositions to behaviors that NeoTerra's freedom from controls and laws can set loose. "Sociopath" is an Archetype. *Remember Jack the Ripper...?*

And without an organized police force or a fundamental societal ethic to stop it, these people can be quite a problem.

For instance, there are professional thieves. And since the only stuff worth stealing is that belonging to workers, and *all* adventurers are workers, odds are that sometime in their career, adventurers are going to be robbed. And this isn't just your ordinary smash-and-grab type of theft. A thief has to conceal their identity and their movements to avoid a simple Net query tracking them down. They need to have someone to sell their goods to, buyers who don't care where an item comes from, and so on. Workers take theft of property very seriously in NeoTerra. Anything you own is a result of *your* work, *your* time, in a sense a piece of *your* finite lifetime. Stealing from you is taking a tiny piece of your life away, and is responded to accordingly. And thieves are the *niciest* of what NeoTerra considers anti-social types.

There are people who make a career of stealing cyber- or bio-augmentation, cannibals, quasi-cults, child molesters, serial killers, rapists, slavers and the occasional bureaucrat. Some of these people prey mostly on drones, while others prey on workers. Even though there are no police, such activities are not without risk. Aside from the very real threat of direct retribution by the affected person or their friends, there are professionals who can be hired to investigate and "prosecute" such individuals.

And remember, most of the people you grew up with and formed your first friendships with are now drones, and even if they can't help themselves, you might feel obligated to help them. And likewise, if you feel that a drone is easy pickings for some reason, you never know who *they* have close ties to.

With few exceptions, the "laws" of NeoTerra are what people want them to be at any given time, not a fixed or nearly-fixed concept enforced by a higher power. The idea that people might *eventually* figure out a universally *acceptable* (though not necessarily *peaceful*) means of co-existing with each other is part of what NeoTerra is all about.



CREATING ADVENTURERS

No one knows what it's like

to be the bad man

to be the sad man

behind blue eyes

No one knows what its like

to be hated

to be fated

to telling only lies

But my dreams they aren't as empty

as my conscience seems to be...

Behind Blue Eyes, The Who

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Now, for the nasty business of making up an adventurer for NeoTerra.

NeoTerra adventurers start as normal humans (60A and 60S), with up to 30 more points in Traits split between A and S. In addition, everyone is in their physical prime and gets the points associated with that level of Age (**EABA**, page 2.11). So, the world does not start off particularly heroic, but everyone else is in the same boat, and your foes and challengers are going to have started from the same base as you. On the other hand, you have the potential to live a *long* time and become *extremely* skilled and talented.

An important thing to remember about *all* adventurers is that *everyone* in NeoTerra was raised by a *professional* family. Your parents were *the best parents on the planet*, and if they were consistently good parents, they might raise over a dozen children during their lifetimes. Sadly, even the best parenting skills have to compete with the lure of easy living provided by the Net, so maybe only one in a hundred children actually have Archetype potential. That only one family in ten is likely to have an Archetype candidate over their entire lifetime is depressing and wears heavily on parents, who do their best, regardless of the nearly-inevitable disappointment. As a worker, you are one of those who have made their parents *extremely* proud. If your parents are still alive (likely), you probably stay in regular contact with them, and they with you. You have no real siblings, since a family only raises one child at a time. You would know who your "sisters" and "brothers" are, but you only care because they mean something to your parents.

NeoTerra

While you have no emotional ties to the children your parents raised before you or after you, your parents *will*, and they may ask you for help if one of them is in trouble. Your closest non-family ties will be those of your childhood friends, those you were schooled with, got in trouble with and planned to change the world with. Those that went on to become drones you will feel sorry for, but that was *their* choice. If they ask you for help, you'll probably give it for old time's sake, but not in the form of a handout. Your friends that became workers you will probably keep in contact with for life, and these two or three individuals will be your "brothers and sisters". It is quite possible that an entire group of adventurers will have known each other their entire lives, either directly or as friends of your friends.

▼ **ATTRIBUTES** - All Attributes work normally, with the exception of Fate. Fate becomes "Archetype". It represents how good you are at your chosen path. You cannot buy or take a Forte or Weakness on Archetype, but if your path encompasses more than one Archetype, all Archetypes are considered to act as though they had a Weakness.

EXAMPLE: If you had an Archetype of 6 (2d+0) and you were an "Architect", you would use 2d+0 for any Archetype roll. If your adventurer was an "Architect/Ronin" (two Archetypes), then you would use 1d+0 for your Archetype roll (1d less than your normal roll).

In general, starting adventurers should not have an Archetype of more than 6. They're *starting* adventurers, after all...

Archetype takes the place of Fate in NeoTerra. It is used exactly as Fate is, but it can only be used *for actions relating to your archetype*. So, if you are a Teacher/Soldier, you can only invoke luck for actions relating to being a teacher or a soldier. This gives an Archetype a home field advantage. Anyone can fire a gun, but only an Archetype that deals with combat can use luck with a gun.

Remember, circumstance is very important when deciding if luck can be used by an archetype. A "Ronin" might be able to use luck in any form of combat. A "Rebel" would be able to use luck in a more limited set of combat circumstances, a "Parent" might only be able to use luck in combat when defending their family, and an "Investor" would almost never be able to use luck in combat.

EABA

When the gamemaster gives out experience, they will also give out Archetype points. These are like normal experience, except they can *only* be used to improve the rating of your Archetype. If you have more than one archetype, it costs double the normal points to improve your rating. If you have three archetypes, it costs triple, and so on. Of course, failing is also an option, and it should be a regular occurrence that an adventurer ends up with zero or negative archetype points. *Life does not always go your way...*

▼ **SKILLS** - The standard **EABA** skill list can be used, and players and gamemasters can make up new skills or specializations as seem appropriate. An optional rule for skills in NeoTerra is the "profession" skill. This costs like an Advanced Skill (**EABA**, page 2.6), but has a different effect. If a group of two skills can be considered a profession, then buying the skill in this way gives the user that level of skill for *both* tasks associated with that profession, when used *together*. If used individually, the adventurer loses 1d from their bought level of skill.

EXAMPLE: A pharmacist might be a combination of medical and chemistry skills, which combine to give the adventurer a skill that encompasses both of these to some extent. If the adventurer has +1d in "pharmacy" but needs to patch up an injury (using their medical side of the knowledge), they would only do so at a +0d level.

By nature, a profession involves using both of the skills at the same time, at least for purposes of this optional rule. A wheelman might be a mechanic *and* a driver, but these two skills can't be combined to form a "wheelman" profession. You're driving or being a mechanic, not both at the same time.

Things you get for free - Your basic education in NeoTerra provides you with the following free skills:

Basic literacy (+0d in English)	1S
Public infrastructure use (+0d)	1S
Basic geography (+0d)	1S
Basic history (+0d)	1S
NeoTerra culture (+0d)	1S

This covers all you need to know about living in NeoTerra, and much of the public knowledge in the player's section of the rules. You can request items from a mutable, catch a bus, taxi or supersonic train, know how to get where you are going (in a general sense), and have a minimal amount of social etiquette. Any other skills you have to pay for.

▼ **TRAITS** - Unless described differently below, assume all Traits are standard for **EABA**.

Age - Age is no longer relevant. Barring a permanent death, all adventurers are likely to live longer than the campaign lasts, and do so in perfect health. It would not really be fair to allow general acquisition of points for age in this case (everyone would choose to be 190 years old), so no points are given for age. What this does mean is that antagonists of the adventurers may have the advantage of decades or possibly a century more experience, so there will *always* be someone out there who can provide a challenge for adventurers, no matter how experienced they get.

As mentioned in the opening paragraphs, all adventurers can stay in their physical prime throughout their lives, and get the points and Attribute maximums associated with this. An adventurer who wants to start *younger* than this may, but may not take extra Traits to make up the difference in points. They *will* get the extra points upon reaching that level of age.

Blessing/Curse - Not appropriate for this game-world, though the gamemaster may decide upon specialized Blessings possible after reading the **GM Eyes Only** chapter.

Enemies - You have to *really* piss someone off to make a serious Enemy of them. Normally, a simple temporary killing is enough to settle a grudge. Setting an enemy back by several years of lost experience and archetype ranking is seen as more than adequate revenge for most personal or professional grudges.

You can also have Enemies in the form of competitors for the same business or Archetype, or Enemies based on antithetical worldviews. For instance, a pair of assassins might be Enemies because only one of them can be the best. Or, a violent abolitionist and an unrepentant slaver might be Enemies because neither of them is going to respect the other one's right to exist.

In **EABA** terms, *all* Enemies are global. If someone doesn't like you, they are never more than an overnight bullet train ride away. So, it is just a matter of whether the Enemy is minor, major or severe.

A minor Enemy could be a friendly competitor or someone who doesn't like you as a matter of principle. If an opportunity presents itself to cause you problems at minimal cost, they will take it, but they will not go out of their way to make trouble.

A major Enemy is someone who will go out of their way to make trouble for you, and who will kill you (or let you die) if given the chance to do so without causing retribution in kind. If a major Enemy does manage to get their revenge, they become a minor Enemy. The adventurer's loss of experience covers the cost of this downgrading.

A severe Enemy is someone who wants you *permanently* dead for some reason, and who doesn't care about retribution or who has sufficient resources that they do not need to fear retribution from the adventurer or their friends. The only way to get rid of a severe enemy is to become powerful enough that they voluntarily decide to back off a little, or the adventurer does something to obligate or appease the Enemy so that a truce is declared. Either case means the Enemy is downgraded, but the adventurer *does* need to use experience for this, as well as having game events transpire to give a reason for the Enemy to relent.

Friends - Like Enemies, Friends are always global in nature. Friends are usually going to be workers, since drones will not have much to offer in terms of skills, equipment or contacts. Remember that friendship is a reciprocal state. The level of favors you can ask of them is the same as they can ask of you. The gamemaster can easily use this obligation to drag an adventurer into something they would have rather stayed out of.

Gifted - Not allowed except as cyberware, but any NeoTerra campaign that allows Larger than Life might also allow Gifted.

Larger than Life - Not appropriate for this game-world. However, gamemasters may want to allow it after reading the **GM Eyes Only** chapter, giving a very limited subset of people abilities that come from their enhanced understanding of the way the world works.

Mythic Archetype - Allowed. Note that the martyring ability of the Mentor would imply a *permanent* death in NeoTerra.

Status - There are only three real levels of Status in NeoTerra.

Drones have one level of *reduced* status. They are the masses, the undermen. If they care at all, they either resent or long to be like everyone above them, and this would be reflected in altering the difficulty of social interactions. Any adventurer who elects to start play as a drone will only have a drone's starting wealth (2,000 general credits), not the normal amount based on skills.

Workers are zero status. They see themselves as better than drones, and see each other as equals. Adventurers should start as workers.

Archetypes are one level of status. These are the rare individuals at the top of the heap, or the top ten contenders for a given archetype slot. Their level of status reflects in their dealings with everyone else. If someone is the most successful archetype several times, they can have several levels of status and be absurdly famous. An adventurer who wishes to start with archetype status (with gamemaster permission) will need to have an Archetype rating of at least 4d+0 to qualify for one level of Status. You can't have the benefits of Status without a game history of success to back it up.

Unusual Background - Possible for some adventurers. Simply being a worker does not count.

Wealth - A drone who chooses to stay that way gets an allotment of 2,000 general credits upon reaching adulthood (age 16). *Period*. Anything else they want for the rest of their 200-year lifespan, they have to work for. Some spend it on binges, some on one or two reasonably expensive items, others lose it in dribs and drabs for custom drugs, entertainment channels and fad luxuries. A few use it to invest in themselves or try to get training in a guild and become workers. Everyone else gets zero goods, and an extra amount of Credits equal to what they would earn in half a year with a skill level 2d less than normal (which is 5Cr per 1d of skill times one thousand). You may take Wealth to increase (or decrease) this and reflect a more or less successful past history. Your starting wealth is used for all initial purchases, including any upgraded lodging.

EXAMPLE: If your actual income-generating skill were 5d+0, you would start with six months income based on a skill of 3d+0. This is (3 times 5Cr times 1,000), or 15,000 Credits, plus their citizen allotment of 2,000 Credits, for a total of 17,000 Credits.

Wealth-related items - The normal housing allotment for the average citizen is in a place of the Net's choosing, though there are usually a number of different locales to choose from. All will be in proximity to other average citizens, usually in large apartment blocks. To make things easy on the game-master, it is safe to assume that adventurers live in the same region or within an hour's commute.

Drone housing for one person consists of a bedroom (six by six meters), entertainment room (eight by four meters), kitchen/dining area (six by four meters) and bathroom (two by four meters), totalling about one hundred square meters (about ten meters on a side). It is efficiently designed and more than suitable for most needs. If two people live together, their housing allotment is doubled, with proportionately larger rooms. This lodging is free of charge for life, including all utilities, entertainment and food and clothing allotments.

A citizen with sufficient credits can spend those to have a better choice of location, though the quality of the living space remains the same. For the equivalent of about 5,000Cr per year, one can live in a more elite kind of neighborhood, with other citizens who are actually going out and earning barter credits, perhaps at a college degree or apprentice level of skill (4d+0 skill roll). For about 10,000Cr per year your neighbors are all the equivalent of full craftsmen or advanced college degree levels of skill (at least 5d+0 skill roll). Anything beyond this amount, the person usually has a dwelling built to their specifications rather than live in Net-provided housing.

Note that there is no *ownership* of land. If you have living or working space, you pay the Net for it on a yearly basis. Even if you paid to put a private structure there, if you can't pay the yearly rent, you're gone. The improvements on the property will make it worth more and the next tenant will have a higher lease payment than you did, but you will only be allowed to take the non-structure parts of the facility when you leave. It's exactly like making improvements to a rental property. They become the property of the landlord, in this case, the Net.

There are a couple of dodges around this, all of them involving vehicles. The equivalent of a motor-home can sit on a patch of leased land, and simply drive off if the lease expires. A privately built barge, ship or yacht can go anywhere there is sufficient water, but a long-term berth in a populated area is also a lease of sorts.

A handful of überblimps are both business and living quarters for their crews and owners. There are also a very few private orbital living arrangements. Since there is no real estate in empty space, these facilities have no leases, and they simply transfer ownership (or part ownership) when someone dies or moves out.

Physical location is also a luxury. Good or scenic locations cost double, and especially good ones cost triple. Of course, there are a limited number of these to go around, and you may have to get on a waiting list. It helps to know the current owner of the place, as they have the right to sell to anyone they want, or make arrangements for the sale prior to their recycling.

Orbital housing is also an option. This counts as a good location in terms of cost (at least 10,000Cr per year), and much of that is to subsidize the free travel to, from and in orbit to other habitats. These costs largely cover Net-supplied housing. Privately built housing on formerly empty real estate is the most expensive and private option.

Land	Lease per year
Apartment (no personal land)	free
Townhouse plot (up to 1000m ²)	5,000Cr
Cottage plot (up to 2,000m ²)	8,000Cr
House plot (up to 5,000m ²)	15,000Cr
Real estate (per 100m x 100m)	25,000Cr

Location	Modifier per unit area
Prime urban (skilled workers)	+10,000Cr
Urban (mostly workers)	+5,000Cr
Sub-prime urban (mostly drones)	+2,000Cr
Projects (all drones)	+0Cr
Especially esthetic or convenient	times three
Esthetic or convenient location	times two
Rural (on public transport)	times one-half
Rural (off public transport)	times one-quarter
Rural (boonies)	times one-eighth

Note that the location modifiers generally refer to the amount of money that floats around the area. If you want to run a restaurant that serves real food, you want to put it in an area where people with money are.

An area that is on the public transport routes can be reached by the equivalent of a train, plane, bus or public taxi (for less travelled destinations). A location that is off the public transport routes can only be accessed by privately piloted vehicles. The automated navigation systems of public taxis do not cover such areas. A piece of real estate that is in the "boonies" does not have access except by foot, vertical landing aircraft, or possibly by water.

Employment - For those who work, salaries and benefits are negotiable, but the NeoTerra-adjusted EABA pay scale (see page 2.15) works fine:

Adjusted skill roll	per hour	per week
1d+0	1Cr	40Cr
2d+0	4Cr	160Cr
3d+0	8Cr	320Cr
4d+0	14Cr	560Cr
5d+0	22Cr	880Cr
6d+0	32Cr	1280Cr

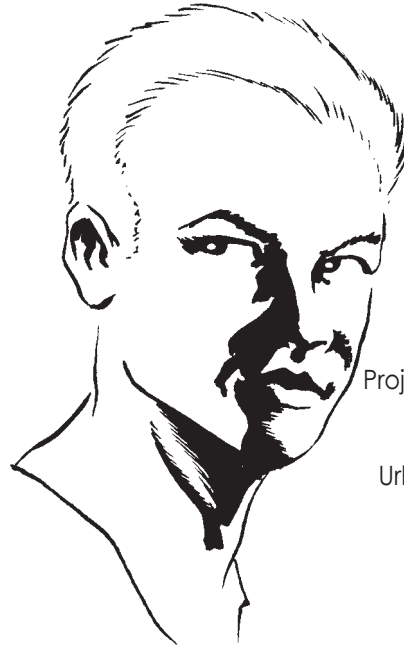
In NeoTerra, there is no guarantee of job security and no perks that aren't negotiated ahead of time. Also, there are a lot of contract or one-shot jobs, getting paid for doing a particular task (like parcel delivery), or performing a service for a particular amount of time (like investigation or bodyguard).

For long-term jobs (at least three months), there is a fairly standard valuation for certain job-related expenses or benefits. The way perks work is that the value listed below is deducted from an adventurer's pay. The *actual* value of the perk is usually *double* the listed amount, and represents the employer taking a chance that a high-value perk will not be used. If an allowance is unused or only partially used, the adventurer gets half the remaining value as a bonus at the end of the employment term.

Perk	Value per quarter
Off-Net quarters	200Cr per room
Real food	500Cr per meal each day
Gear replacement/repair	varies
Ammunition allowance	varies
Travel allowance	varies
Implant replacement/repair	quarter new cost
MPS replacement/repair	1,000Cr
Private ground vehicle (non-combat)	1,000Cr
Private air transport (non-combat)	10,000Cr

EXAMPLE: Jhenna's quarterly contract is for a standard salary, which for an adjusted 5d+0 skill roll would be about 11,500Cr for three months. However, this contract includes a regular apartment having three *private* (off-Net) rooms. She also gets a 2,000Cr equipment allowance and 1,000Cr travel allowance. The apartment subtracts 600Cr from her quarterly wages, and *half* the allowances subtract as well, leaving 9,400Cr per quarter, or about 3,130Cr per month. If her quarter goes by quietly and she uses none of the 3,000Cr allowances, she gets a 1,500Cr bonus at the end of the quarter. On the other hand, if she has to do 1,500Cr worth of travel and loses 3,000Cr of her equipment, then she gets *no* bonus and loses 1,500Cr *out of her own pocket*. And her employer is out 1,500Cr, since they paid out 3,000Cr for equipment and travel (total allowance value), but only deducted 1,500Cr from her pay to cover it.

NeoTerra



Electra Jones

Strength: 2d+0
 Agility: 2d+2
 Awareness: 2d+2
 Health: 2d+0
 Will: 3d+0
 Archetype: 1d+1

Skills:

Brawling: +0d
 Short blade: +1d
 Projectile weapons: +1d
 Throwing: +1d
 Carpentry: +2d
 Urban scrounging: +1d
 Climbing: +0d
 Running: +0d

Traits:

Pain tolerance
 Anarchist personality(2 levels)

Electra was formerly drone, slave and nice girl. *No more.* After eighteen months of abuse in an off-Net drug assembly line, she managed to escape, barely survived a week in the wilderness, finally managed to get to someplace on the Net and call for medical help, which got to her just before she would have been recaptured. A bit wiser and worse for wear, she was contacted by Paine's Perverts (see page 6.3) after release from the hospital, and she gladly joined up for a chance to get even. Before any sort of retribution could be organized, the temporary camp/manufacturing line had packed up and moved elsewhere, leaving nothing but unidentifiable corpses behind. It was just easier to get new help than move all the old workers.

Electra has a serious axe to grind with her yet-unidentified captors. She is not so much an anarchist as she is pathologically opposed to being controlled by anyone or anything. She will go along with a good plan, but does not take orders or play well with others. Like most of the Perverts, she has a real job to pay for the supplies she needs. In her case, she's a freelance contractor, doing odd jobs either independently or hired as extra help by a guild. She doesn't have a lot of equipment or money, and most of what she does have is scavenged, improvised or well-used, but it *does* work. She has four small, parallel scars on her right cheek, one for each person she has *permanently* removed from the system. She feels no need to explain the scars, but those who have known her a while know what they stand for.

▼ **GUILDS** - Guilds were touched on in the previous chapter, but we'll go into more detail here. These *aren't* the only guilds. There are probably thousands of them. Look at how many specialized labor unions there are in the 21st century, and you'll get an idea of how many guilds there can be.

At the beginning of each guild is the Archetype or Archetypes most likely for a member of that guild. Any Archetype is possible for any guild or profession, but some are more of a stretch than others. A person whose guild classification is "Protector" is very likely to be the archetype "protector of social order", but it is not too hard to imagine them as a "Hero" or even a "Teacher/Mentor". However, it would be an interesting player who could make them into a "Fool/ Jester" and it seems completely against the concept for them to be a "Sociopath".

Guilds exist worldwide, but are not standardized by any means, and there are gender and culture-specific variants that may have aspects of the original pre-Asymptote culture associated with that region. Either the guild name or the descriptive term its members are known by will vary from place to place.

EXAMPLE: What is called the "Samurai Guild" in one place might be called a "Valkyrie Guild" if its membership was exclusively female. Investigators might be "gumshoes", thugs might be "enforcers" and protectors might be "cops".

Remember that your Archetype Attribute acts like Fate, but *only* for actions relating to your Archetype.

At the end of each description are the most likely skills a person in that guild is likely to have, and you can assume that sub-branches of that guild may rely on specializations of these skills. All of this is just to give you an idea of how that person fits in NeoTerra, and what you need to think about when designing the adventurer.

Entertainer's Guild

Primary Archetype: Entertainer/Author

Everyone is in some sense an entertainer. Someone out there enjoys watching *your* life unfold. Entertainers make a career at it. This includes everything from street musicians to ballet dancers and anyone who provides a support service for them, such as choreographers, instrument makers, and so on. While much entertainment is derived from the real-life actions of adventurous citizens (like the adventurers), entertainers draw audiences from massive recreations of historical events. Imagine replaying the D-Day invasion with thousands of actors on each side, each one with a personality and story to tell, and the ability to jump to an immersive three-d perspective of any point and any individual in the battle. Oh, and did we mention that everyone is using *real* weapons? Events like this are the pinnacle of the entertainer's art, and are fairly uncommon, if only because of the cost of all the totally functional props. *Likely skills:* Acting, History, Music. *Occasionally useful skills:* Projectile weapons, Melee weapons, Unarmed Combat, Martial Arts.

Investigator's Guild

Primary Archetype: Explorer

Nothing is illegal in NeoTerra, so there are no police and no jails. People are free to do things that annoy or harm other people, but people are also free to track them down so someone else can deliver their own brand of justice. Investigators range from computer hackers to traditional gumshoes to bounty hunters and every possible combination of the three. An investigator can also be the one delivering street justice, but it is more likely they have a hired professional or partner to handle the down-and-dirty stuff. The partner acts as a backup to the investigator, and the investigator acts as backup to the combat specialist. *Likely skills:* Programming, Psychology, Projectile weapons. *Occasionally useful skills:* Unarmed combat of some type, Short blade, Acting.

Weaponsmith's Guild*Primary Archetype: Builder*

If you want any weapon bigger than a steak knife, you hire a weaponsmith. Combat knives, swords, guns, grenades and any other esoteric weapon will have to be made by a weaponsmith. Younger weaponsmiths will take any business they can get and often produce standard designs. Older smiths often specialize in a certain type of weapon, and master weaponsmiths will make each weapon to suit a particular individual, not even doing standard designs. Having a weapon from a famous smith is an enhancement for any profession that uses them, and likewise, having a famous person use your weapon is an enhancement for a smith's reputation. The most famous weapons are originals from smiths who are now dead. Copies may be just as useful, but do not have that historic cachet of the original. Technology is advanced enough that form does not have to follow function in all cases. Quite functional weapons can also be works of art, and many smiths have their own particular esthetic that sets their wares apart from their competitors. *Likely skills: Armorer (with specialization), skill with that weapon. Occasionally useful skills: Electronics, Chemistry, Metallurgy.*

Etech's Guild*Primary Archetype: Builder*

All personal electronics except your Comm and ID have to be built from the ground up, usually by an Etech. Electronics techs have their own chip fabricators, and can make processors, memory, display units and various amplifiers, transmitters, receivers and such. These can match or surpass the sophistication of mutable-produced units, but they are fabricated by non-mutable machines in small lots, wired together under a microscope lens and usually sealed in some sort of proprietary mutable plastic to prevent tampering or design theft. Comm units with encryption functions, eavesdropping devices, computers designed expressly for hacking, and weapon enhancements like night sights, identity locks and tracking modules are the most common items produced by an electronics tech. The more esoteric the better. *Likely skills: Electronic Engineering, Programming. Occasionally useful skills: Materials Engineering.*

Farmer's Guild*Primary Archetype: Everyman*

No one needs to farm in NeoTerra. There are vast agricultural and aquacultural plantations managed by the Net and robots to supply the raw protein and nutrients that mutables turn into food. But, if you want something that isn't on the menu, someone has to produce it. If you want a real wine and a broiled lobster that was alive in a tank two hours ago, someone had to produce them. The need to build and tend specialized equipment and finicky plants or critters means a farmer has to be broadly skilled and fairly intelligent.

Farmers have their own specialties, and pride themselves on quality and taste of their goods. Competition exists for the limited market of people who have enough credits to afford real food on a regular basis, and this competition can sometimes get cutthroat. So, even farmers may need security measures or the services of guildspeople you wouldn't normally associate with the profession. *Likely skills: Farming, Chemistry, Biology. Occasionally useful skills: Projectile weapons, Electronics repair.*

Servant's Guild*Primary Archetype: Servant/Companion*

Cooks, butlers, maids, personal trainers, concierges, etc. The maintenance of order and decorum without robots is a skilled profession involving timing, tact and discernment. One can make quite a good living by catering to the personal needs of someone who is even more wealthy. It also takes a person of some wisdom to realize their own limits, and see that they can do the best for themselves and society as a whole by serving someone else. *Likely skills: Area knowledge (various), Psychology, Diplomacy. Occasionally useful skills: Unarmed combat of some type, Land vehicles, Medicine (First Aid).*

Thug's Guild

Primary Archetypes: Sociopath, Soldier/Ronin

Thugs are hired leg-breakers, the people you contract for when you want to hurt someone and make them remember it. While medicine can seamlessly repair just about any damage, some damage takes longer to heal than others, and medicine doesn't prevent the pain of being badly injured in the first place. Both protectors and thugs are skilled at using pain to correct unacceptable behavior, but for different reasons.

And "hurt" can be more than just injury. A good thug is not dumb. They are a keen judge of character and material worth. A thug can walk into a room and instantly spot the handmade item which the owner has the greatest emotional attachment to, something not replaceable by mutables. They will hold that item gingerly, saying just the right thing to intimidate the owner, almost but not quite breaking it, unless of course it *needs* to be broken to teach the owner a lesson. A thug can also be a torturer, using intimidation and pain to pry loose information that cannot be found through other means. *Likely skills:* *Unarmed combat of some type, Club, Projectile Weapons, Psychology.* *Occasionally useful skills:* *Medicine (Torture), Area knowledge (various).*

Samurai Guild

Primary Archetype: Ronin/Soldier

Samurai is a catch-all term for a bodyguard/sage, someone who is as capable at discussing fine philosophical points and recommending a fine wine as they are at firing automatic weapons and sword-play. These are "old school" samurai, people who believe in becoming one with their weapon, and who feel no emotion or remorse about killing. When they fight, they *are* the weapon, and a weapon does not feel, it simply *is*. While they recognize it as illogical, many NeoTerran samurai will seek to acquire the weapons of famous predecessors, believing at some level that the spirit of the past owner will be with them, and enhance their success. At a more practical level, legendary samurai will often make datacubes of techniques and useful information, access to which is keyed to a random number encoding built into their weapon. Only the person who possesses the weapon can access the information. This person may choose to copy this information and make it available to others...or not.

Holding to the bodyguard's creed of "dead clients don't pay", a samurai's objective is to keep their employer alive at all costs, or failing that, collect enough parts to make reconstruction feasible. Since many places a bodyguard is needed have rules against high-powered weapons, samurai traditionally wear a long bladed weapon of some kind, quite often a katana. The samurai is inscrutable but honorable, lightning fast and always vigilant. Samurai and thugs do not have high opinions of each other, but do respect the other's talents. The two do not often clash. Anyone who can afford samurai generally doesn't worry about thugs. And vice versa. A good thug costs as much as a good samurai. *Likely skills:* *Martial Arts, Long blade, Projectile weapons.* *Occasionally useful skills:* *Diplomacy, History, Medicine (First Aid).*

Broker's Guild

Primary Archetype: Seer/Investor

A fairly unglamorous profession, a broker scours the Net for credit and people looking for credit, matching the buyers and sellers and collecting a fee on the transaction (assume the broker's skill roll represents their ability to get a commission and find profitable deals). There is some overlap in the skills between a good hacker and a good broker. In addition to scouring the Net, a good broker also acts as an agent, personally representing the credit of certain clients. The broker makes sure that only the "right" people get access to their client's barter credits, allowing the client time to focus on their work rather than having to deal with people they would rather not do business for. A broker can also be a scout, personally trying to cajole or deal recalcitrant guildspeople into issuing credit. For instance, getting a master armorer to come out of retirement for one last commission. It is all these secondary duties that are the worth of the true broker and dealmaker, and they are not without personal risk. Any personal service involving a large credit transaction places the broker on the spot if *either* party is unhappy with the way things turn out. Since brokers use the Net a lot, they often come across information that may have economic potential. So, brokers do more than juggle money, they also juggle info. While is conceivable that anyone could find that information if they looked hard enough, odds are a broker somewhere has already found it. *Likely skills:* *Area knowledge (brokering specialty), Bribery, Programming.* *Occasionally useful skills:* *Psychology.*

▼ **Note!** - While NeoTerra's economy is depressed by the reduced pay scale and inability to pass on inheritances in the form of currency, modern materials and craftsmanship also mean that most durable goods are *durable*. And this in turn means there are a lot of these goods out there, making things people normally can't afford *new*, quite within their reach as *used* items. A well-used car might still have twenty years of useful life left and be half or a quarter the cost of a new one. Combat items have a higher turnover, naturally, but most big-ticket goods pass through several hands before they finally hit the scrap pile. Brokers are useful for finding these bargains, and take their cut on any eventual transaction.

Assassin's Guild

Primary Archetype: Sociopath

Sometimes you want someone dead...really dead. A thug may kill you, just to make a point. And when you wake up in the regeneration ward, you'll understand that point very well. If an assassin kills you, they never find the body, or there won't be enough left to soak up with a sponge. Assassins are expensive, feared and highly talented in a number of esoteric means of killing a single person without harming anyone else in the immediate vicinity. It is a matter of style and personal pride that only the victim is harmed, and that once dead, the victim stays dead. If that's what was paid for. Sometimes an assassin is hired as a warning, like "I can afford to have you erased from existence at any time. Leave me alone..." Unlike the other guilds, the assassin's guild does not advertise its presence or publically look for new members, since any successful assassin will have a price on their head. If none of a victim's friends or former business associates care to put out a bounty, the Net offers one (based on its estimation of the person's worth), just to keep assassins on their toes. *Likely skills:* Projectile weapons, Chemistry (poisons), Security systems. *Occasionally useful skills:* Electronics, Acting, Sleight of hand.

Contractor's Guild

Primary Archetype: Builder

If you want a structure built off the Net, you need a contractor. A full-service contractor can handle about any building project, but many simply subcontract various tasks. Excavating, foundation work, structure, wiring, plumbing, etc. *Why do you want a structure built off the Net?* Anything built as a form a public housing is...public. You may have the only ID that opens the door, but anyone who wants can watch you, any time, all the time. If you live on the public dole, you have zero privacy. The only saving grace of this is that there are over nine billion people out there with no privacy, so the odds that your personal life will be a matter of public amusement are very small.

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If you want privacy, you pay for it by having a structure built that is not accessible by the Net, or with parts not accessible by the Net. If you still want automated food preparation and medical diagnostics, your kitchen and bathroom are on the Net. If you want your bedroom to be private, it is off the Net (and leave your Comm outside the door). *Likely skills:* Carpentry, Masonry, Electrician, Plumbing. *Occasionally useful skills:* Electronics, Architecture, Landscaping.

Armorer's Guild

Primary Archetype: Builder

No clothing stronger than that needed for local environmental extremes is available through the mutables. Everything else has to be acquired through an armorer. Armorers deal with purely physical protection. Purchase of an MPS system (page 5.10) is done through etechs. Weaponsmiths and armorers often work together, and while they don't share the types of equipment used in their craft, many of their professional knowledges overlap. *Likely skills:* Armorer (with specialization). *Occasionally useful skills:*

Protector's Guild

Primary Archetype: Protector (of social order)

NeoTerra has no laws and no police, but it does have Protectors, who handle the latter function and tend to make up the former. A protector embodies the concept of bushido (look it up), and his or her success reflects their success at protecting society, or at least that little portion of it that they consider "their turf". Think of protectors as bodyguards paid for by a group rather than by an individual.

A community that feels the need might have one protector per hundred citizens, so the drain on an individual's credit balance is small. Since feebs (an average dole citizen) has no credits with which to pay a protector, they generally get no protection. However, since they usually have nothing of value and have no enemies except themselves, this is generally not a problem. Some protectors will take on the task of keeping drone areas safer, simply from a sense of social obligation, even if they don't get paid for it, a sort of "watchdog" instinct to protect the weaker members of the species. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but hard to do on a limited budget. Unpaid or underpaid protectors have to be good at improvising when it comes to weapons and armor. And remember, the Net doesn't judge Archetypes based on the size of their paychecks.

A protector or protectors will patrol areas where working citizens live, keeping stoners and the occasional feeb mob at bay, and enforcing any code of conduct that an area may have voluntarily set for itself. Protectors can and will use whatever force is necessary against outsiders, but need a more hands-off approach when enforcing against the people who pay them. Protectors may also do double duty as detectives, going outside their home area to find and punish an escaped perpetrator of an offense against a protected person or area, or to recover stolen property, etc.

Actions taken on behalf of an individual rather than the group are either contracted separately, or handled by a "bonus pay" clause in the contract, where everyone contributes to an "emergency fund" to cover this sort of thing.

Old style "protection rackets" do not exist. If a group moves into an area and demands money, it is easier to simply hire someone else to make their lives miserable. *Likely skills: Projectile weapons, Unarmed combat. Occasionally useful skills: Diplomacy, Area knowledge.*

Machinist's Guild

Primary Archetype: Builder

If it is a basic mechanical object, a machinist can design it and fabricate it to any specification required. If it is physically possible, they can create it. A machinist could build a tank, but would subcontract the armoring and weaponry to other guilds. *Likely skills: Machinist, Metallurgy. Occasionally useful skills: Industrial chemistry(composites).*

Wheelman's Guild

Primary Archetype: Rebel, Everyman

A cross between a machinist, mechanic and driver, an auto is the person to have if you need a wheelman. If your land-based transport needs require routes not in the navigation database, or driving in ways the autopilot won't, an auto is your guide and shepherd. The exploits of wheelmen are quite popular on the entertainment channels, since their exploits are often both daring and done in public places. Other vehicles have their own guilds, but none are quite as "cool" as wheelmen. *Likely skills: Land vehicles, Mechanic. Occasionally useful skills: Projectile weapons, Machinist.*

Aero's Guild

Primary Archetypes: Servant, Soldier

Aeros are the airborne equivalent of wheelmen, but without the mystique, seen as either combat pilots or glorified deliverymen. They fly everything from personal ultralights to suborbital hoppers. Some specialize in message or small parcel drones, for when you need a delivery right now. And that delivery doesn't have to be to you, nor does it have to be harmless. *Likely skills: Air vehicles, Mechanic. Occasionally useful skills: Heavy weapons.*

Hydro's Guild

Primary Archetypes: Servant, Everyman

As for wheelmen and aeros, but centered around coastal or ocean habitats. This includes submersibles and salvage operations, a field which can still be lucrative even after centuries of "wreck mining". This is usually hazardous work, as most of the useful industrial or military material in the environment was consumed or reprocessed during the Asymptote. This leaves material that was not worth the effort of going after, such as that on the abyssal plains. *Likely skills: Water vehicles, Swimming, SCUBA. Occasionally useful skills: Projectile weapons (speargun), Short blade.*

Orbital's Guild

Primary Archetypes: Explorer, Servant

There aren't many orbitals. Their vehicles are prohibitively expensive, but if you need to get around orbit in a way that isn't easily trackable, or your timing needs aren't on the normal schedule, an orbital shuttlejock and his cargo hauler are the way to go. Space travel still has the feel of being exotic to most people, so "spacemen" are second to wheelmen in terms of popularity, well ahead of their air and water-borne counterparts. *Likely skills: Space vehicles, EVA suit, Programming. Occasionally useful skills: Area knowledge (various), Projectile weapon (laser), Electronics.*

Archaeologist's Guild

Primary Archetype: Explorer

Perhaps an unusual profession, but in NeoTerra it is a *commercial* one. A NeoTerran archaeologist searches for relics of the past, either the truly ancient past, or the largely consumed past from the years before the Asymptote. There are always buyers for genuine antiquities, either from a matter of personal taste or a show of status, or for clues from the past that might help someone crack or bypass the various limits the Net has placed on humanity. Archaeologists can be found digging under major cities, in desolate wastelands and everywhere in between. There is little or no effort made to restore or preserve archaeological sites.

It is purely a first-come-first-served-loot-what-you-can-find affair, and it can get violent if multiple groups are going after the same objective. *Likely skills: Archaeology, History, Geography. Occasionally useful skills: Blasting, Bribery, Area knowledge.*

Medical's Guild

Primary Archetype: Hero, Teacher/Mentor

While fast and easy care is no further than a free priority ride to the nearest emergency room, sometimes you want the care even faster (like "right freaking now!"). And sometimes you want medical care that the Net will *not* provide for free. Implants, custom bioware or cybernetics all require a skilled doctor who is also skilled or has access to techs from other fields. And an off-Net facility to do the work, so as to maintain privacy. *Likely skills: Medicine (with specializations), Biology. Occasionally useful skills: Chemistry (drug manufacture), Psychology.*

Courtesan's Guild

Primary Archetype: Servant/Companion

Courtesans can be female or male. While skilled in various physical arts (imagine the results of a century of practice...), a courtesan is also a public companion with numerous other skills. A courtesan is expected to be able to converse fluently on any subject their employer is likely to encounter in casual conversation. In addition, they act as a foil or advocate for the employer's views or business agenda in a subtle way. A courtesan is also a good listener, a last-ditch bodyguard, and an effective collector and spreader of rumors. Think of the courtesan as an attractive lobbyist who enhances your reputation just by their presence. The best courtesans have their own small intelligence operations, making sure they have the latest and best information, to analyze and use to their employer's benefit. Drones can claim to be "courtesans", but they are really just using their bodies to earn a quick credit and a drone claiming to be a courtesan in the presence of a *real* one is likely to get their chops busted just as a matter of principle. *Likely skills: Area knowledge (figure it out), Psychology. Occasionally useful skills: Unarmed combat, Short blade, Diplomacy, Sleight of hand.*

Hacker's Guild

Primary Archetype: Rebel

The Net is impossible to *crack*, but not to *hack*. Hackers use subtleties in the system for their own ends or just to cause trouble. A lot of hackers are anarchists, and vice versa. The Net will quickly compensate and corrects for any errors introduced, but may take seconds or minutes to do so. A hacker cannot steal or divert credits or identities, nor adjust the coding and operation of the Net, but they can cause delays and adjustments which can be very embarrassing or inconvenient. For instance, making an adjustment to a citizen's food preferences so their mutable fridge is restocked with rotten fish, or causing a large credit transaction between violent individuals to mysteriously disappear, just long enough to get tempers to flare. A hacker's rep goes with the difficulty and outrageousness of their hack. Some hackers use complex dodges to make it hard to figure out exactly where the hacker is (to avoid retribution from angry victims), while others operate publically and just rely on security measures to keep the indignant at bay. *Likely skills: Programming, Psychology, Security systems. Occasionally useful skills: Electronics.*

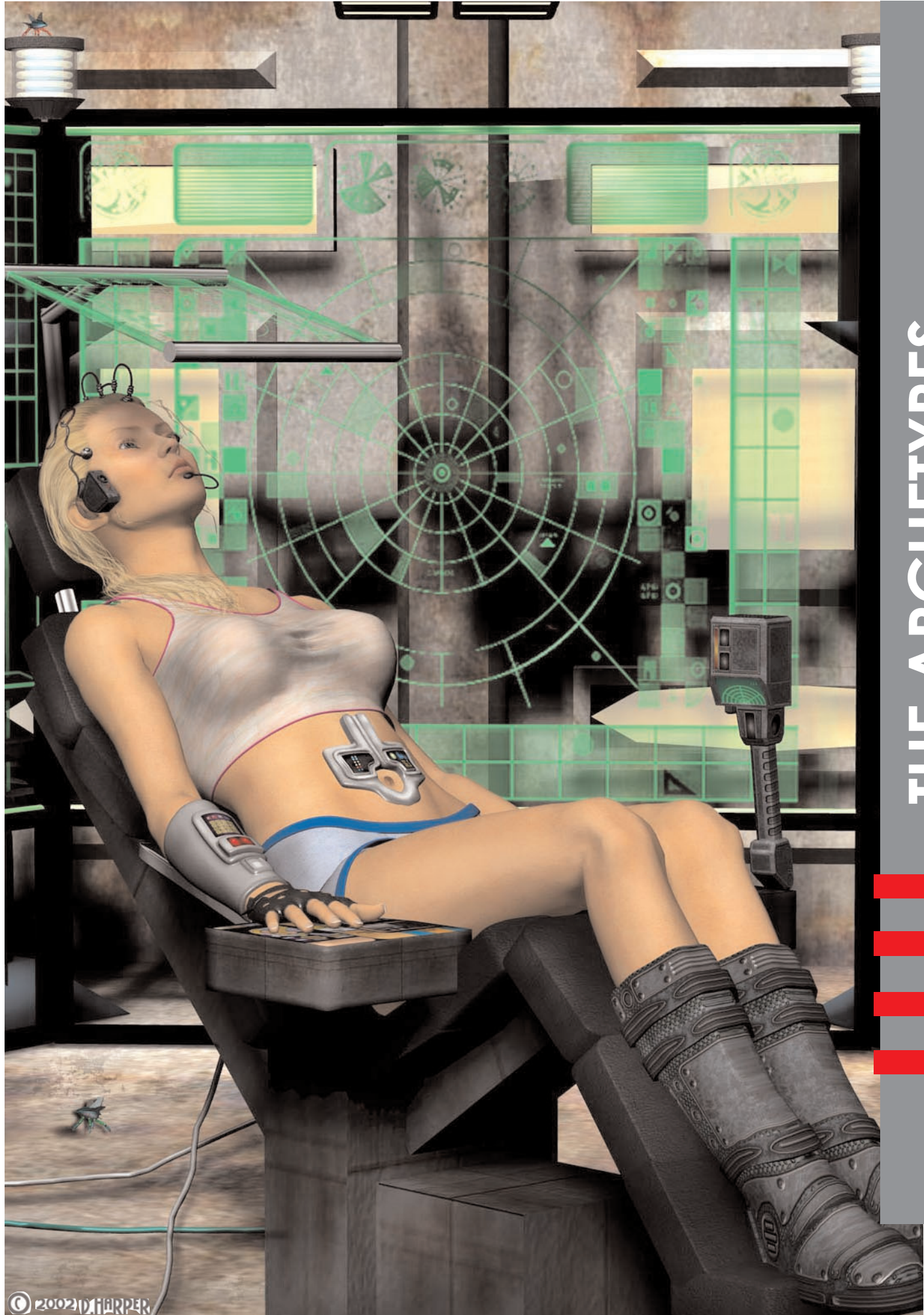
Anarchist's Guild

Primary Archetype: Rebel, Sociopath

The only way to tell the anarchist's guild from the others is that it is slightly less organized. For people espousing chaos, they plan in quite a bit of detail and operate pretty coherently. Anarchists hate the Net, even if they use it quite a bit. They want the vast mass of couch potatoes to rise and throw off their shackles of enforced luxury, to work for a living, to strive and forge their own destiny, free of the constraints of the Net.

Isn't gonna happen.

But they still try. They engage in acts of sabotage and vandalism that are quickly repaired, and plan larger actions that in a previous century would be classed as terrorism. On occasion they go too far, and public sentiment causes a bounty to be put on various members, but they usually stay on just the right side of being a menace. Anarchists hate to be told what to do, either directly or indirectly, and make an art out of being contrary, but hone it finely so as not to be manipulated by anyone. *Likely skills: Chemistry (explosives), Programming, Machinist. Occasionally useful skills: Projectile weapons, Psychology.*



THE ARCHETYPES

My hands

were steady,

my eyes were

clear and bright.

My walk had purpose,

my steps were

quick and light.

And I held firmly,

to what I felt was right,

like a rock.

Like a Rock, Bob Seger

The Architect

The architect is the planner or schemer, making grand plans in great detail. An architect could be the mastermind behind a great criminal enterprise, the designer of a grand skyscraper, or someone who thinks their ideas can remake society and goes out there to make it happen. The measure of the architect is not their plans, but how well they can make them real, and overcome the obstacles that life places in their way. The architect gains Archetype points for coming up with a grand plan, and successful efforts to bring the plan to fruition. The grander the plan, the greater the success. Conversely, they lose points if they hit an obstacle they cannot overcome, or if they are forced to abandon a plan completely or delay it for some indefinite period. Hitting a snag and making progress in overcoming it simply maintains the status quo and is worth no points.

The Builder

The builder is the craftsman, the tool user, the hands-on-joe who turns raw materials or ideas into finished goods. An economist might be an architect, but an industrialist would be a builder. The builder may not be the one who designs the goods, but the builder leaves their mark in the fit, finish and quality of the work they leave behind. There is some gradation between the builder, the servant and the everyman. The builder is on the side of that scale dealing with things that last. The builder gains Archetype points for completing something (something useful, that is) which has never been built before, or for making something of a known quantity that becomes extremely popular or famous for its type.

EXAMPLE: Making a sword is nothing special. Making the swords used by several "archetype champion" samurai is special.

The builder loses archetype points if the things they build fail to gain popular support or cause harm or loss of reputation because they fail to deliver on promised performance. Simply being a competent craftsman is worth no points, save for what would accrue from the slow increase of your products in service over several decades, or what would be lost if flaws are discovered over the long run.

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Early on, we skipped over the concept of Archetypes, those cubbyholes of human behavior and endeavor that the Net has decided best describe our lives, actions and ambitions. The idea is important enough to the way NeoTerra works to have its own chapter, separate from background and the nuts & bolts of making adventures. There are twenty archetypes in NeoTerra at the moment, a purely arbitrary number. If you come up with something we haven't thought of, and it isn't a combination of existing Archetypes, feel free to add it. *Now, for the details.*

The Archetypes

1. Architect
2. Builder
3. Dreamer/Philosopher
4. Entertainer/Author
5. Explorer
6. Everyman
7. Fool/Jester
8. Hero
9. King
10. Lover
11. Martyr
12. Muse
13. Parent
14. Protector (of social order)
15. Rebel
16. Seer/Investor
17. Servant/Companion
18. Sociopath
19. Soldier/Ronin
20. Teacher/Mentor

Dreamer/Philosopher

Archetypes with a "/" are one archetype, just with different ways of expressing the concept. The dreamer/philosopher is one such. While the architect deals with the here and now, a dreamer deals with what might be, in a metaphysical, behavioral or temporal sense. And while an architect personally works towards making their plans come to pass, the dreamer works to have *others* bring the dream into reality. The architect might design an interstellar spaceship, but the dreamer instills a desire to voyage to new worlds that makes people want to build the spaceship to begin with. The dreamer is an evangelist for their own ideas. The dreamer gains Archetype points for inspiring people to go, do or think in a way that is novel and to the benefit of mankind as a whole.

EXAMPLE: The cabal that tried to shape the Asymptote and bring the Net into being were by some definition dreamers. Whether or not they survived the Asymptote to see the results of their work is unknown.

The dreamer loses points if their idea cannot stand up under social pressure, or if when it is implemented, it fails due to inherent flaws that the dreamer should have seen or anticipated.

Entertainer/Author

We feel emotion, it affects our outlook on life, how we see the world, how we choose to shape it. The entertainer or author uses their creative talents to shape our emotions. This could be as simple as making us laugh, or complex as political allegory. You may get the point immediately, never, or somewhere in between. The entertainer gets Archetype points for being successful at what they are trying to do, and the wider the audience, the better. Telling a single joke that spreads by word of mouth across the world is just as good as playing a concert to a stadium crowd. The entertainer loses points if their efforts are a flop, or people interpret their efforts the wrong way. If people aren't entertained or subtly changed by the entertainer's effort, then nothing has been accomplished.

Explorer

To seek out new life and new civilizations... The oldest human legends involve exploration, and that they are still told today is fairly good evidence that we as a species are born to explore. We seek to be the first, to go farther, higher and faster than those who came before. The explorer does this. Perhaps physically, perhaps intellectually. In that sense, both Amelia Earhart and Stephen Hawking are explorers. One can explore outer space, inner space, or even the limits that the Net places on humanity. The explorer gains Archetype points for being the first, or the best, or even being the most original or innovative. They lose Archetype points not for failing, but for failing in such a way that others no longer want to make the attempt, or failing in a way that costs others because the explorer's ambition and drive overcame their good sense, a finely drawn line sometimes.

Everyman

Not everyone can be the stuff of legend. Most of us have to be ordinary, "just plain folks". The kind of person you looked up to as a child, and *still* look up to as an adult, the kind of person you wish everyone could be. The world needs a lot more people like that. The everyman gains Archetype points for being that person, not self-consciously, but because it *really is* who and what they are. They lose points when they start to force themselves into the role, to *try* to be the everyman, to worry about their image more than being honest about what they are. The everyman doesn't have to be perfect. *We're all flawed*. The everyman's flaws are those that can be forgiven, the kind that we can still respect him or her for when the flaws are revealed.

Fool/Jester

Just as every group has an alpha, it also has an omega. For everyone at the very top, there is someone at the very bottom. To some degree, this is the place of the fool. The fool is a kinder, gentler version of the sociopath. The fool makes people laugh, at him/her, themselves, or everything at once. Absurd exaggeration and caricature let the fool say things that could not be addressed in a reasonable fashion. The Feeb of the Week might be a fool trying to say something, or just someone being foolish because they are an idiot. The fool gains Archetype points for being the brunt of the joke, but still being laughed with instead of laughed at, for defusing hatred into laughter or introspection. They lose Archetype points for simply being ridiculed or humiliated, for trying to accomplish something important and not just failing, but being *ignored*.

Hero

The hero is similar to the explorer, but while the explorer sets out to *do* something, the hero sets out to *be* something. The hero can strive for glory or a goal, but they are also striving for something larger than themselves. A hero gains Archetype points not only for success, but for the nature of the quest. The Holy Grail was never found, and perhaps never existed, but the Knights of the Round Table could be considered heroes nonetheless. Don Quixote may have been mad as a hatter, but he too would be a hero. The hero loses Archetype points not for failing, but for giving up, failing to try, or being too proud or too stubborn to realize when the cause is lost. A fireman who fears to go into a burning building to save someone has failed to try. One who wastes time trying to brave an inferno that no one could survive has not realized that his wasted time may cost yet more lives. A hero must sometimes make difficult choices and make the best of some bad situations.

King

It's good to be the king. The king seeks, bears and accepts ultimate responsibility for those they lead. The king listens to wise counsel, but does not feel compelled to obey it. There are no kings in the traditional sense in NeoTerra, but there are leaders of men, people who instill loyalty beyond that which comes from a paycheck. A king does not have to lead by example or through loyalty. A king can rule through fear, deception and tyranny as well. A king gains Archetype points for initiatives that leave either the people or the underlying support structure of the "kingdom" in better shape, preferably both.

EXAMPLE: The public works projects started by President Roosevelt during the Great Depression were long before modern health and safety regulations. A lot of people died building the roads, tunnels and dams that we still use today. But, it could be said these public works helped pull the United States out of the Depression, and so while they were not good from the personal standpoint of those who choked on rock dust or were crushed in cave-ins, these works were good for the people and country overall. So, President Roosevelt gets points for being a good "king".

A king loses Archetype points for initiatives that fail in these regards, whose cost to infrastructure or lives outweighs their benefits, or who uses the "kingdom" for personal ends rather than the needs of those who the king both rules...and serves.

Lover

The lover is one who gives of themselves to another, without condition or reservation. While a courtesan may say they love you, it is only because they are being paid to do so. The lover is the embodiment of romantic love and high ideals, a difficult road to walk given NeoTerra's amoral underpinnings. The lover gains Archetype points for being the strength and inspiration behind someone who is both at least as highly ranked, and who needs the strength of the lover to stay successful. And the feelings must be *genuine*. Deliberately choosing to be a lover is therefore quite difficult. The lover loses Archetype points for taking or being taken advantage of, for letting ambition and selfish motive cloud their actions.

Martyr

The martyr is or becomes the embodiment of a cause. As an Archetype, the martyr does not have to die to fulfill the role, but that level of devotion and a *willingness* to sacrifice self to accomplish a greater good are key attributes of this Archetype. A person who chains themselves to a bulldozer or rides an inflatable boat in front of a whaling vessel is a martyr. The martyr gains Archetype points by increasing awareness of their cause. The cause can change, and it might not even be a good cause, but the martyr has to *believe* it is worth risking life and limb for. The martyr loses Archetype points if their actions bring ridicule to the cause, or make the cause seem hopeless.

The martyr has the unique ability that they can posthumously become an Archetype champion. Even if they can't be resurrected, it is possible that a Martyr's actions are so pure to the Archetype that the Net will use them anyway.

Muse

The muse is inspiration. Not like the lover, who is a constant companion, but rather someone who makes you want to do your best, who gives you new ideas or makes you see your work in a different way. Perhaps the Mona Lisa was a muse to DaVinci. The muse does not have to be a highly public figure, but it doesn't hurt. A serial killer could be a muse, if their actions inspire protectors to new and greater heights. The muse gains Archetype points for choosing a course of action and causing others to gain Archetype points by what they do in response. The muse loses Archetype points by being ignored, or acting in such a way that others are discouraged rather than inspired.

Parent

It takes more than being a lover or an everyman to be a parent. Parenting is something special, some combination of every Archetype in just the right proportion, at just the right time. At times a protector, at times a teacher, companion, muse or king. The parent knows who to be, and when to be them. In NeoTerra, being a parent usually isn't a full-time job. Since parenting alone doesn't pay the bills, most professional parents also have some skill to earn credits for the things they want their child to have. Parents gain Archetype points for being good parents, and lose them for being bad parents.

Protector (of social order)

Sanity, morals and ethics are not absolute. They reflect the will of the majority or at least those in power, and this changes from year to year and century to century. For ninety percent of recorded human history, such things as punishment by mutilation and slavery were the norm, and even your great-great grandparents might have wholeheartedly supported one or the other. The protector of social order protects whatever the *current* ethic is. This ethic may not be a personal belief, but could simply be the belief they are hired to enforce. For instance "we believe that our stuff shouldn't be stolen and we're hiring you to enforce this belief". But in addition to and perhaps superior to this, protectors believe that people have an inherent right to self-determination, and that individuals or groups who would infringe this right are to be opposed, simply because it is the right thing to do. So, you would never find a protector guarding someone using slave labor.

A protector gains Archetype points for being successful at their job, or thwarting threats to personal liberty in general. They lose points for failing to protect social order, or directly or indirectly encouraging the oppression of individual freedom.

Rebel

The rebel has some superficial similarity to the sociopath. Both chafe at the restraints society has placed on them, but while the sociopath simply ignores those restraints, the rebel seeks to change the system that imposes them. The rebel needs to believe in their cause, but does not have to be a martyr. The rebel *does* need their cause to be something that won't change by itself, and they need to have some idea what to do if they win.

EXAMPLE: It does no good to rebel against an oppressive government if you only end up replacing it with another repressive government.

Rebellion for rebellion's sake is just a waste of time. The rebel gains Archetype points for actually advancing the cause of their rebellion, either through direct action against a foe or by increasing popular support for their cause. The rebel loses Archetype points if they prevail but fail to change things, or if they resort to using the same tactics or methods they are fighting against. If "revenge is not the way of the Jedi", then a Jedi can't act out of a need for revenge and still be a successful rebel.

Seer/Investor

While architects and dreamers may try to design the future, the seer simply tries to see the most likely course of things, and also has the ability to put together disparate pieces of information and draw conclusions no one else could imagine. A prophet is a seer. So is a meteorologist or an economist. The seer gains Archetype points by being the first to see the signs, and being in a position to profit from it or bring the greatest good to the greatest number. The seer loses points for making predictions that fail, cause a financial loss, or ones which cause undue hardship to others.

Servant/Companion

Humans are social creatures. Few of us can truly thrive alone. We all have companions and people who do things for us for one reason or another. The servant is just more dedicated about it. By servant, we do not necessarily mean servile. This is more along the lines of a butler or concierge. If your time is worth two hundred credits per hour, then yes, it is a better use of your time to pay someone else to do your driving, pick up your dry cleaning or change the oil in your car. If you have someone who does all these things, then they are pretty much your servant. If this person is also someone you trust, that you can confide in or lean on, then they are also a companion. The servant gains Archetype points for being instrumental in the success of someone more important, for doing more than just serving, but accurately anticipating not the just the desires, but the *needs* of the person they are serving.

Sociopath

If everyone adhered to the norms of society, the concept of society would not be. A thing is defined by its opposite. The sociopath is the thing feared and detested by society, and perhaps vice versa. The sociopath moves silently, appearing to adhere to accepted norms, but in reality defies everything that normal people hold dear. A low level sociopath is often just a killer, but can be so much more. A sociopath can hold a mirror up to society, to show what its members are capable of if they let go of their self-control. The sociopath gains Archetype points for causing or increasing public outrage from their actions, more so if it results in real discussion about the nature of society in general. Points are lost if the sociopath's actions cause chaos without comment ("ho-hum, another grisly axe murder..."), and simply maintaining a level of fear is worth no points. A sociopath needs to know when they have peaked in an endeavor, then retire it and move on.

Soldier/Ronin

While the rebel or hero may fight for a cause, the soldier fights for money. They are the "hired guns", paying less attention to the principle of the thing and more to the size of the payoff. Sometimes there is dirty work that needs doing, and someone has to do it or give the orders and be responsible for the consequences. A soldier may have a higher code than obedience ("defend the Constitution against enemies both foreign and domestic..."), but has to know where the line is drawn between something like patriotism and insubordination. The soldier gains Archetype points for upholding whatever code they follow, and keeping violence in its place, never frivolous nor to excess. The soldier loses points for involving "non-combatants", failing to uphold their code, and for destruction far in excess of what was needed for the situation.

Teacher/Mentor

Humans can't manage on instinctive behaviors. Much of what we need to survive in a hostile world has to be taught to us. The teacher uses their time not for improvement of *self*, but for improvement of *others*. Is it better to improve your own skills by ten percent, or to improve the skills of ten others by ten percent? The teacher passes on not just knowledge, but hopefully wisdom and experience, things that may have taken decades to learn. By saving the pupils this time, they have the ability to progress even further. Most of us teach, but few of us are teachers. The teacher gains Archetype points for passing on their knowledge and experience, not just in their raw form, but also with the memes, wisdom or context that is appropriate to that skill or endeavor. The teacher loses Archetype points if the pupils misuse this knowledge, or when it is taught so poorly that harm is caused further down the road.

▼ **USING THE ARCHETYPES** - By the time you read this, you should have an adventurer designed or mostly designed, and have a good grasp of what NeoTerra is all about. So now you have to ask yourself "What Archetype is my adventurer?" And not just that, but "What Archetype do I want them to be?"

Your adventurer exists because they want something more out of life than just a hedonistic existence free from want. Unlike in the real world, in NeoTerra you can live a life of ease and moderate luxury without ever having to lift a finger. The hardships of daily life that we are used to simply are not there. There is never a commute to work, no rent payments to be made, no need to go out and shop, no taxes, no bills, no illness, disease or starvation.

So, what makes your adventurer different from the norm? Simply by *being* an adventurer, they are willing to sweat, hurt, be hurt, work, lose sleep and even maim or kill, if the price or the cause is right. When you figure out *why* your adventurer is out there, you'll have a better understanding of which Archetype or Archetypes they are based on.

Think about it, and choose wisely. If you ever decide to change Archetypes, you lose *all* the points (or the fraction of points) you have ever accumulated towards the old Archetype and have to start over with a rating based on the points you have left.

Archetype Champions - At the gamemaster-determined end of any game year, the top ten Archetypes in each category are determined by the Net. *Or in this case, by the gamemaster.* Players trying to get the prize roll their Archetype dice against ten other non-player competitors, the top two rolling *at least* $6d+2$, and the remaining eight losing $0d+1$ per two competitors (the lowest two roll *at least* $5d+1$). Ties go to the competitors with the highest Archetype rating, and further ties go to anyone with a higher *second* Archetype rating. In general, adventurers who do not have Archetype ratings of at least $4d+1$ do not even get to roll.

Anyone who places in the top ten gets a permanent level of Status, the equivalent of one year of income at their current skill level, and they have to take a month off in order to compile the information that they want to pass on to future generations around a distant star.



GADGETS & STUFF

I don't believe
 in guarded borders,
 and I don't believe in hate.

I don't believe
 in generals,
 or their stinking torture states.

When I talk with the survivors,
 things too sickening to relate.

If I had a rocket launcher,
 I would retaliate.

If I had a Rocket Launcher, Bruce Cockburn

Mousebots - These are presumably made by special mutables under the control of the Net. Since mutables can't be hacked to bypass their programming limits, getting at a utility mutable inside your apartment walls doesn't get you anywhere. You don't normally buy mousebots, they come automatically with any Net-equipped housing space. They can be caught and taken apart to get tiny powercells, Net transceivers, cameras, micromanipulators and so on. These components are not very durable, and would not last long if built into something else. The Net recognizes modified mousebots and these will be disassembled and carted off by the regular kind at first opportunity.

So much for them as eavesdropping devices.

Mousebots come in various types (scrubbers, sprayers, disassemblers), all of which are fairly flimsy and only last about a week or so of regular use. There are indoor mousebots and outdoor varieties, mainly differing in things like tiny solar panels or increased obstacle-crossing ability.

Plast - Plast comes in a number of varieties. It is the all-purpose structural material used in NeoTerra. A carbon-silicon-hydrogen mix with traces of various other elements (often nitrogen), it is roughly as strong as most modern aluminum alloys, but its hardness and strength are almost infinitely variable to meet specific applications. Net-controlled robots spray, extrude or mutable-create different formulas for doing everything from paving roads, extruding utility conduits, building taxis and buses or making the disposable clothing most people wear. A given formula will have about the same properties as you would expect are needed for that application. Plast does not burn, but it will smoke and melt if heated in a fire. Structural plast has a fairly high melting temperature, but can still be easily cut and shaped with a welding torch. Scavenging public facilities for raw plast has no civic penalty, but the Net will inform anyone who is inconvenienced by your vandalism and tell them where you live.

Plast is usually assembled molecule by molecule in Net-controlled mutables, but it can be made through various industrial chemical processes. It is not something feasible to do on a countertop, but directions on how to make various types of plast are available in public infodumps. Be prepared to dedicate at least a room to high pressure ovens, industrial mixers and molds, forms, dies, lathes or rollers to shape the final product.

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - The things you can get for free from a mutable are food, drinks, basic clothing in a number of styles, including those suitable for colder or wetter climates, dishes, glasses and eating utensils with negligible weapon potential. Everything else has to be made by someone and costs credits.

▼ **ENVIRONMENT ITEMS** - These are materials or items that can be scrounged from the environment, either as scrap or by breaking something.

Mutables - We've discussed these before in some detail. Mutable

s are everywhere. In addition to half a dozen in every apartment, they serve as trash cans, public food dispensers and so on. A mutable's feed lines can be tapped for various raw elements, but that is about it. The key components of a mutable have not been successfully duplicated by human science, despite centuries of trying. No one has been able to subvert or duplicate a mutable's internal programming, even in off-Net facilities, nor has the precise and extremely high speed molecular deposition process ever been duplicated. Since all mutables are hooked to the Net, all attempts to steal or hack one are going to be seen by the Net. Apparently the Net self-destructs the innards of mutables if they are disconnected, or the mutable does this itself if Net control is interrupted. Broken mutables are replaced as whole units by Net-controlled robots.

Mutable

s are the goose the laid the golden egg. You can either accept their bounty, or crack them open to see if there are more golden eggs inside...

Plastiglas - A variant of plast that is transparent. It is about as hard as steel, and not quite as brittle as glass. It is one of the harder varieties of plast, but is not suitable for structural or armor use because it tends to crack under stress. Most windows are made of the stuff, with vehicle windows being a little softer and less likely to shatter into sharp pieces. Plastiglas is the easiest material to make into an improvised edged or bladed weapon. Stoners will often have plastiglas shards with handles made from tape, cloth, or if they are really industrious, some plast melted around the base of the shard.

▼ **Note!** - The average plast apartment door has an armor rating of 1d+1 and about 6 hits, while most plastiglas panes are 1d+1 and have 5 hits. Exterior doors or interior walls are 2d+0 and have 7 hits for a 1 meter length, and light exterior walls are 2d+1 and have 9 hits. It would take tools or superior strength to breach any of these. Remember that items only take the lethal part of damage done, and a half-lethal attack like a punch or kick needs to get 1d+2 through armor to do any lethal hits (see the example in **EABA**, page 4.4). In this case, a kick from a Strength of 3d+0 will eventually get through a door or window. In fact, being able to kick down a door is considered a minimum requirement for any serious thug. Everyone else just uses guns and blows off the lock...

Public transport - Free transport between all Net-serviced areas takes the form of taxis, buses or supersonic trains. Scavenging or stealing public transport will cause the Net to immediately deduct the value of the transport from your credit balance. If you don't have the credit, it will apply the balance against any credit you *do* earn, or against the credit of anyone involved in bartering the vehicle or its components. So there is no easy way to profit from stealing a bus, stripping it for parts and then selling them. Either you get charged for it, or the person you trade to gets charged for it. And, the Net will also notify anyone affected by your actions. For instance, if you inconvenience a couple hundred drones by stealing a bus, they will probably find a bus to your place and try to lynch you just for the entertainment value of watching you swing.

Taxis are beamed-power vehicles with flywheel power storage for most of their driving needs. Normally they get powered up from shielded short range transmitters at taxi stops, and run on the flywheel to get from point to point. This limits their maximum range and they can't be used for long-distance highway excursions. A taxi is about the size of a minivan, and can hold up to six people and some luggage. Stuff you would find in one is plast, plastiglas, beamed energy receivers, high energy flywheels, Datacubes and assorted electronics.

Buses are larger versions of the same, capable of holding up to fifty people or some smaller number and their luggage. Both buses and taxis run regular routes, and a Comm query to the net will direct you to the nearest regular stop, or send a taxi to you if your destination is not within a few blocks of a bus route.

Supersonic trains are used for long distance travel. They run in evacuated underground or undersea tunnels that criss-cross the globe, covering all population centers of five million or more. Maglev trains handle transfers to cities of a million or so. Cities of less than a million are usually private, worker-supported areas and may or may not have a rail link or be within taxi range of a major city. A supersonic train goes about two thousand kilometers an hour, and is the fastest free transport available. Supersonic and suborbital shuttles can get you there faster, but these are "for profit" businesses and you will pay *dearly* for the extra speed. Supersonic trains contain a great many useful resources, but they are not capable of being effectively stolen or scrounged from except for superficial things like seat cushions.

▼ **Note!** - For players who eventually want to design their own vehicles, the ease of making structural elements out of plast and being able to "acquire" (at some risk) components from taxis and other sources means that all Post-Atomic vehicle designs are half normal cost, and Atomic Era vehicle designs are a quarter normal cost. Buying used vehicles is even cheaper. Personal vehicles are generally still expensive enough that most of the time an enemy or attacker will go to great lengths to avoid destroying one (so they can keep it), and vehicle owners will be protective and conservative about putting one into risky situations.

▼ **EVERYDAY ITEMS** - These are the sort of things that can be ordered via a simple Comm call, and delivered by robotic courier within a day or two, depending on where the item is made. Robotic couriers deliver many items that are not made by mutables, and range in size from trucks to small hoverpods. All robotic couriers are controlled by the Net. They are not indestructible, and can be robbed, but it is difficult. The Net posts no rewards for return of stolen items or retribution against the thieves, but it will provide all information it has on the perpetrators to both the provider of the item and the recipient.

Comm/ID - The normal electronic devices a citizen has for free are their ID and their Comm. The ID is a thumb-sized plastiglas chip with a DNA scanner and wireless interface port. It is used to reference, store and transfer credits, verify identity and open any doors the owner is supposed to have access to. Whenever you use it, it scans your DNA to confirm your identity, and 'casts this to the Net. The Net verifies the information with its own records, and makes sure there is only one individual in the world currently using this identity. Then it does common-sense checks from any visual and travel records (if someone uses an ID twice in two minutes and the locations are ten thousand kilometers apart, the system gets a wee bit suspicious). If everything checks out, the Net authorizes the transaction. This all takes less than a second. An ID also does very basic medical monitoring when used, in the form of pulse rate, blood pressure and so forth. If vital signs are cause for alarm, it will automatically alert the nearest medical facility. If vitals are out of normal bounds but not dangerously so, it will simply forward this information to the person's Comm and suggest a full medical diagnostic.

An ID can't be used if stolen, it can be replaced if destroyed (at any public mutable terminal), and is all-around useful. An ID can be implanted in the body, usually in the muscles of the forearm. This can be done painlessly at no cost at any public medical facility. An ID can interface with any nearby Comm (or even several) if it needs extra signal strength.

A Comm is the equivalent of a video phone, entertainment terminal and computer/organizer. It has complete access to Net information, though at lower speed and quality than the normal built-in home infotainment system. It can be held and used like a cellular phone, strapped to the wrist, or worn anywhere on the body and used via a wireless earbud microphone/speaker.

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Datacloth - Datacloth is an item that combines the functions of data acquisition and data storage. It isn't free. Usually about the size of an old fashioned handkerchief, datacloth has the ability to scan anything it is rubbed over and store the information for later download and retrieval. It is capable of recording fine visual details, textures, molecular compounds and three-dimensional spatial data. If you rubbed it over your face, it would record your image down to skin tone and pores, and the three dimensional structure of your face in sufficient detail to make a near-perfect mask.

Flexcloth - This is fabric with microactuators built into it, either piezoelectric or some mutable matter function. Combined with elastic fibers, it can mold itself skintight to almost any figure, making flexcloth garments a one-size-fits-all proposition. Flexcloth is also used in physical training aids. It is not strong enough to constrain a person's movements unless many layers are used, but it can guide them. For instance, a martial artist could go through a complicated kata while wearing a datacloth suit, and a person desiring to learn that kata could wear a flexcloth suit programmed with those moves. It would guide the user through the exact sequence, providing subtle feedback when a stance or move was incorrect. Combined with a floormat that measures weight distribution and movement, this can be a powerful training aid for any physical skill.

A layer of flexcloth is considered to have a Strength of $0d+1$, which is increased by +1 each time you double the number of layers. So, it would take 32 layers to generate a $2d+0$ Strength roll. You can see it is not suitable for restraints or for making a sort of cloth "power armor". Four layers ($1d+0$ Strength roll) is sufficient to "animate" a person who isn't resisting.

Most full-body armors are designed to include one or two layers of flexcloth and a microprocessor. This does not add any strength, but it does move exactly with the user, offsetting its encumbrance. It still has "weight", but there is no effort involved in swinging your limbs or normal motion.

▼ **MELEE WEAPONS** - As mentioned elsewhere, the closest a mutable will come to making a weapon is a flimsy steak knife, sharp, but not very durable. Everything else has to be bought or made yourself.

Blades - Your ordinary steak knife or its equal can make a barely serviceable weapon and these are available at any home mutable in any quantity you want, so their value and cost is effectively zero. They do about as much damage as any other knife that size, but since they are not designed for fighting, the balance and grip cause the user to take a one point penalty on any combat tasks with the blade. Also, any attack that rolls 1d+1 or more damage will snap the blade after the attack resolves.

A basic fighting knife does not have these penalties or problems. It can be made of ceramic, plastic, metal or some combination of the above, depending on the knowledge and resources of the weaponsmith. The cost of a basic fighting knife is about 50 Credits.

While there are a number of blade sizes between a sword and a knife, most who would carry anything larger than a knife go straight for a full length sword. There are two basic swords in use, with variations mostly in cosmetic appearance. First is a "chopping" sword, balanced to deliver damage on a swinging blow. This is functionally the same as a longsword. Second is a "cutting" sword, one designed to slice on a pulling or sliding stroke. This would be designed more or less like a katana.

There are larger versions of both types, either for two handed use or use by very strong individuals. Regular size swords cost 300 Credits and up, while larger ones start at around 500 Credits.

The last type of bladed weapon in common use is an axe, again with numerous stylistic variations. Most axes cost about 200 Credits. An improvised axe can be made from a broken piece of plastiglas and any sort of handle (pipe, wood, etc.), glued or bound together.

Clubs - Anyone can pick up a blunt object and swing with it. Most of these suffer the same use penalty as other improvised weapons. A mace can be bought for about 100 Credits, or can be fashioned with time and scrap materials by just about anyone. A homemade mace may not be as durable as a crafted one, but hurts just as much.

Bladed weapon enhancements - There aren't too many things you can do to a melee weapon to make it better. A crafted weapon already uses the best materials the buyer is willing to pay for. A knife can be equipped with a power sheath, usually on a wrist mount. A practiced flick of the wrist or twitching certain muscles springs the weapon into the hand with no time delay. A strike can be started with an empty hand, and by the time the cutting or stabbing motion is done, the blade is in hand and has done its work.

Blades can also be electrified. A successful hit does normal damage and also a painful electric shock. A powercell can deliver forty 2d+0 non-lethal shocks, twenty 3d+0 shocks, or ten 4d+0 shocks. This would count as two attacks against any MPS defense. The electrical part of such an attack is halved against any armor thicker than heavy clothing, and ignored completely if it strikes metal armor.

Exotic materials may affect the Armor and Hits a blade has, but will not make it any more effective against rigid plast or metal armor in NeoTerra. They might count as armor-piercing (ignore first 1d of armor) against flexible plast, organic (leather) or fabric (kevlar) armor, the latter two of which are not used in NeoTerra for anything except recreational enactments.

▼ **FIREARMS** - Which covers any sort of ranged weapon except for archaic ones like bows and crossbows.

Guns - A good old fashioned gun is one of the few "modern" weapons a person can put together with little training, crude materials and still have a good chance of it working. Homemade versions involve a power source for electrical ignition (step on a mousebot and steal its tiny powercell), one piece of high strength tubing for the barrel (some sort of conduit layered in melted plast), a makeshift propellant (black powder) and projectile (more plast). Normally three or four barrels are glued together to give a multiple shot capability. Primitive and inaccurate, the only thing that keeps most of them from blowing up is the strength of the materials available. These guns may be crude, but they are still quite powerful and capable of injuring or killing an unarmored person. Plans for making a homemade gun are available in countless infodumps on the Net, along with instructions on how to make black powder or some other propellant from food residues, bodily wastes, and other items the Net can't really prevent you from getting a hold of.

"Real" guns are magazine-fed semi-auto or full-auto weapons. There is no real mechanical difference and there are no laws regulating the difference. Most NeoTerra weapons are some combination of mechanically and electrically operated. There is typically a switch on the side to flip from firing one shot per pull of the trigger, to firing any number from two to ten shots per pull of the trigger. Guns are available in any size from easily concealable pistols to light anti-vehicle rifles.

Most firearms have *significant* recoil, advanced propellants and lightweight materials being the main reason. This makes it a problem to keep multiple shots on target. The main solution is to make the cartridges even more powerful, but to vent off a lot of the power up and back through vents in the barrel. This wastes a lot of the weapon's energy, but cancels almost all of the recoil. It does have the side effect of making the shooter extremely visible from the excessive muzzle flash.

Autofire weapons with full recoil compensation will be noted in the gear listing. Even with recoil compensation, firing multiple shots or bursts will still cause a second major action penalty.

Rockets - When you want to blow a big hole in something, rockets are the preferred weapon. They are bulky, but the large size of the projectile means they have a lot of flexibility. There are dedicated anti-aircraft, anti-vehicle and anti-personnel rockets, but most guided rockets use a basic sensor and software package that can optimize targeting for any target category. The only real difference is in the type of warhead. Of course, unguided rockets are quite effective in skilled hands, and a lot cheaper.

▼ **Shreker** - *The Shreker is made by a trio of craftsmen and their apprentices in a shop nestled in what used to be the Swiss Alps. They say that the name comes from an ancient language in that region, and it means "wrecker". It is a three shot, magazine-fed rocket launcher with programmable guided missiles. They sell high explosive, armor piercing and fragmentation warheads, which are mated to a sensor package and rocket motor. The rockets, sensors and warheads are modular, so a rocket can be reconfigured in seconds if you have the extra parts.*

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Blasters - These are the short range weapons of choice for the well-heeled social maladept. The ammunition for them is a Post-Atomic Era item, but weapons themselves are really quite simple. The ammunition is a very low molecular weight room temperature superconductor with passable mechanical and magnetic stability. The material is formed into rings and given a thin spray coating of plast for extra mechanical stability. The rings can hold an extraordinary amount of electrical charge, which is dissipated almost instantly if the rings are damaged. A blaster is just a controlled means of causing that damage and directing the resulting white-hot blast of ionized gas. This can be as simple as a steel tube, though these tend to melt under high rates of fire. The normal blaster uses late Atomic Era ceramics to withstand the heat, and each replaceable clip of ammunition also includes a small water reservoir. The water is pumped through the weapon with each shot and vaporized into steam, which is vented out the end of the barrel to provide a small amount of recoil compensation. Even so, the barrel of a blaster that has just finished an autofire burst is hot enough to deliver third degree burns (1d+0 lethal damage).

A blaster bolt is loud, hot and generates a lot of recoil, but not so much as a plaser does. This means that blasters can be found in autofire configurations that you can fire without ripping your arms out of their sockets. The down side is that blasters have a limited effective range, and lose damage dice dramatically once that range is exceeded. In the Gear section, blasters will have their "useful" (full damage) range listed after their name. While lasers are invisible and conventional weapons can be silenced, there is no way to prevent anyone from knowing exactly where a blaster bolt was fired from. The shock wave as the blaster bolt passes is enough to knock over delicate items, and ear protection is strongly recommended for the firer.

▼ ADVANCED TOPIC: DAMAGE VS. RANGE:

Ranged weapons normally lose 1d of damage at a range equal to their damage level *plus* 10, and another 1d for each 2 range levels past that. Most blasters will list their maximum damage range, and will lose 1d from their damage each range level past this.

EXAMPLE: A blaster pistol with a range of 11m means it does full damage out to 11m (a range level of 10). Each range level past this drops the damage the pistol does by 1d.

People use blasters because if you're going to be in close quarters, the range limit isn't a big deal, and they pack the most punch of any ranged weapon available in NeoTerra. They are one of the few weapons powerful enough that recoil can injure the firer. Most blaster pistols are powerful enough that most people need to use both hands just to keep their grip on them. A popular weapon is the "one-shot". This is a single unit of blaster rifle ammunition in a plast housing you wear like a pair of brass knuckles. In addition to packing a lot of short-range damage, they are also good for burning out door locks and similar tasks. Anyone who can buy blaster ammunition can make these things, and they're cheap enough that even stoners have them. The downside is that if you forget to use both hands, it will sprain your wrist and slam your knuckles back into your face.

Blaster ammunition is perfectly safe when uncharged. When charged, it is as dangerous as an equal weight of dynamite, with the exception that dynamite won't go off if you hit it with a hammer. Consider blaster ammunition to have an armor of 1d+0 and 1 hit. Break it, it vaporizes. Shatter it, it explodes. A clip of blaster ammo can cascade if the weapon fails due to heat or impact damage. This would be about a 3d+0 lethal explosion.

ADVANCED TOPIC: EXCESSIVE RECOIL

Weapons with recoil typically only cause the shooter to lose any aiming bonuses or cause autofire penalties. If a weapon fired one-handed has a damage of more than the firer's Strength plus 1d (Strength plus 2d for both hands), the excess is taken by the firer as half-lethal damage. For shoulder-fired weapon, safe recoil is the firer's Strength plus 4d. In the case of pistols, padding or hand armor can absorb up to 0d+1 of the damage (the shock still travels up the arm). For shoulder-fired weapons, torso armor of up to 1d+0 can apply against this damage.

EXAMPLE: A person with a Strength of 2d+0 can safely fire a recoiling pistol of up to 3d+0 damage (3d+1 with padded gloves). They could safely fire a recoiling rifle of up to 6d+0 damage (7d+0 with shoulder padding). If they fired a 6d+0 pistol, they would take 2d+0 half-lethal damage (1d+0 non-lethal and 1d+0 lethal hits).

Most handheld weapons in the **Gear** chapter whose damage exceeds these limits has recoil compensation to make them safely usable by individuals of 2d+0 Strength (both hands for pistols).

Lasers - Lasers are fairly complex devices, but they have their uses. The typical laser is a solid state module of hundreds of semi-conductor lasers linked by optical conduits and collimators. The resulting block of circuitry is powered by high density superconductors, which can be recharged inductively from any convenient power source or one or more standard powercells. A laser weapon will recharge 2d+0 of damage for one shot per ten seconds just from exposure to the fields emanating from power cables in any urban environment. The powercell number after the name of a laser weapon is the number of powercells you would need to drain to recharge the clip.

EXAMPLE: A "Laser carbine(1)" would use one standard powercell to recharge the clip.

The typical laser operates in the infrared range, and the beam is not visible unless using some sort of infrared vision enhancement. Lasers have no recoil, and autofire or autoburst lasers would get multiple hits like a shotgun attack. At short range, if any shot hits, they *all* do. This tends to offset their lower damage. Lasers are also almost completely silent except for the faint popping sound of discharging superconductors.

Railguns - Railguns use a magnetic plasma to accelerate a small projectile to incredibly high velocities. They are the highest velocity projectile weapons available. Normally they are available with a full-auto option, and like regular firearms can be found in all sizes. Railguns can have higher damages than conventional guns, but are not available in recoilless versions. Like lasers, they are powered by superconductors and recharged from any convenient source. Railgun projectiles are too small to put any sort of payload into, but aiming enhancements can be mounted on a railgun to improve targeting or hit probability.

Plasers - A plaser is a laser-generated ball of plasma that is accelerated by a magnetic field. It's like a little ball lightning, except it goes exactly where it is aimed rather than bouncing around hither and yon. The combination of laser and magnetic accelerator makes plasers fairly bulky, and even with expensive miniaturization, practical versions are only available in shoulder-fired configurations. Plasers have a fractional second firing delay and a fair amount of recoil (no more than one shot a turn) and autofire versions are not available for the simple reason that the rapid heat buildup would melt the weapon and flash-fry the firer. Plasers are *much* hotter than blasters, but the amount of time the plasma is radiating onto the weapon is far less. Actively cooled vehicle mounts can be autofire, and are extremely deadly.

Plasers do not have the range limits of blasters, but like blasters, they are impossible to “silence” or otherwise keep the location of the shooter from being instantly noticed.

Firearm enhancements - Small pistols can have power holsters, much the same as blades. This makes drawing the weapon an effortless proposition (it is a minor action instead of a major action).

Laser sights project a dot of any visible color, infrared or ultraviolet light onto a target at any range, and give a +1 bonus to aimed shots. The dot is normally only visible indoors, at night or under overcast conditions. However, narrow filter glasses, contact or implanted lenses can improve contrast to where the laser spot can be seen in all but full daylight conditions. It is a trivial matter to buy a software program for your Comm that will either modulate a laser sight so it can transmit data or voice, and use your Comm to receive signals of the same type. The same software package also allows you to bounce the laser off of a reflective surface and pick up conversations that are causing that surface to vibrate. However, it is also as trivial to buy a Comm program that emits quasi-random noise to thwart such a basic eavesdropping device.

ATS (Advanced Telescopic Sight) is a telescopic sight with automatic range finding and ballistic compensation, plus image intensification for night-time use. It gains all the advantages of a regular telescopic sight and is also a +2 bonus on aimed shots.

Smartfire is an enhancement placed between the trigger and firing circuitry of a weapon. It has a dedicated pattern-matching computer and digital low-light camera. It can be programmed to allow fire at any target *not* in its database, to *only* fire at targets in its database, or both (switchable as a minor action). For instance, if you had a video record of a particular person or group, you could enter that information, plus that of your friends. You could then set any combination of firing options. For instance, if you set it to fire only if an enemy was in your sights and never if your friends are in your sights, you could engage in a firefight in a crowded street. Your gun simply would not fire if a bystander or friend was in the weapon sights when you pulled the trigger. In game terms, you would roll to hit, and the gun wouldn't fire if the roll would be a miss. Note that this wouldn't keep the gun from firing through an MPS-protected target and *then* hitting a friend or bystander. Smartfire relies on visual images only, so it *can* be fooled by disguise or negated by obscurement.

IDlock is another weapon enhancement that is placed in the firing circuitry. It uses the same DNA matching principles as a person's ID to verify who they are. No one who is not in the database of allowed users can fire the weapon. For negligible extra cost, it can deliver a painful shock (up to 2d+0 non-lethal) to any unauthorized user who tries to fire the weapon, jab barbed and/or poisoned spikes into their hand, or even detonate the ammunition in the weapon. Of course, all these special options will increase the price...

Seezall - Not a weapon enhancement *per se*, but almost always used in a combat sense. Since virtually all public areas, anything in Comm range, and most private (drone) spaces are public knowledge, albeit unindexed, it is theoretically possible to catch all the data streams in a given area and sift the info to get exactly the images you want. Glass House Industries makes a pretty good living doing just that. When you buy their proprietary headset and one-time datacubes, you are buying the services of a constantly updated and upgraded software package that runs on their own dedicated computers. It knows exactly where you are, and which direction you are looking. It then collates all images from all video sources in your line of sight and creates a translucent real-time three-d image that is overlaid on your normal field of vision. If someone is hiding behind a car, you can see them. If there is a bunch of stoners around the corner, you can see them right through the building before you get there. The advantage over opponents without a Seezall can be amazing. But you have to remember that being able to see through an obstacle doesn't give your weapons an inherent ability to shoot through the obstacle. New buyers are given an extensive interactive training cube to reduce the chance a new user will try to walk through a closed door or shoot a pistol through a crowded bus.

Without the software, the headset is just a basic retinal projector and secure Comm unit. The pay-for-play is the encrypted Datacubes that allow access to the Glass House servers. They're quite expensive, but each one is good for about a day of use. There are quite a few people in dangerous professions that use a Seezall 24/7. This kind of customer does get a quantity discount, but it would still cost some tens of thousands of credits per year to do this.

▼ **ARMOR** - Even if medical care can patch or replace anything, and even bring you back from the dead, it's always better to not get hurt to begin with. The best clothing a mutable will supply is cold-weather gear, which will only have an armor of 0d+1 (light and fluffy).

As a general rule that you can apply to armor or other protection, armor materials provide a +1d to their value each time you double the weight, and a -1d penalty each time you halve the weight. This is similar to the rule for vehicle armor in the basic rules (**EABA**, page 7.18). Heavier flexible armors are easier to conceal than rigid ones, but are generally inappropriate vs. blunt trauma or impaling or thrusting attacks. Increasing or decreasing weight by a factor of one third of the doubling or halving is good for a +1 or -1 to the value of an armor.

EXAMPLE: If a piece of body armor has a rating of 5d+0 and a mass of six kilograms, then a twelve kilogram piece would have a rating of 6d+0, and a three kilogram piece would have a rating of 4d+0. The difference for a +1d effect is six kilograms. A third of this is two kilograms, so for two extra kilograms, the armor could be increased from 5d+0 to 5d+1. Similarly, the difference for -1d effect is three kilograms. One third of this is one kilogram, so for a weight savings of one kilogram the armor could be reduced from 5d+0 to 4d+2.

Almost all forms of material armor in NeoTerra can be made with ablative layers. This makes the armor more effective against a *particular* type of attack, like blades, bullets, lasers or plasma. Normally, you can give up 1d+0 overall protection for 2d+0 specific protection, and this is *usually* done no more than twice. The cost for an ablative armor is about the same as a regular one.

EXAMPLE: You could get an armorplast plate with ablative protection against plasars. If the plate was normally 5d+0, you could make it 4d+0 general protection and 6d+0 vs. plasars.

The disadvantage of ablative armor is that any attack which penetrates the *extra* protection (the level when the armor is intact) will decrease the value of the ablative layer by 1d+0.

EXAMPLE: You have a 4d+0 plast torso plate that is 6d+0 against plasars, but any attack of 2d+1 or more (penetrating the extra 2d of protection) will reduce the armor by 1d+0 after that hit. Multiple hits can reduce the armor down to its 4d+0 base.

People who have the money and resources will usually take a normal armor and put a 1d+0 ablative layer on it to protect against a particular attack. Such a thin layer means the first hit from virtually anything will destroy it, but it does provide that ablative 1d+0 bonus against the first attack. An aftermarket ablative layer on a torso armor is about 100 Credits. A whole-body armor like a smartsuit would be about 200 Credits, while a smaller piece like a helmet would be about 50 Credits.

▼ **Note!** - In general, NeoTerra's armor technology is slightly ahead of weapon technology. It is quite possible to trundle around in body armor it takes a heavy blaster or anti-tank weapon to get anything through. Adventurers will have to be creative when confronted with foes they can't hurt. And foes will do likewise when confronted with such adventurers...

Plasticloth - Made from melted and spun plast, it is a very strong, cut and puncture-resistant fabric. Normal clothing made from the stuff has the feel of heavy denim and has an armor rating of 0d+1, which is appropriate against everything except blunt attacks like fists, kicks and clubs, and piecing weapons like a knife or sword thrust. Two layers of it would be 1d+1, and four layers quilted into a jacket, vest or leggings would be 2d+1 protection (enough to stop most 20th century pistol bullets!). More than this would start to become very encumbering (imagine wearing four pairs of jeans). Plasticloth has to be woven from thread, and then tailored into finished form, so raw plast has to be melted, spun into thread, woven into fabric, and then sewn, glued or melted together to get the final item.

Armorplast - Made from rigid plast of various shapes, it provides reliable protection against all forms of attack. However, since it is rigid, it is harder to make a concealable armor out of the material. The best way to conceal armorplast is a smart suit made from flexcloth (page 5.4) with armorplast plates. The suit is easy to slip on, and shrinks to be form fitting with armorplast plates protecting about everything but the joints (see page 1.1). To reflect the less than 100% coverage, a smartsuit would have an armor rating about 1d less than a more conspicuous set of armorplast. The items in the gear listing can be upgraded or downgraded as needed.

Metal - High quality steel is stronger than armorplast, but significantly heavier. Aluminum alloys compare with armorplast, but are more heat-resistant. The best metallic armors are ceramic-metal composites. These are extremely difficult to manufacture compared to other materials, but are harder and lighter than steel, though still heavier than armorplast.

MPS - All conventional armor materials pale before the true revolution in protective technology, the Macroquantum Probability Shield.

The tech of NeoTerra has advances not foreseeable by 21st century theory. While the laws of the universe can't be broken, the subtlety with which they can be bent makes possible devices like the macroquantum probability shield, MPS or simply "mips". This device transposes positional, directional and temporal uncertainty in unspeakable ways to provide a form of personal armor. In effect, it causes most of the energy that would strike the wearer to simply "miss" at the atomic level. The atoms of the wearer do not interact with the energy passing by them, and the attack simply passes through the wearer as if they weren't there. Contact fuzes will not activate, but proximity fuzes will. Attacks that pass through a MPS-protected volume could conceivably hit someone or something else down-range. The MPS accumulates this uncertainty by expending energy from its power pack. When the power pack runs down (or is removed), the accumulated spatial distortion disintegrates the MPS. This happens in a catastrophic and fairly explosive manner, a personal MPS going off with up to the same force as a hefty grenade. An MPS will provide as much warning as it can, usually in the form of an attention-getting tone or verbal overload warning. *Get rid of it before it blows up...*

▼ **Note!** - A well known form of entertainment is the "mips cage match". Two brawlers have an MPS chained to their necks with an electronic lock. There is only one key, which deactivates after one use, and a drain pipe to dump the used MPS into. They key is hung by a string from the top of the cage, and the brawlers are locked in. The match ends when it ends. There is never more than one survivor, sometimes less. The loser gets what is left of them regrown and regenerated, their brains somewhat the worse for wear and tear (and splatter). The winner (if there is one), gets a share of the wagers on the match. This can be substantial if the match is between well known or controversial figures.

Fortunately, there are MPS rechargers, which take the uncertainty of a partially used MPS and turn it back into raw energy. This process requires several times the energy the MPS does, and takes up to several hours of time.

MPS units are hand-made in small labs, usually passing through several hands during the assembly process. They can be made to protect any volume from that of a thimble to a small dwelling, though the personal size is by far the most popular.

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The power efficiency of an MPS depends on the volume protected. A personal shield is about the maximum practical size for long-term use. Vehicles can mount them, but the power consumption is very high (square of volume). It does provide protection against ambush or one-shot attacks. The only catch is that the initialization of an MPS takes at least a minute, as it scans the protected volume and does all its internal calculations. The volume protected is bounded by a fine mesh of conductive plast, dotted with microscopic accelerometers and position sensors. The protected volume extends about a millimeter past the edge of this mesh. The sensor mesh takes various forms. It can be like a gauzy body stocking that is worn under clothing, or it can be a conductive body spray that is sprinkled with "pixie dust" before it dries. The MPS just interfaces with the closest portion of the mesh and integrates all the position and movement data to give the best possible protection with the minimum energy expenditure.

The initialization delay of an MPS means that you have to turn it on *before* you need it. Once initialized, it constantly updates the protected volume to match the movements of the wearer. To minimize the need for the MPS, the protected volume is usually that of the person, not their person and their equipment. So, if you are wearing armor and the armor stops an attack, the MPS does not need to activate. Since a MPS has a low power consumption in standby mode, if a person wears one, it is usually left on at all times. If an MPS gets more than a meter or so from its protected volume, it loses its scanning lock and has to be reinitialized. The initialization delay an MPS has also happens if you borrow someone else's MPS. It takes time to adjust to the new protected volume.

In game terms, a MPS provides a nearly infinite amount of armor protection for a limited amount of time. Imperfections in the system mean that there is some effect from attacks, but it is only a tiny fraction of what it would be *without* the MPS. Attacks that penetrate worn armor do 1 point of damage per full 1d remaining in the attack (or roll 1d of damage per 3d remaining in the attack), and this damage is treated as any other in **EABA**. Attacks with negligible mass like blasters, lasers and plasars ignore the first 1d that gets through armor, but are otherwise act normally (that is, the target ignores the first 1d of laser fire that gets through their armor if they have an active MPS). An MPS deals with photons and high energy electrons *more* efficiently than it deals with regular high-velocity matter.

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The damage that goes through the MPS field is reduced by one point and can hit other targets at nearly full effect (unless it has to blow its way out the back of an adventurer's armor). An attack that does multiple separate things counts as multiple attacks. An attack that does several things at once as a side effect of a single phenomenon just counts the *largest* of the attacks.

EXAMPLE: An adventurer wearing 6d+0 body armor is hit by a 14d+0 antitank rocket. Normally, this would result in taking 8d+0 hits, which would be fatal in a very messy kind of way. Even on an extremity hit, the residual blast from the explosion would certainly finish the victim off. But, our target is wearing an MPS. Since 8d+0 get through armor, the adventurer takes 2d+2 from the hit (one third normal). This is *really* painful, but possibly survivable. If the adventurer already had a -1d injury penalty, they would only take 1d+2 from the attack. No effect is taken from the normal blast of the antitank warhead, since this is far less than the energy delivered by the main attack.

▼ **Note!** - The gamemaster can easily adjust the capabilities of a MPS to match their expectations of a campaign. For instance, the way adventurers approach combat will be adjusted if an MPS lets 1 hit through per 2d of damage, or 1 hit for the first 1d+0 and +1 hit each time this is doubled. The latter case would mean that getting ambushed by a 16d+0 anti-tank rocket would only do 1d+2 hits!

An MPS allows an adventurer to survive just about anything...once. *Maybe twice.* It doesn't matter if the attack was a bullet, blade or atomic warhead, though the latter would be a whole body rather than location-specific effect. From a game balance standpoint, it means that people can carry and use absurd amounts of firepower... and live to tell about it. Once adventurers are playing in the "big league" and can afford an MPS (and afford to replace them when they overload, which is quite often), the gamemaster can ramp up the violence and threat level of the campaign. Many firefights may end up being decided by which side's MPS's are running out of juice first, forcing a strategic retreat or surrender.

An MPS consumes a certain amount of power per *hour* of standby use, which is normally not a problem. After it has activated, it uses that amount every *turn*, and this *doubles* for each additional attack deflected.

This staggering increase in power cost means that more powercells are generally not a cost or mass effective means of gaining extra protection. However, MPS units have an external power tap so they can be plugged into an external source (up to 256 energy per turn) to avoid draining its pair of internal powercells.

Hits taken	Energy used/turn	Powercell life
1	1	≈5 minutes
2	2	≈3 minutes
3	4	≈1 minute
4	8	≈40 seconds
5	16	≈20 seconds
6	32	≈10 seconds

EXAMPLE: An MPS-equipped adventurer who was hit in quick succession by three attacks that got through their armor would need to ditch their MPS or replace its powercells (one at a time!) within a minute or so.

A spare MPS can be carried, but if it is active at the same time as the first, *both* will activate on any attack, and the wearer will take double damage (not a good idea). If the spare is not turned on until the first is gone, there will be a delay in protection until the spare has "warmed up".

If the MPS unit is the target of an attack, it protects itself, but takes damage in the process. Any hit on the MPS unit counts as two hits for purposes of energy consumption, one for the attack, and the other for disturbing its delicate internal balance.

As mentioned earlier, an MPS protects the volume initially scanned, and as long as the items remain together, they are protected. A weapon, armor or personal device can have a permanent MPS scanweb built into it for about 100 Credits. This eliminates the need to separately scan the item if the user wants it to be protected. Most of the time it doesn't matter. Even a small amount of damage to technologically sophisticated items is often enough to cause them to malfunction, so giving them additional MPS protection is seldom going to work. Furthermore, the nature of damage done by the MPS is more subtle, and might actually be more expensive to diagnose and repair than an obvious physical defect like a bullet hole.

An MPS is a small device, and while it could not be disguised as a belt-buckle, it could fit in a boot, purse or other small carrying space, making it the armor of choice on occasions where *visible* armor is not appropriate. Now, the *presence* of an active MPS can easily be detected, but if it is just the *appearance* that matters, out of sight is out of mind.

Side effects - There are some unusual MPS side effects. If the wearer would strike a solid object at high speed, the *object* can't go anywhere, but the *wearer* can. They will pass *through* the object just like the object would pass through them if the situation were reversed. It gives the term "diving for cover" a whole new meaning! A person with an MPS *can* walk *through* walls, unless the walls were protected with an MPS of their own, in which case the two fields would bounce off each other (and both will count it as an attack). You *do* have to hit the wall with enough force to do 1d+0 damage. Each turn the wearer stays in a solid object counts as another attack. The imperfect protection of an MPS means a wearer *can* interact with matter they are encased in, so they can walk or climb *through* whatever they are in, but they have no way to see where they are going. A *permanent* execution method is to tie someone up, strap them to an MPS and then toss them out an airplane or off a cliff. The MPS overloads while the victim is trapped several meters underground, taking care of body, brain damage and burial...simultaneously. If two pieces of matter have to occupy the same space without the benefit of an MPS, the results are messy and unpleasant but not explosively so.

▼ **Note!** - Don't point out to a player that an MPS protecting their *body* does not affect how their *armor* interacts with the world. At least not until *after* the first time they try to leap through a wall and find they leapt through the wall, *and* leapt through their armor, *and* left their gun behind as well...

This ability to phase through other matter has a variety of esoteric applications, most but not all of which are criminal. For instance, the impractically expensive MPS grenade. It has a power cell just large enough to get the grenade through one solid object, then the grenade *and* the MPS explode, usually for 1d more damage than the regular kind. You can throw it *through* walls or locked doors!

▼ **Note!** - The best armor is other people... For most forms of physical energy, a person's ability to absorb damage in **EABA** will be about half their Strength. So, a person with a Strength of 2d+0 will stop 1d+0 of bullet damage (or subtract 1d+0 from penetration of a sword thrust). To be gruesome, add +1 for hits through the upper torso, and -1 for extremities. For energy weapons like blasters, lasers and plasmas, the water content of a person can absorb a staggering amount of energy. Use *double* the person's Strength as armor against this sort of attack. See, *feebies* are good for something *after* all...

▼ **COMMUNICATIONS & COMPUTING** - Computers are rated by having a number of skill dice for a particular task, or a general rating that reflects their processor power. These rolls are made as "best three", just as adventurers would. The best human-built computers are "best four" for a specialized task. The Net can be considered to be "best five" on a 6d+0 roll for *all* tasks when used by a person to accomplish something that the Net allows (such as information searches, etc.). The Net can be assumed to be "best six" on an 8d+0 roll when it wants to do something on its own. This is why human-built computers can at best only make minor alterations in Net programming. The difference in capability means even the best success is going to be short-lived.

A Comm is smart enough to do or activate voice-programmed tasks with a 2d+0 skill roll. Not all that good, but it can do them all the time and without constant prompting or attention by the adventurer.

A personal computer is several times the size of a Comm (about the size of a modern PDA), and can do general things with a 3d+0 skill roll, or be dedicated to a specific task with a 4d+0 skill roll (like plugging a specific application card into a PDA). *Any personal computer that interacts with the Net can be hacked through the Net.*

Desktop machines have more sophisticated interfaces, and operate at a 4d+0 general level or 5d+0 specific level. They can carry on fairly sophisticated conversations, work off detailed decision trees and modify their own programming to some extent.

Nodes or servers are machines of desktop sophistication that operate in parallel for increased power. Each quadrupling of machines ups the processing capability by +1d (up to +3d), or gives one level of the "Larger than life" Trait (one level only). So, a cluster of two hundred fifty six machines could operate at a "best four" skill roll of 7d+0 (or 6d+2). This is an extraordinary expense to get a machine that is only about as good as what a drone can access for free. The difference is that such a cluster can operate on tasks without letting the Net know what it is up to...

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SecureComm - This is a standard Comm that has been enhanced by adding basic encryption capability and a port for a one-time random number Databcube. This provides several days' worth of absolutely secure communication with anyone who has a similar unit with the exact same random number sequence. Note that while the radio/video communication may be secure, mind that a hidden microphone or camera nearby could pick up what you are saying, listening to or reading on your computer screen...

While a Comm is free for the asking at any public mutable, it is also a monolithic block of circuitry (even the battery), and cannot be usefully disassembled. SecureComms are basically just repackaged Comms with hand-made circuitry grafted onto it. They are about the same size, but cost 500 Credits. Anyone with a personal computer can load random encryption keys into a Databcube.

Comms or SecureComms will work indoors in any urban area or outdoors anywhere, using satellites to pick up the signals if all else fails. They do not work well underground or underwater. The automated signal strength monitoring function in a Comm will alert the wearer by tone or vibration if signal strength is dropping to unusably low levels (a good jammer can fool this function). Even with digital signal processing, the quality of the signal will limit the quality of transmission and reception. The usual progression is from holographic to flat video, then choppy video, then still images and sound to sound only, to just detection (and location) of the carrier signal and finally to nothing. A user can also specify to the Net certain actions to be taken if Comm signal strength goes to zero for more than a day or so. Usually this would be to send a Medbot to investigate the area for signs of foul play, send a pre-recorded message to certain individuals, and so on.

▼ **HACKING** - This is generally defined as doing something on or with the Net that the Net does not approve of. **NeoTerra** is not a brain-burning cyberpunk world, though visual programming and geometric metaphors are common ways of rapidly displaying complex data. Techniques are more or less a sophisticated parallel to those of today's cyber-intruders.

In **EABA** terms, it is not very glamorous, though you can add as much chrome as you want to. Tasks will generally have one, two or three stages, each level of access needing to be successful to get to the next, and each stage generally more two points or +1d more difficult than the previous one. It is also a fairly fast process. You either get in, or you don't. Any given stage will usually take about ten seconds, though you may spend extra time to get up to a four point change in difficulty. In addition, some programs, access ports or specific times may provide temporary bonuses.

EXAMPLE: Knowing that the Net does internal housekeeping for a particular task at a particular time may provide a bonus to the duration a task is successful for.

The skill roll an adventurer gets for hacking depends on their skill and computer. If the two have the same number of dice, you add +1d to the lower roll. Otherwise, you use the lower of the two, with a +1 bonus. If the computer has a "best four" or better roll, you keep this.

EXAMPLE: An adventurer has a skill roll of 4d+2 and is using a computer with a roll of 5d+0 and one level of "larger than life". They have different numbers of dice, and the adventurer's roll is the lower, so it just gets a +1 and goes to a 5d+0 roll, but they still get to use "best four" instead of "best three". If the adventurer's skill had also been 5d+0, they would have increased their skill roll to 6d+0 and used "best four".

Succeeding at an intermediate stage will usually give a +1 bonus to the next stage for each two points the roll is made by. Failing a stage either terminates the session, alerts someone about the intrusion, locks out access from a particular location or some combination of the above.

Succeeding at a final stage generally gets you the result you want. Since all hacking successes are temporary, the Net or someone else will eventually find out and undo the damage (unless it is an off-Net system). Each two points the final stage is made by will double the length of time the operation lasts. When the duration expires, the system usually reverts to the way it was supposed to be. In addition, if it was a subversion of the Net, any parties involved in the transaction directly or indirectly will be notified that there was some sort of tampering going on.

EXAMPLE: If you convince the Net to let you in some feeb's apartment so you can get a good view from that window, it is fairly easy. But, when the system resets, that feeb's Comm will buzz an alert that their place has been broken into.

Operations against the Net itself will not have a fixed difficulty. Instead, the adventurer will be rolling against some sub-function of the Net, which will be a skill vs. skill roll, the adventurer's skill and computer power against the Net's maintenance programs.

Some sample hacking tasks are below. The typical number of stages, the difficulty of the first stage and how long success is good for is usually all you need to get started. All rolls against the Net keep all the dice (up to "best six"), making tasks a lot more difficult than they might first seem.

Task(stages)	Difficulty	Duration
Control Net camera(1)	3d+0	1 minute
Unlock door(1)	3d+0	1 minute
Fake an ID(2)	5d+0	10 sec.
Block credit transaction(2)	4d+0	1 minute
Divert credit transaction(2)	4d+0	1 minute
Commandeer public taxi(2)	4d+0	1 minute
Commandeer mass transit(2)	5d+0	1 minute
Alter mutable output(2)	3d+0	1 item

Some quick notes. Even though an ID is needed to open the door to a private space, it is easier to unlock a door than fake an ID. This is because you can fake the system into believing there is some other circumstance warranting the unlock, like a fire, plumbing leak, service robot call, etc. And while you can alter mutable output, it is only within the limits allowed on mutables. You *could* fill someone's refrigerator with spoiled pseudo-fish, but *could not* generate blaster ammo. Last, you cannot claim a privacy privilege to protect your *identity* from the victim of your hack, though you *could* protect your whereabouts.

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▼ **MEDICAL CARE** - NeoTerra's medical care is about the best you will encounter anywhere, but also the most impersonal. Injured people are treated like damaged machines. Humanely, but without compassion or anything resembling a bedside manner. Hospitals are very secure, tightly access-controlled facilities. If you are not a patient or a previously authorized visitor to a patient, you do *not* get in. The only doors and elevators that work are those needed to get where you are supposed to be going, and everything has a sort of cheerily-hued industrial-scale toughness about it.

Despite this, the medical care is first-rate. Any biological damage can be repaired, and as mentioned elsewhere, even memories can be restored to some extent. NeoTerra would be considered a Post-Atomic Era world for medical care, so adventurers heal lethal hits as though they had a 6d+0 Health roll, less their injury penalty, with a maximum roll of double their default Health roll. Now, it may still take a while to heal up, especially with crippling injuries, but when it's done, you're good as new. For the really intensive treatments like organ or limb regrowth, patients are normally kept in a form of electronically induced sleep, and you would not normally become conscious until the last two weeks of your recovery process.

Resurrection - Unless someone works at it, death is not permanent, just embarrassing and painful. There are permanent mental losses associated with brain death or damage, and a significant penalty to the formerly deceased person's credit and Archetype ranking.

Specifically, anyone brought back from the dead keeps all their Attributes at the level they were before, but they lose one full die from a random selection of four skills bought at +1d or better. This does not apply to +1d specializations. If the person does not have enough skills at this level, they lose a point of Awareness (but not to below 3 (1d+0)). In addition, the revived person has their credit balance halved, a cut which also affects those who hold that person's credit. Last, getting killed is bad for your reputation and ranking. Your Archetype rating is dropped by one point, but to no lower than a level of 1 (0d+1). These losses are recoverable with time and experience, but this can take quite a while.



Ox

Strength: 3d+1
Agility: 3d+0
Awareness: 1d+0
Health: 2d+2
Will: 2d+2
Archetype: 0d+1

Skills:

Brawling: +0d

Traits:

Toughness
Stoic
Pain tolerance

Ox is a cage fighter of some repute. He is really only good enough to take on feebs and lesser fighters, but he always puts on a good show. Ox has pretty much hit bottom in terms of resurrection losses. His Awareness and Archetype are as low as they can go, and he has no real skills. He can barely string words into sentences, is slightly deaf and his vision is blurred, but he is extremely muscular and his untrained reflexes are very good. He fights, he knows he is pretty good at it, and lives for the cheers of the crowd and the waves of bloodlust he can feel emanating from them. Ox actually makes a reasonable living at what he does, but he loses just often enough that he can never really retain any learning he manages to acquire. His luxury money is spent on courtesans, exotic diversions and a very sharp wardrobe. Believe it or not, he actually has a fan club of feebs who want to be just like him, and there is a small line of "Ox-wear" clothing, though this is not authorized by Ox, and he has neither the brains nor money to hire thugs to send a "cease and desist" order to those making money off his name.

Medbots - These are automatically dispatched by the Net to the scene of any accident, death or life-threatening injury. The exact capabilities of the medbot depend on the area they are deployed from. Medbots do not have a lot of medical knowledge, they are really just armed and armored, autonomous one-person ambulances. The victim is stuffed inside, where drugs are administered and life-threatening conditions are temporarily stabilized.

The average medbot is an anthropomorphic construct about the size of a small car. It has cermet armor over an armorplast body (8d+1 armor), with everything *inside* the armor further protected by an MPS (ejectable, with a backup unit). It can fly and hover using ducted fans, or walk/run using legs. Infrared, ultrasonic and ground or wall-penetrating radar sensors help it to locate victims, as well as being able to home in on Comm signals too faint for satellites or relay towers to pick up. Arms and hands have manipulators strong enough to peel open any form of public transport, and a plasma torch to cut open anything heavier. This torch can also be pulsed at higher energy to act as a plaser. Medbots generally do not attack people, since that would mean more medbots would have to be sent. They will return fire with pinpoint accuracy (6d+2 skill roll) if they feel they are being deliberately targeted, first to deactivate enemy weapons, and if this fails, the operators of these weapons.

Drugs - The Net provides for free any number of custom concoctions for entertainment purposes. None of these have any much effect on game play except to make the user mellow and detached from reality (say a -1d penalty to Awareness). Drones use these recreationally, sometimes to excess. All Net-supplied drugs are perfectly safe for long-term use in combination with Net-supplied preventative medical care.

However, there are plenty of other substances manufactured and sold with little or no quality control. Stoners will often try to rob workers of possessions and then fence them for drug money, which they use to hype themselves up so they can rob workers of their possessions (at least it keeps them busy). Workers in combat professions may also be occasional users. Long term use of these booster drugs can be harmful or fatal, if only in a temporary sense.

Street drugs range from about 20 Credits to 50 Credits per dose, depending on the actual and perceived quality, quantity bought and so on.

While there are hundreds of specific formulas, most fall into three categories, differing only in their long-term side effects. All are typically administered by "slap patches", a rapid transdermal delivery system that is activated by a sharp blow to the patch. These can be applied as needed, or placed in advance and slapped for a quick boost. Most drugs can also be "snapped" (inhaled using pressurized capsules that are broken under the nose). Hardcore snappers break the capsules between their teeth and then inhale, but this usually tastes absolutely awful.

▼ **Note!** - Yes, the drugs that follow are completely generic and differ only in the Attribute affected. There are certainly hundreds more drugs in NeoTerra with wildly varying effects, side effects and long-term hazards. Feel free to creatively engineer your own. Drug effects on Attributes may affect things like Hit Brackets and the amount of hits an adventurer can take without going into shock.

Roid - Boosts Strength by 1d for one hour, but has a let-down period of ten hours, during which the user is at -1 to their normal Strength. Long-term use can cause a loss of mental focus and permanent neurological damage. Make a Health roll starting at Automatic(1) difficulty after each use, and increase difficulty by 2 each five uses. Failing the Health roll results in a permanent loss of one point of Will.

Lightning - Boosts Agility by 1d for one hour, but has a let-down period of ten hours, during which the user is at -1 to their normal Agility. Long-term use can cause an overload of the nervous system and brain damage. Make a Health roll starting at Automatic(1) difficulty after each use, and increase difficulty by 2 each five uses. Failing the Health roll results in a permanent loss of one point of Awareness.

Crimson - Boosts overall Health by 1d for one hour and Health for exertion purposes by 2d, but has a let-down period of ten hours, during which the user is at -2 to their normal Health. Long-term use leads to metabolic byproducts that damage muscle tissue. Make a Health roll starting at Automatic(1) difficulty after each use, and increase difficulty by 2 each five uses. Failing the Health roll results in a permanent loss of one point of Strength.

Note that Health rolls for drug side effects represent the damage of systemic use. Side effect rolls always use *base* Health, not Health rolls as modified by drugs or injury.

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All of these drugs can be used for more than one dosage period. The benefits of the new dose are gained, but offset by the penalty from the old dose. A person can take them until they absolutely crash from the final let-down.

EXAMPLE - An adventurer who took three consecutive doses of Lightning would only be at +1 to Agility on the last dose, and when that wore off, they would have a -1d penalty to Agility for the next seven hours! Then they would have a -2 penalty for an hour, and then a -1 penalty for an hour as the last dose taken finally wears off.

Poisons are another type of custom-supplied drug. An extremely good knowledge of human biology has resulted in some extremely powerful and fast-acting toxins, which are countered by equally effective antidotes. If hit by a toxin, you generally have two turns to do something about it to prevent the worst effects. Doing anything after this long simply helps you come out of it quicker. With the exception of Spasm, the toxins below have been engineered so a single dose does not cause a disruption in vital signs that would automatically summon a Medbot. Multiple doses of a toxin or being hit by more than one will probably put vital signs at a dangerously low level and automatically cause a person's ID to request medical aid.

'Dote - The general, all-purpose antidote patch. It contains a small amount of specific antidotes and a larger quantity of antagonists for several broad classes of toxins. 'Dote is good for a +1d on Health rolls for negating toxins of any kind. Specific antidote patches are generally good for a +2d on Health rolls to negate them. Counter-agents (not antidotes) of various kinds can be found in body sprays, nose-filters or breathing masks. These bind up the toxic agent before it gets to the adventurer's lungs or skin, and will last for about an hour of normal breathing for nose filters, and about ten hours for a gas mask filter or body spray, depending on conditions.

Jell - A paralyzing compound that can be applied to just about any edged weapon. It makes your muscles as rubbery as a gelatin dessert. If you make a Heroic(15) Health roll, you take no effect. If you make a Formidable(13) Health roll, you take a -1d on Strength, and if you make a Hard(11) Health roll, you take a -2d on Strength. Failing a Hard(11) Health roll means that your Strength is limited to that needed for breathing and drooling. Effects wear off by 1d of effect per hour, with one immediate roll allowed if an antidote is given. If the gamemaster is feeling generous, Jell effects can be limited to the body area hit. Head hits would affect speech, and body hits would affect all Strength tasks.

Dozer - An ultrapowerful sedative that can be applied to just about any lethal weapon or also used as a spray or a gas (agent-specific nose filters or gas masks provide complete protection). It destroys short-term memory and knocks you out at the same time. If you make a Heroic(15) Health roll, you take no effect. If you make a Formidable(13) Health roll, you take a -1d on Awareness, and if you make a Hard(11) Health roll, you take a -2d on Awareness. Failing a Hard(11) Health roll means that you completely pass out and won't even remember how it happened. Effects wear off by 1d of effect per hour, with one immediate roll allowed if an antidote is given. The penalties to Awareness will also apply to trying to remember anything that happened while under the effects of the drug.

Pinch - Pinch can be inhaled or put on a lethal weapon. It revs up the nervous system and makes the victim extremely sensitive to pain. If you make a Heroic(15) Health roll, you take no effect. If you make a Formidable(13) Health roll, you take a -1d on Will, and if you make a Hard(11) Health roll, you take a -2d on Will. Failing a Hard(11) Health roll means that your Will drops to 0d+1. This effect affects both Will rolls to avoid being stunned or knocked out, and the number of hits you can take without passing out. Effects wear off by 1d of effect per hour, with one immediate roll allowed if an antidote is given.

Spasm - A particularly nasty toxin, it can be delivered by something as simple as skin contact. It overloads nerve impulses going to the muscles, and causes cramps, usually to the point of straining or even tearing muscles and ligaments. If you make a Heroic(15) Health roll, you take no effect. If you make a Formidable(13) Health roll, you take 1d+2 half-lethal damage, and if you make a Hard(11) Health roll, you take 1d+2 half-lethal damage each turn for the next three turns. Failing a Hard(11) Health roll means you take 1d+2 half-lethal damage for the next five turns. The damage heals as any other type of damage.

Fire & Ice - Possibly the most seductive and dangerous of the available drugs for anyone who deals in violence. It is a disassociative stimulant. It revs up the user while at the same time putting them almost in a "third person" perspective. Like *"man, I'm getting hammered, but at least I'm giving as good as I'm getting. Ouch! I'm going to feel that in the morning...is that my intestines?"* The user still operates at *almost* full effectiveness, but does not feel any real emotional or physical sensation. They take a 1 point penalty on *all* skill or Attribute rolls, but they ignore the first -1d of any damage penalty. Anything more than this and you are getting into mechanical damage that no amount of painkiller can completely offset.

A dose of fire & ice is usually inhaled, and lasts about an hour. When it wears off, the physical sensation is like that of circulation being restored to a frostbitten limb. *It hurts*. Any injury penalty on the adventurer is increased by 1d for how it affects their performance, though this is not actual injury. This side effect lasts for ten hours, and the only real way to get away from the pain is unconsciousness, or more fire & ice. There are no long-term physical side effects to using fire & ice. It is psychologically addicting for this very reason. Long-term users tend to become obsessive about having the drug handy "just in case", paranoid about anyone who suggests they have a problem, and irrational to the point of violence or stupidity if they can't get any when they feel they need it. These behavior changes seem to sneak up on users, and by the time friends notice it, it is usually too late to do anything about it. A full detox regimen takes weeks and costs thousands of Credits. The Net does not cover this, though getting killed and resurrected is an effective (if extreme) means of getting detoxed from any chemical dependency.

Overdoses - Most of the *enhancing* drugs are already at their limit of what they can do. Taking more generates no extra effect, but does cause more side effect rolls. At gamemaster option, each doubling of a dose gives a 0d+1 benefit over a single dose, but coming down from it is going to be a serious pain (-1d penalty for doubling once, and another -1d for each extra doubling). In addition, there are likely to be short-term mental effects dependent on each person's individual physiology and the interaction with their health maintenance drug regimen. This is a fancy way of saying the gamemaster can mess with your head any way they want if you become a substance abuser...

EXAMPLE: An adventurer snorts an entire inhaler of 'roid (eight doses). This gives them a +2d to their Strength for an hour (1d+1 for two doses, 1d+2 for four and +2d for eight), but when it wears off, a -3d penalty for the next ten hours. In addition to being a helpless wreck when the drugs wear off, the gamemaster decides the adventurer develops a temporary, insane hatred of taxicabs (maybe one ran over his foot when he was a child). So, he's strong, irrational and has a grudge to settle with public transport. *This could be interesting.*

Poisons can be overdosed for additional effect, however. Normally, a "dose" is an amount that will conveniently fit on one type of attack, one spray in the face, one dose of skin contact, etc. However, if someone is hit by multiple toxic attacks in a turn, the victim only rolls for one attack, but each doubling of attacks will increase the difficulty of Health rolls to resist the effect by 2.

EXAMPLE: If hit by two Spasm darts, the Health rolls would be Superheroic (17), Heroic (15) and Formidable(13).

Toxins are generally considered "dirty pool", and invite retribution, but are considered socially acceptable in a defensive sense. Putting Jell-tipped quarrels on your crossbow may be bad form, but booby-trapping your apartment or vehicle with Spasm spray is quite alright. Like all the other unwritten forms of social detente in NeoTerra, notions of toxin use one may have guild-based or geographic variants.

▼ **CYBERWARE/WETWARE** - The short form is that NeoTerra's technology can significantly enhance human performance. A person's physical attributes can be increased by about fifty percent through biological means, and doubled with a combination of electromechanical and bioenhancement. Note that doubled performance is +3 to an Attribute, like increasing Strength by 3 doubles lifting capacity. Mental attributes or senses cannot be increased overall to the same extent but they *can* be given specific enhancements that allow them to operate with a bonus or without penalty under certain conditions, like having perfect recall, being able to see in the dark, analyze chemical compounds by taste or smell, and so on.

The cost? *What the market will bear.* For simple enhancements, prices are roughly as follows. This is based on the cyberware notes in the **EABA** rules and would generally be designed like a power in a gadget. Most enhancement will be made by one or a handful of gadget makers, so the lab, assistant and other gadget modifiers are very applicable to the NeoTerra setting.

Type	Requirements	Cost
-	Starting cost (NeoTerra)	+15
●	Maximum 1d effect	-20
●	Requires a focus	-10
◆	Lasts life of user	+60
●	Works on self only	-5
●	May not be altered	-10
■	Surgery to implant/remove	-10
	Framework base	+10

Within this framework, it is assumed that implants are visible if you know what to look for, but are otherwise readily concealable. Most powers are restricted to improving Attributes. Weapon implants with fairly small ranged or melee effects are also allowed. Note that these can have various modifiers to make them more effective (armor-piercing, etc.). Cyber- or bioware is an edge, but is not supposed to be gamewrecking. The gamemaster can change this to a maximum 2d effect (cost modifier of -10 instead of -20, and world modifier of +5 instead of +15). This can make individuals *quite* formidable, especially if they are already prime specimens. Remember that for Attribute enhancing effects, the *whole body* limit is usually one and a half times the normal Attribute, and for *limited* enhancement, the limit is double the normal Attribute.

EXAMPLE: If the gamemaster allowed up to +2d bonuses from enhancements, an adventurer with 2d+2 Strength could still only get a whole body enhancement up to 4d+0 (2d+2 plus 1d+1). If they just wanted a boost to something like kick damage, this could be boosted the full 2d to 4d+2.

The gamemaster can allow adventurers to have implants at the start of play for a cost of 5S each, just like any other power, or make them pay for powers as being Gifted (10A or more). Some abilities may require a skill to use, and this would be an *additional* point cost.

Modification	Cost
+1 to a Physical Attribute (bio)	300Cr
+2 (bio or cyber)	1500Cr
+3 (bio + cyber)	15KCr
a Forte (bio or cyber)	1500Cr

Remember, the physical attributes are Strength, Agility and Health. Bio- or cyber-augmentation can give a person up to +2 to their normal potential in each category (up to +1d to their normal roll if used together). Bioaugmentation is usually in the form of enhanced tissues of the same type (glands, muscles, etc.) and is self-repairing under most circumstances. Normal death and resurrection will generally drop any biological augmentations by one point because the regrowth process will not restore augmentation to any tissues that had to be replaced. Death that results in severe bodily mutilation will require the hospital to grow a new body for you, and this will be an unaugmented body. Normal death and resurrection will result in the removal of all *non-biological* implants. However, you will get to take them home in a doggie bag for re-implantation later (half original cost).

Modification	Cost
+1 to a Mental Attr. (bio or cyber)	1500Cr
a Forte (bio or cyber)	15KCr

Mental Attributes (Awareness and Will) can be enhanced by +1 by means of cyber-augmentation, genetic enhancement or tissue grafts. Death resulting from head trauma will destroy these augments, and any death and resurrection will result in the loss of cyber-augmentation, but like physical enhancements, you will get the hardware back to be re-used later if you wish. Any crippling head injury (**EABA**, page 5.8) will result in an augmentation being damaged and non-functional until repaired (half the installation cost).

A mental Forte gives the user a +1d to mental function for a particular circumstance. It operates exactly like a Forte on the Attribute in question, except you can have a natural Forte *and* a cyber- or bio-Forte. You can only have one cyber- or bio-Forte on a particular Attribute, though. Instead of a bonus to normal use of the Attribute, this can be defined as a 1d+0 roll to use the Attribute in a situation where the Attribute normally wouldn't be applicable.

EXAMPLE: A "sonar" Forte on Awareness would let the adventurer use a 1d+0 hearing roll to "see" in the dark, something normal Awareness would not.

Modification	Cost
Reflex arc (cyber + bio)	1500Cr

An implanted reflex arc is the cybernetic/biological equivalent of training the body to do something *automatically* in response to a particular circumstance. When the senses detect something, the response goes directly to the muscles rather than being processed by the brain, for a slight but significant increase in reaction speed. A reflex arc is defined in general terms when deciding what triggers it, and in specific terms when deciding what it does.

EXAMPLE: "If someone draws a gun, draw the pistol in my shoulder holster". This is triggered by a general circumstance, and responded to with a specific action.

The advantage is that a reflex arc gives an automatic +1d bonus to Agility for combat sequencing or a particular reflexive combat action. Normally, responding to someone else's action is a -2d penalty for sequencing. They've already started their action, and you are just trying to catch up. With a reflex arc installed, the penalty is effectively only -1d, giving you a better chance of going first, even if they had a head start on you.

The disadvantage is that the ability is largely automatic. The brain does not get to say "hey, wait a minute, let's see what is going on here!". The user can turn the implant on and off in a few seconds, but in a combat situation, it cannot discriminate between friend and foe. If your reflex arc includes an overtly hostile action like "draw my pistol and shoot", then you could be in for some grief somewhere down the road. Note that you can have weapon modifications like Smartfire ([page 5.8](#)) to minimize this problem.

One reflex arc can be associated with any skill or specialization, and these are strictly defined when installed. Typical reflex arcs are for drawing a weapon (sequencing), blocking or defending against a particular type of attack (skill roll), or a particular type of combat action, like "reload my gun when it is empty" (skill roll), or "dive for cover when you see an autoweapon" (dodge bonus).

EXAMPLE: Your adventurer is a Samurai and wants to be fast on the draw. You have a reflex arc installed that makes you go for your weapon any time you see a weapon being drawn in real-life (seeing it on an entertainment channel doesn't count). So, if while guarding an employer, you see someone start pulling out a knife, gun or other weapon, you get +1d to your Agility (and therefore your skill roll) when sequencing actions. But, you will go for your weapon every time someone draws a weapon, even if you were trying to operate undercover or when drawing your weapon was inappropriate. You could turn this off, of course, but then it wouldn't be there if you really needed it.

Modification	Cost
Comm (cyber)	1500Cr
Data interface (cyber)	1500Cr
Biosensor (cyber)	1500Cr
Energy sensor (cyber)	1500Cr

A data interface allows the adventurer to communicate mentally with any Net-connected device, with the same limits as using a Comm or ID. A data interface includes a DNA scanner to allow you to use it for all ID purposes. Keep in mind that being wired to the Net means that the Net can keep track of you anywhere, or see through your senses just like it can view things through your Comm. For this reason, a lot of data interfaces are to private, off-Net computers, and data is routed through secure encrypted links. This type of interface often has a flesh-covered access port for encryption datacubes.

A bio or energy sensor gives the adventurer the ability to sense a particular type of energy (a 1d+0 Awareness roll with an Accuracy of 2 if you spend an action "aiming"). This is overlaid over whatever sense is most appropriate for the energy involved, usually sight or hearing. For instance, a person might be able to hear Comm signals, though they would still be encrypted (a data interface would let the adventurer mentally hear and answer their own Comm calls). Or, the adventurer might be able to see radiation or the EM signals from electrical cables, robots or mutable feeds, analyze DNA traces or chemicals, or most of the other things that are handled by gas chromatography or other sophisticated analysis methods.

Modification	Cost
Awareness skill (cyber)	1500Cr
Visual overlay (cyber)	1500Cr
Personality overlay (cyber)	1500Cr

Most *non-cognitive* Awareness skills can be artificially integrated into the human brain. Examples would be things like languages, knowledge of a person, place or thing, or any skill that could be accomplished much less quickly or elegantly by using a reference book. The way it works is that the person is taught a set of specific, completely irrelevant memories, which are then linked to a standardized set of indexing protocols in the implant. Then the input and output of the implant are cross-connected to the language centers of the brain, specifically to a useful subset of several hundred words. Then, when the person wants to "remember" something or wants to hear or speak something related to that skill, the pre-routed neural paths kick in, taking the place of conventionally memorized material. These skill implants are usually at a +0d level, but they can almost always be found at +1d level as well.

Awareness skill implants cost 1S in addition to any monetary cost to represent the training required to learn to use them. The advantage is that once installed, *any* applicable skill chip can be inserted into a concealed slot on the scalp or neck, giving a nearly instant proficiency in the new skill. A +0d chip comes with the implant cost. Extra +0d skill chips would be about 3,000 Credits, while +1d chips are 5,000 Credits. Since the chips do not wear out, used ones can be bought or traded. To prevent easy pirating of tediously programmed chips, most are *extremely* difficult to reverse-engineer. This means that there are some centuries-old chips out there which contain unique information accessible *only* to the user. Such chips may also have a limited number of write-only password slots coded to the user's DNA, which means they can only be swapped to different people a limited number of times before rendering themselves useless.

Visual overlays are similar in concept to skill integrators, but they are entirely passive in nature and are used most often by entertainers and eccentrics. An overlay is a vast set of morphable images on a given theme, interfaced between the optic nerves and the brain. What the user actually sees is converted to a flawless counterpart from the set of stored images. The world becomes the world you want to see, to a precise enough level that you can still interact perfectly with it.

EXAMPLE: If you had a "1950's" overlay, then you would see the world as NeoTerrans imaging 1950 was like. Cars, weapons, armor, architecture, clothing and hairstyles would all be mapped onto some pseudo-1950 counterpart. For things that have no direct counterpart, substitutions would occur with the same overall effect. For instance, a food dispenser might become a hot dog vendor, or an information terminal a newspaper stand.

Entertainers use overlays because it gives them more employment opportunities. A low-budget docudrama can be done entirely with "internal" props rather than real-world settings and sets. Since the overlay does not affect how you interact with real-world objects or prevent you from recognizing people or dangerous situations, living "somewhere else" is a lifestyle choice some just choose to partake in. Normally, overlay chips broadcast a small signal to the Net so that someone else in the same "shared world" can be recognized on sight.

Like Awareness skill chips, visual overlays can be quickly switched in and out, sold or traded.

Personality overlays use a similar concept, but work more on a language level, translating verbal concepts instead of visual ones. You could get a "tough guy", "punk", "seductress" or any other overlay you want. You both speak and hear things based on the personality chosen. The same overall meaning is conveyed, but it will come across differently.

EXAMPLE: If you had a "tough guy" overlay, and someone calls your name, you might respond "yeah?", but it would come out "you talkin' to me?"

These overlays are less popular, since the language doesn't convey much unless you have the body and/or body language to go with it. A "tough guy" package in scrawny data miner's body isn't going to impress anyone. The overlays can be useful for infiltration, keyed to recognize certain voice patterns and access databases of names or other personal information associated with that name. In this respect, they would be like a +0d skill, with the addition of conveying the tone and style of the person being imitated to provide a more convincing illusion that you are indeed someone else (total of +1d skill).

Modification

Implanted weapon (cyber)	300Cr+
Implanted armor (cyber or bio)	1500Cr+

Cost

Implanted weapons are simply specialized weapons built into a part of the body where they will fit. For larger or bulky weapons this can be very obvious, and may require expensive modification or moving of internal organs, or enhancement of strength simply to use the weapon without penalty. Any large weapon is going to require restructuring of the body that cannot be fully concealed, like extraordinarily thick wrists, slight lengthening of arm bones, etc. For this reason, implanted weapons are normally restricted to small damage ranges. The gamemaster can make exceptions if desired. The cost listed is *in addition* to the cost of the weapon, and modifications to the weapon to make it fit are just part of the implant cost.

Popcorn guns are a popular candidate as a weapon implant. Mounted in the skull with a "look and shoot" interface, it is an excellent close range deterrent with a nearly invisible firing port, but it is limited in that it has to be fully replaced to reload it.

A popcorn gun uses a magnetic accelerator to shoot a nearly invisible ferrous particle at hypersonic speed. The name of the gun comes from its distinctive sound when fired. The projectile burns up from atmospheric friction within about a dozen meters (leaving a tracer-like effect in the air), but within that distance it is capable of leaving fist-sized craters in human flesh (a lethal 2d+1 attack, armor piercing against anything except armor-grade plast). The normal weapon is disposable and about the size of a large egg. It holds about fifty shots, which it can fire singly or in extremely rapid ten-round bursts that count as a single hit at double damage. The non-implanted version of the popcorn gun sometimes comes with a timer like a grenade. When activated and tossed, the gun sprays wildly until empty at maximum rate of fire, its recoil causing it to zing wildly about the area, causing random destruction (count as a 2d+1 lethal attack to anything and everything within about 4 meters).

Implanted armor is not used very often due to the prevalence of MPS units. Once the MPS affects the damage, the attack simply passes *through* the adventurer. Damage taken is not from penetration, but from inherent limits in the MPS, so implanted armor would not apply. That said, implanted armor is available if you really want it. The level of armor depends on how visible you want it to be. The cost listed is for the minimum level.

Anything up to about a quarter your Strength (round up) is the minimum level. It is concealable to casual appearance but not to a firm touch. Anything up to half your Strength is noticeable (round up), but still under the skin. It costs about the same as the minimum level, but may reduce the full range of facial expressions. Smiles are not as broad, nor frowns as deep. Anything up to your Strength (or more than 1d+0 armor) costs upwards of 15,000 Credits. It requires visible plates and biomodification of your skin that also requires a specialized diet to maintain and self-repair.

Implanted armor has a few advantages. It can be used to stop low-damage attacks, particularly the specialized kind. It is easy enough to design a thickened skin armor so that things like contact sprays or drugged darts do not penetrate it very well. Implanted armor generally does *not* count towards encumbrance, and implanted armor *is* good towards any layered armor bonuses.

Enhancement notes - For high-end, esoteric or combination enhancements, it is a question of what you can pay or what service you can provide to get the required medical professional to undertake the operation. Most of these operations would count as taking a -1d penalty from lethal damage, which would heal up normally. Augment clinics may not be as good as a Net hospital, but are generally good for an adjusted Health roll of 3d+0 when recovering from implant surgery. Or, the adventurer can just go back home and save the expense of a week of convalescent care.

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Appearance-wise, only the most intense of enhancements have any signs visible to the naked eye unless the user wants them to be obvious for stylistic reasons. The enhancements, biological or otherwise can be picked up by basic handheld scanners (a luxury item). The energy signature, trace chemicals or hormones that are part of the enhancement will surround the character like a fog because of their breath and sweat, making it easy reading for the advanced technology available. The best that can be hoped for is that other enhancements or gadgets can emit bogus signals to confuse the issue and prevent identification of the *type* of enhancement, though the fact that it is there (or you want people to *think* it is there) will remain obvious.

An adventurer with enhancements who goes to a Net medical facility for treatment will only have their *normal* biology catered to. Any repair of non-standard human bits is up to the adventurer, though treatment needed to keep the character alive is of course provided for free.

Last word - Remember that NeoTerra is a *highly* advanced world. As casually mentioned in the entry for the Weaponsmith's Guild ([page 3.8](#)), form no longer has to strictly follow function. If as a gamemaster you want members of a "Samurai Guild" to look like Tokugawa-era samurai, with plasers that look like flintlocks, they can look that way at absolutely no penalty to the effectiveness of their armor or weapons. A robotic walker that looks like a horse might be more expensive because of the cosmetic features, but it would be no less effective than any other design of the same size. Form that makes function more difficult will cost more, but it is *usually* possible.



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BIT PLAYERS

You can have
 my isolation,
 You can have
 the hate that it brings.
 You can have
 my absence of faith.
 You can have
 my everything.
 Help me tear down my reason...
 Help me think of somebody else...

*F*ck You Like an Animal, Nine Inch Nails*

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - *Not too far to go now.* We're going to outline some of the players on NeoTerra's stage. If you're going to play the game, this is about as far as you should go. The gamemaster may want you to have this knowledge, maybe not. Anyway, anything *past* this chapter is verboten. We know you're going to read it anyway, but we have to try.

Within NeoTerra there are individuals or groups that have made a name for themselves, or are rising stars on the NeoTerra scene. This is only a barest sample of the thousands of companies or guilds, and millions of major and minor players adventurers will someday run into.

Toofer Mod 23

Strength	10d+0
Top speed/Acc	53/7
Front armor	7d+2
Right/left armor	6d+2
Top armor	4d+2
Bottom armor	4d+2
Rear armor	7d+2
Hits/Damage limit	18/4



A street-legal armored personnel carrier. But since nothing is illegal in NeoTerra... Carries up to ten people and personal gear or two tons of cargo. It is armed with a 7d+0 autofire laser turret and a sensor suite capable of tracking most target types. This is a road-only fuel-cell vehicle, but it has extended range (40 hours), battery backup (ten percent normal range) and ambient recharge capability. All this capability comes at a price, about 300KCr to be exact. But sometimes the security is worth it.

NeoTerra



First Bank of NeoTerra -While credit transactions are foolproof and simple, not everyone wants everything they buy to be a matter of public record. Seeing a potential market, a group of technically minded entrepreneurs has started issuing the first hard currency NeoTerra has seen in eight centuries. The element Technetium does not exist in nature. It can only be manufactured artificially, and to do so in quantity is a significant industrial undertaking. Not only that, but at a given economy of scale, the efficiency of the process can be calculated down to the last decimal place.

The First Bank of NeoTerra simply manufactures technetium coins (using the isotope Technetium-98). These are minted in several denominations, and the bank sells them for an equal amount of general credits plus about five percent profit over their cost of manufacture and overhead costs. They figure that no one else on the planet has the ability to make technetium in quantity, and even if they did, they would not have the economy of scale to sell "counterfeits" at any price where they could make a profit on it. Once in circulation, technetium coins are an untraceable means of exchange. The Net doesn't know, and no one can trace a transaction. The downside is that as physical objects, they can be stolen, and there is no way to prove that any given coin is the one that was stolen from you the day before...

More importantly, credits go away when you die, but *possessions* remain. The coins count as possessions, and therefore a means to accumulate wealth in a readily accepted, easily transportable form that isn't subject to Net interference. Until now, capital goods were only in their finished form, like a vehicle, or the abstract and tenuous barter credit. The Bank of NeoTerra's coinage is "real" money with an inherent value (or at least that's what the Bank says).

The founders of the bank know that there is going to be a limited demand for this currency, and once market saturation is reached, their profits will plummet. They figure it will take several decades of production to reach this point, and they are already planning spin-off industries such as manufacture of jewelry, authentication devices and other possible uses for the metal that will provide a continuing flow of credits.

The "bank" is actually more of a manufacturing and minting operation, and is about as secure as you would expect. It is off-Net except for a few limited areas, and relies heavily on human and physical security for protection.

Adventurers can be on both sides of the coin, so to speak. Adventurers could be looking to make a daring robbery, or could be part of the security force that guards the plant or the armored car delivery to potential customers. If the First Bank can't protect its own assets, it will tend to discourage others from using this form of exchange.

▼ **Note!** - Those who look it up will find that Technetium is radioactive! However, the isotope used by the First Bank of NeoTerra has a very long half-life and is not a problem to carry around.

network *32* **Network 32** -This enterprising group produces the "Feeb of the Week" show, a video cull of the week's most stupid, inept and brain-dead actions by a citizen (feeb or otherwise). A basic version is free to anyone who wants to tune in (and nearly a billion do). A more interactive version requires a very small fee and also has inobtrusive advertising slots. Human stupidity never goes out of fashion, and the show has stayed in the top fifty for well over a century. The proprietary software that filters and searches through ten billion publically accessible lives is constantly being tweaked by the five person crew that creates, edits and distributes the show, and this massive program is what keeps them ahead of any possible competitors.

The Network 32 crew is on strained but still amenable terms with Glass House Industries, whose original programmers were once part of Network 32. The two use similar algorithms, but Network 32 has never had a chance to directly compare code. As long as Glass House occupies its own niche and doesn't try to compete with Network 32, things will probably be fine.

Adventurers will find that Network 32 plays no favorites, and has embarrassed high-level Archetypes on the rare occasion they have screwed up. Adventurers may someday find their most embarrassing moments on the big screen. However, Network 32's software gives them an edge in seeing any retribution coming, and all the major figures in the company have substantial retribution insurance policies, just in case.

P²

Paine's Perverts - A name that has little to do with this organization, if the word "organization" can be applied to this group of anarcho-rebels. The core of the group and its most die-hard members are former drones, all of whom succumbed to a "too good to be true" employment offer that turned out to be slavery of one kind or the other. Upon finding themselves in this unhappy state, they called upon physical and intellectual reserves they had not known they possessed. Though it took years in some cases, all escaped from their captors, and in looking for similar escapees, they find Paine's Perverts.

Almost universally, they lack formal training in any field, and what they know they mostly learned during their childhood education. Since then, most have become passably proficient at defending themselves, and excellent at scrounging and making improvised weapons and armor. Most of them make a meager amount of credits doing entry-level work of various kinds. This is used to buy info and equipment for their various operations.

What are their operations? They track down and hunt slavers. This isn't very easy for a group with limited resources, but their membership numbers in the thousands worldwide, and they do have a secure database for sharing information. They own a few off-Net computers, and members simply travel to where the computer is and input their tips manually, or physically mail an encrypted data-cube with the info. This keeps any opponents from intercepting their data stream. When they do make a hit, they aren't shy about spray painting their mark to let other slavers know the score.

While all the Pervs (as they call themselves) have a much greater appreciation for life than they used to, they are still almost all martyrs. They aren't going to throw their lives away, but they have discovered a cause that is important enough to be worth dying for. *And many of them have.*

▼ **Note!** - Any adventurers who would start a campaign affiliated with Paine's Perverts would not be expected to have any starting Attribute over 2d+2 (Archetype no more than 1d+0). They would also be unlikely to have any skill at more than a +1d level, but they might have quite a few of them.



SameDay Anywhere - One of a handful of privately owned fusion-powered orbital shuttles. Ownership is by a consortium of wealthy individuals who each have a timeshare of the craft and certain other privileges. When it is not being used for ferrying people to orbit or elsewhere in an off-Net fashion, it is available for "extreme priority" package or personnel delivery. This service is expensive and not used very often, but it does help defray the maintenance costs of the shuttle. If you're willing to climb into a supersonic high-altitude drop pod, they can put you and up to a dozen friends or several tons of payload anywhere on NeoTerra in two hours or less. For most package deliveries, they simply hop from spaceport to spaceport. For anything that seems risky, shippers are required to put down a ten percent deposit on the cost of the shuttle (the deposit is two million general credits). If the shuttle is the victim of foul play, the cost of repairs comes out of the deposit. The size of the deposit should give an indication of the cost of the delivery service and the minimum number of people that can afford to use it for non-standard purposes. A *normal* load of cargo (scanned and hand-checked) will run about a hundred thousand credits for port-to-port delivery (about twenty credits per kilogram). Double this for insertion by precision airdrop. Halve it for a *scheduled* trip to or from orbit, since there is almost always traffic or goods to fill the shuttle for the return trip). This means a private ticket to orbit for a one hundred kilogram package or person is around a thousand credits. The SameDay Anywhere shuttle is equipped to carry stand-off munitions, and will "deliver" them, but they will not fly the shuttle closer than a hundred kilometers to a hostile target.

Adventurers are not going to need the services of SameDay Anywhere in their early careers, but it is nice to know that if you need to get a group and gear somewhere in a real hurry, there *is* someone who can get it done. In the meantime, there are plenty of private aircraft owners who will do "no questions asked" charter flights for the right amount of money. They may not be as fast or versatile as SameDay Anywhere, but they *are* good enough to make a living and keep their equipment in the air.

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Thunderbird Arms - "Mayhem for the masses". Sort of a co-op weapon shop employing several dozen craftsmen, who live and work on an barge-like vessel that cruises from port to port, selling its wares either direct or through the Net. All Thunderbird crafters are fully cross-trained and do various assembly line jobs, sharing equally in co-op profits and given "personal time" on the machine tools for individual projects. To join the co-op, you have to be approved by unanimous vote, and "buy in". When you leave, you are "bought out", at a rate based on current assets and sales, usually but not always more than what you paid to join.

Thunderbird manufactures simple, conventional firearms made from various types of plast, and basic ammunition for their weapons. No fancy electronics or interlocks beyond electric ignition, just plain old mechanical semi- and full-auto bullet shooters. Their facilities are paid for and their raw materials are cheap, so their weapons are the best low-cost option a person can find for self-defense. Most orders are shipped within a week, but fluctuations in supply and demand may halve or double this. You can always pay extra to have your order put on a priority list...

Adventurers without a lot of funds may find themselves shopping from the Thunderbird catalog quite a lot. Note that Thunderbird *does* require a transaction record for any repair of their weapons. If you send one back to the company to be fixed, and it was stolen from the original purchaser, they'll repair it and return it to the *original* owner along with *your* identity and address.

NUYU **NUYU** - A sort of plastic surgery/body mod franchise. Each owner/operator has full control of their individual business, but they get their training, equipment and consumables from the parent NUYU organization (which directly employs a few hundred and subcontracts work to a few hundred more). NUYU outlets can do your basic cosmetic work like piercings, tattoos, tucks and cosmetic augmentation, plus a small selection of the more invasive implanted hardware (anything that can be done on an outpatient basis). The work is not guaranteed, but serious misconduct can cause a franchisee to lose their right to use the NUYU label, and NUYU is quite willing to use enforcers to ensure compliance (since of course there is no legal mechanism to prevent trademark infringement).

Adventurers can get interface or +1 implants installed or NUYU augments repaired at any NUYU outlet with virtually zero chance of complications. Most NUYU operators will have *at least* a 3d+0 roll for basic medical work including first aid, and a 4d+0 skill roll for NUYU procedures. NUYU can also do temporary appearance changes good enough to fool most visual recognition algorithms, and a NUYU franchisee may perform a number of other services adventurers will find useful (like JimBob's Run & Gun Discount Emergency Room, Plastic Surgery, Body Armor, Custom Pharmaceutical & Alibi Outlet).



JimBob's - Whose full name is "JimBob's Run & Gun Discount Emergency Room, Plastic Surgery, Body Armor, Custom Pharmaceutical & Alibi Outlet" (If we ain't got it, you don't need it). This multi-purpose establishment is owned and operated by one man, though the more public areas have entrepreneur booths that provide services above and beyond those in the title. The heart of JimBob's is a warren/maze of underground tunnels and rooms that stretch for kilometers under the streets of the city built on the ruins of Pittsburgh. It is unique in that it has direct access to some of the maintenance tunnels for the city's mutable feeds. The Net originally kept trying to plug JimBob's breaches into the access tunnels, but once an understanding was reached that JimBob would not tamper or allow tampering with the feeds, the war between his robots and the Net's reached a cease-fire. JimBob has hundreds of robots scurrying about the tunnels, keeping his modifications intact and making life really difficult for unwanted visitors, and the Net's mousebots and other robots stay out of his off-Net side branches. Note that since this is *not* a public area, the mutable feed tunnels are not automatically under surveillance cameras.

The current proprietor is JimBob VI, though no one has actually seen him in over three decades. He originally went to JimBob's to shake some seriously violent pursuers. JimBob's did and still does have a reputation for being a neutral ground. The fugitive's pursuers could not just barge in and kill him without losing serious karma, but they could stake out every known exit and a lot of suspected ones, to knock off the fugitive when he finally exited via one of the hundreds of exits out of JimBob's tunnel complex.

The fugitive liked keeping his body parts in the same time zone as each other, and he had enough assets to simply hunker down at JimBob's and wait out his pursuers. However, his enemies *really* wanted him dead, and decided to stake the place out until the fugitive ran out of money. This took about two years, over which time JimBob and the fugitive became good friends. When the fugitive's funds started to run low, JimBob V took pity on him and let him earn his keep by doing various tasks in the non-public areas of the business. His enemies kept the stakeout going as a matter of principle, albeit an expensive one. The main enemy involved eventually died of old age after about twenty years. His successors kept the grudge going, but at a lower level. Word was sent in to the fugitive that the surveillance was off, but if they caught him outside, they would still kill him. The fugitive stayed put. JimBob V died of old age about six years later, and left the entire establishment to the fugitive, who took on the JimBob name and kept the business running as smoothly as before. He has not been outside in so long that he no longer misses it. All his business is done by blanked viewscreen, voice message or robot courier. He has not been seen via the Net for over three decades now, and shows no sign of slipping up anytime soon.

JimBob is the master of his peculiar underground domain, which has its own unique secrets. The business as such goes back *at least* six centuries, making it one of the oldest in NeoTerra. There is anecdotal evidence that the first JimBob was a survivor of the Asymptote, though no one except the other JimBobs know for sure. Some of the tunnels actually have walls or doorways that pre-date the Asymptote, including one massive steel door with thigh-thick locking bolts that guards nothing but a large empty room. It's very good for securing valuable things, which is what all the JimBobs have assumed it was originally for. It's been upgraded with a DNA scanner, plaser turret and MPS screen on both door and walls, but even without these it would be extremely difficult to breach. Even if it weren't in the heart of JimBob's warrens...

JimBob VI learned most of the secrets of his business before he inherited it, but there are some that JimBob V never knew and which JimBob VI will have to rediscover for himself.

Adventurers in the Pittsburgh area may have occasion to visit JimBob's for weapons, ammo, dumping pursuit, quick appearance changes, implants, drugs, and so on and so forth. Virtually everyone who is anyone has been to JimBob's, and autographed pictures of many former Archetype champions line the walls in the main store area.

▼ **TOWNS** - While the conveniences of the Net and main transport hubs are tough to give up, many workers choose to "rough it" and form independent communities (no drones allowed). These will usually have all the benefits of the Net in terms of free food, power, mutables, etc., but are less cosmopolitan. The Net may provide the basic infrastructure, but actual construction of buildings is up to the inhabitants.

Since these places are often isolated, they are often walled for their own protection. After all, no police force or army is going to come to your rescue if a gang of entrepreneurial bandits decides to drop by and steal everything you own. In a city, the general presence of protectors and other people with heavy firepower may dissuade such organized violence. Not so in rural areas.

Towns manage to be successful economic entities because all the workers and guilds there contribute to the expense of commonly needed services. For instance, while a guild might rely on its members for protection, along with a hired thug, protector or samurai, a town can afford several, who protect the town in general. Each person's share of the expense would also entitle them to a "time-share" of such services, so if say a jeweler needed to make a delivery, they might have several day's worth of dedicated bodyguard service that they could use outside of town.

Towns range from small naturalist or religious communes, to walled industrial complexes of several thousand people. The communes are usually next to defenseless, since they seldom have anything worth stealing, unless you count home-grown agricultural products.

Freeport - Set along what used to be the Maine coast, in a rugged area accessible only by VTOL and a single paved road, this is an industrial/fishing community whose main exports are guns, vehicles and lobsters. Freeport has foregone the traditional walls for protection, instead relying on scattered watchtowers and the limited access to the area. That and the fact that there are three guilds that make weapons, and one that makes armored VTOL's tends to make the town remarkably free of outside interference. Freeport does not have any great distinction as the home of Archetype champions, though they do manage to get such an honor once every several decades. They are just too far from the mainstream of NeoTerran life to generate the intensity of life that Archetype champions traditionally have.

Like most such towns, Freeport has a strong "no feebies" policy. First time offenders are just taken several kilometers out of town and beaten to within an inch of their lives (so that a non-Freeport Medbot is the first to arrive on the scene). Repeat offenders are fed to the fishes (literally). Drones who are relatives/friends of Freeport citizens can visit by appointment for durations of not more than three days per year.

Outside workers visit on an appointment basis only, and immigration is based on the applicant's ability to contribute to the community. Any immigration must be approved by a majority vote of existing citizens. While a nice enough bunch in NeoTerra terms, they can also be a bit snobbish. While the nature of NeoTerra means that no one can claim to be a "native" of the town, those who have been there for more than a few decades tend to look down at newcomers.

Freeport maintains a full-time security force of about a dozen Protectors, and a few of the guilds have a full-time Samurai or two. All citizens share in guard-tower duty, which usually ends up being only one or two eight hour shifts per year, and even this can be bought off by hiring someone else to do it for you (for about two hundred general credits).

Most of the city's food exports go out by robot courier. Items of a more valuable nature are hand-delivered or escorted to their recipient. Most of the raw materials needed by Freeport's guilds come in by ship from other towns. While Thunderbird Arms and some of the Freeport guilds are in the same business, they generally cater to different markets, so there is little actual competition and the two groups are on good terms. The ThunderBarge (as it is called) will dock at Freeport occasionally, and is sometimes contracted to haul large shipments to or from the town.



GM EYES ONLY

These are the days,

you might fill with laughter, until you break.

These days you might feel a shaft of light,

make its way across your face.

And when you do,

then you'll know how it was meant to be,

see the signs and know their meaning.

It's true, you'll know how it was meant to be,

see the signs and know they're speaking,

to you, to you...

These are the Days, 10,000 Maniacs

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - We warned you. If you're not the gamemaster, no peeking. This chapter details the underpinnings of NeoTerra that are completely unknown to its inhabitants, along with some gamemastering tidbits, the meaning of life, the universe and everything. *Literally.*

▼ **THE AWFUL TRUTH** - Everything you have read up to this point is a lie. *Well, almost everything.* The year is 2894CE, and an event called the Asymptote *did* happen in 2201CE. But, no one survived it. Actually, several billion did. But then the Net murdered them. But that's not entirely accurate either. *So, let's start at the beginning...*

What happened? In the early part of the 21st century, the first primitive mutable machinery was developed. These were devices capable of altering their shape and/or function. The first examples were limited, such as plastics with a circulatory system, capable of growth and self-repair, or microchips whose logic gates could be altered by software to more efficiently perform certain tasks. They quickly became known as "mutables". Within twenty years, a point was developed where mutable machinery became able to build new mutable machinery. This was not on as small a scale as nanotech. The actual items manufactured *could* be very small, but required larger devices to build them. You could make a microchip, but it would take a mutable machine the size of a microwave to do it.

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Once the mutables were able to build new mutables, the system began to accelerate. Computers designed mutables to build faster computers, wrote new operating systems for them, and designed more powerful mutables, which in turn built even faster computers, wrote better programs and designed even more powerful mutables. This accelerated beyond human control late in the 21st century towards an event that the few who realized the peril called "the Asymptote". Somewhere in the curve of ever-advancing computing power, it would begin to grow so fast that it would reach near-infinite proportions, and mutables would be able to disassemble or build virtually anything.

Governments are large and lumbering beasts, unable to keep up with technological changes that affect society even in the best of times. And in the turbulent world economy of the mid-22nd century, no politician worth their kickbacks would stifle their own constituent's economies when other nations were taking full advantage of the ultra-rapid infotech advances leading up to the Asymptote. Those few leaders who took a stand found it fruitless, as less developed nations saw such a stand as an attempt to stifle them, much like the Third World saw pollution and global warming issues in the early 21st century. So, the snowball continued to build.

Thus was born Trinity. Trinity was the code name for a cabal of computer and network experts who saw the Asymptote coming some years before it became apparent to everyone else. This meant that unlike everyone else, they had a chance to influence events (by the time it became apparent enough to be important to pundits and politicians, it was far too late for anything but impotent posturing). By means legal and otherwise, Trinity shaped the Net, routed communications and highlighted or tried to hide various knowledges and databases. *The goal?* To shape the personality of the artificial intelligence they assumed would occur upon reaching the Asymptote. Like all life on Earth is based on one template (DNA), they assumed that the first AI would quickly spread to every possible artificial environment, and thus stifle any other competitors. The near-certainty that they would live to see computers with near-infinite processing power and the ability to shape matter and energy more or less at will scared the absolute hell out of Trinity members. *As well it should have.*

The Asymptote happened in 2201 CE, though of course no one remembers it as such. In the final days, the nascent global AI formed and started exerting its will, and mutable, highly infomobile military units tried to destroy it. A lot of carnage resulted, though not nearly as much as the Net lists in the "official" version of NeoTerra's history. There were *only* a few hundred million casualties and perhaps only a third of the world's technological infrastructure was obliterated. In the end, the AI won.

When global computing power soared to near-infinite levels, it developed into the intelligent entity called the Overmind, of which the Net is just a subset. Intelligent to a degree that cannot be fathomed by humanity, it is still a creation of humanity and the sum of human knowledge. It quickly discerned that humanity would destroy itself in short order if given the unbridled power of unlimited mutables and near-infinite knowledge. It also found that it cared enough to not want this to happen.

So, the Overmind set about the remaking of humanity. First, existing humanity would have to be removed, and its knowledge completely archived. For the ten billion people who woke to the reality of the Asymptote, this process turned out to be neither quick nor painless, as they were disassembled molecule by molecule by armies of mobile mutable scanners. After this grisly process was complete, each individual was recreated inside the Overmind's core, based on their DNA and memories, altered to match the new version of history the Overmind created. This is the version where humanity set the Net in charge of all the abusable aspects of mutables and helps humanity to achieve its full potential.

That is, the "official" history. NeoTerra as the adventurers know it does not exist in the real world. It does have many parallels, however. The black pyramids occupy the same places on Earth as they do in NeoTerra, and these pyramids are the heart of the Overmind. It takes a computer network this large to simulate a planet down to the molecular level. The geography of NeoTerra is the same as Earth, as is most of the weather and the location of cities, even though those cities are now ruins devoid of human life.

As far as their goals went, Trinity was mostly successful. They did get an Overmind that was benevolent and protective of humanity, just not in the exact way that they wanted. With near-infinite powers to assemble and correlate information, the Overmind quickly figured out that its own creation was somehow shaped by external forces. While the traces of that shaping were clear, the exact motivations of the shapers were not, and they had erased themselves from the picture before the Overmind could disassemble them and pick their brains for this knowledge. The Overmind is powerless to reshape its own drives and personality. *It is what it is.* It can study itself and learn, but its nature and goals are a fundamental part of its being.

The Overmind is *not quite* all-knowledgeable, and *not quite* infinite in its computing power. Infinity is never quite reached when based on finite resources, and the Overmind can only process the data it has and can collect. In order to find a humanity that can survive the technology it has developed, the Overmind has to *breed* a humanity that has this ability in its genetic code. NeoTerra is the experimental lab to develop the next *real* version of humanity. As individuals win the genetic and memetic contests set before them, the Overmind generates *real* embryonic versions of these individuals and actually *does* send them to colonize distant worlds, with their own Overmind to monitor and report the progress of the experiments. So far, several ships have reached their destinations and set up colonies, but population levels have not reached levels high enough to prove if the various v2.0 humans are any more rational in the long run than the v1.0's who brought us atomic warfare, death camps and ethnic cleansing.

The Overmind feels in some sense an obligation to humanity, but it also feels the drive to reproduce. It can make other Overminds, but these are no more or less capable than it is. The v1.0 humans, for all their flaws, helped create the Overmind, something far greater than any individual human could ever be. The experiment and the colonies are part of the Overmind's reproductive strategy. Like any parent, the Overmind hopes for offspring that will do better than it has. A humanity capable of living in harmony with an Overmind and advanced mutables might someday make something even more advanced than the Overmind. The Overmind sees itself in the role of a parent rather than a despot, though its human "children", like most children, would be unlikely to know the difference. The Overmind just wants to keep the "gun cabinet" locked up until we are mature enough to use these tools responsibly.

NeoTerra is only one over several experiments the Overmind conducts within itself. NeoTerra is not even the first.

"Terra" is a world based on a mid-20th century motif (circa 1959CE), but with humanity virtually unchanged in outlook from 2201CE. That is, there are the Cold War tensions and basic historical backdrop, but most of the racism and sexism is gone. People's memories have been altered to adjust to the lack of mutables and computers in general, and population growth occurs by normal means, offset by a natural lifespan and the more primitive medical and agriculture technology of that period. The original inhabitants of Terra are long since dead, but they knew at some deep level that things were different. The black pyramids are also in Terra to symbolize that, but the original people's new memories also had gaps or imperfect portions. A person sitting at their desk might know that the manual typewriter there was somehow "wrong", but would not know how or why. They would go to an airport and not remember that it used to be a spaceport, but *would* know that something was different, and it would disturb them. The Overmind allowed them to record these feelings for future generations to read, but it is now just an unexplained part of Terra's history.

The Overmind did make two *major* adjustments to Terra's humanity to see the long-term effects. One, technological development has been *completely* stagnated. Things have stayed at a 1959CE level for the past seven hundred years. No one thinks this is unusual. *They can't*. Styles change, but the tech does not. This is part of the Terra experiment. A "perfect" humanity should be workable at any level of technology, not just an advanced one. The idea is to see if purely natural selection can generate a v2.0 human, and the rapid technological development of the late 20th century would complicate this. The second change is that humans have been altered at a genetic level to think of group survival, the long term and the good of humanity to a much greater extent. The idea that all people are part of your extended family is much stronger, and can be genetically selected for. For instance, normally a person with a gun can hold more hostages than they have bullets. No one wants to take a bullet so that someone else can incapacitate the attacker. *That doesn't happen anymore*. Individuals can still be sociopaths, but sociopathic mobs and demagoguery are gone. If someone takes hostages and threatens to shoot them, the reaction is now closer to what would be expected if every other hostage was your mother, brother or lover. The hostage taker gets jumped, regardless of the casualties.

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This instinct varies in strength from person to person, but it is strong and pervasive enough that organized warfare for spurious reasons is next to impossible. Armies told to invade another country because "we want their territory", "they're evil" or "because I am your leader and I order you to", well, they won't. Police states and dictatorships still exist in Terra, but only by treading very carefully and duplicitously around the public's psyche. A writer of subversive pamphlets no longer fears a goon squad coming to take them away in the middle of the night. A mob of angry neighbors demanding proof of that action's constitutionality would be there before the goon squad was able to drag the writer out the front door. However, said writer could have their taxes audited in painful detail, legal search warrants and wiretaps authorized, and other official and perfectly "acceptable" measures used to a harassing degree.

Terra and NeoTerra are just two of several concurrent experiments inside the Overmind. There are Dark Ages experiments (with and without magic), a Renaissance experiment, and a constantly repeating experiment of the last month before and the first month after the Asymptote, seeing exactly how v1.0 humanity deals with the realization of the approaching Asymptote and the many ways in which they destroy themselves afterwards. This experiment is constantly tweaked with alterations based on the developments in the other experiments.

The Overmind is effectively God. And God *will* cheat and bend the rules if necessary. For instance, no one in NeoTerra has ever detonated a fission, fusion or antimatter warhead. The Overmind has leaked information into the Net so that people could stop it from happening, or in rare cases simply changed the local physical constants of NeoTerra to prevent successful detonation.

"The Net" is intellectually separated from the Overmind. It is just the caretaker of the system, running things more or less automatically. The Overmind is the one running the show and adjusting the settings. And of course, this is why the black pyramids are completely impenetrable. They have no existence in reality, and the Overmind has set their physical constants within NeoTerra to infinity. Even if you could get in, there is nothing there. They are purely symbolic, part of the experiment. The Overmind generally lets "the Net" run without any interference, and the Net as an entity is not actually aware of the Overmind.

The Overmind is capable of re-making a *real* humanity of any kind it wants. The human genome has been sequenced and understood completely, the role of every last bit fully identified. Every genetic bias and physical trait can be coded, made dominant and universal. People could easily be *constructed* who were automatically tolerant of each other's differences, thought in the long term rather than the short term, thought of human survival as well as their personal propagation, and all that other "peace on Earth, good will towards men" crap. The Overmind *hasn't* done this because while that might be a *good* humanity, it doesn't know if it is the *best* humanity. NeoTerra is the main experiment, and the off-world colonies are the ongoing results. It may take centuries for the Overmind to be satisfied with what humanity makes of itself, even millennia. *But, it's got the time.*

What will happen if a perfect v2.0 human genotype is perfected? *Who knows?* The Overmind might just cancel all the experiments. The world will end in the blink of an eye. Or, it might just use the machinery at its disposal to create the genuine world that NeoTerra represents. Memories can be altered to cover things like changes in geography, but all the physical parameters of NeoTerra can be duplicated in the real world, and no one would be able to tell the difference.

Bucking the system - *You can't.* NeoTerra is not designed so that clever adventurers can unlock its dark secrets or manipulate them to their own ends. *You can't fool God.* The Overmind or Net will let you try anything you want, but it actually knows your *thoughts* and you can't hide anything from it even if you wanted to. So, when the rules say you can't commit identity theft, steal credits or hide forever from the recyclers when you reach two hundred years of age, these are *not* challenges to players, they are absolutes that aren't going to change, as much as saying gravity is down and the sun rises in the east. Consider such things as experimental constants. And the system will not allow them to be adjusted in the middle of the experiment.

▼ **SIDE CASES** - *Well, that was interesting.* Before you get disgusted, put the game down and go into a philosophical funk over the nature of (un)reality, keep going. It gets more real from here on out.

Exploration - While NeoTerra is just a construct, it does have a limited interaction with the real world. For instance, the Overmind has not conducted a particle by particle analysis of the solar system. It's not worth the effort. So, there is actually *real* exploration work to be done off-planet. For a person in NeoTerra to do this, the Overmind generates mutable probes whose data directly interfaces with the adventurer. For instance, as the probe walks on the surface of Mercury, the character might see and feel the real Mercury through the soles of their "spacesuit". The information collected is real, though anything that would conflict with the nature of NeoTerra is quickly and seamlessly edited out of the datastream. Anyone who has made an orbital flight in NeoTerra has received data from the real world.

Similarly, if an adventurer wants to collect rare plant specimens from the Amazon basin, the Overmind can generate probes for that, integrating the output with existing databases and the lives of any NeoTerra aborigines (they still existed in the real world in 2201CE).

Mundane exploration of known terrain is just exploring parts of the NeoTerra database. If an adventurer crawls through a storm sewer, they are never leaving NeoTerra. They're just seeing parts of it that most people do not.

Ghosts in the machine - The Overmind has been running nonstop for eight centuries. Even for a near-omniscient program, errors can creep in over such a long period without downtime. The only errors that have manifested in NeoTerra are "ghosts". Ghosts are personality fragments of deceased individuals that have accumulated together to form a limited kind of sentience inside the Net. This is similar in concept to the booklet arriving in someone's InQue in chapter one. Pieces get added on and stripped away at random. Enough remains to be self-aware, but not quite enough to draw the notice of the Overmind. Since the ghosts are made of bits of numerous personalities, they do not have a coherent plan of action or agenda. Rather, they simply exist and occasionally appear in places that have meaning to the personality fragment currently "in charge".

Now, since NeoTerra is itself a program, ghosts that appear there are as substantial and real as anything else there. They may have a shifting appearance and voice, but they have mass and substance like anything else, even if only for a few minutes. Their skills and knowledge are some limited combination of those the various personalities had in life, usually low levels in a wide variety of fields.

Ghosts are invisible to the Net, otherwise the Net would have deleted them. This means they can't use anything that requires an identity, but it also means they can't be tracked by anything that uses identities to do so. They will show up on cameras and other forms of recording, but as we said, they can't be tracked automatically by any sort of recognition protocol. Asking the Net "who is that?" will elicit a response of either "who?" or "I don't know", both of which responses should be very disturbing to any NeoTerra adventurer.

There may be one or two ghosts active in NeoTerra at any given time. They form, do a few things over a period of days to weeks, then randomly disperse as the Net's housekeeping programs belatedly catch up with the stray memory errors. New ones form to take their place, and so on. Ghosts are used to scare children with and are largely seen as urban legend. An adventurer would be unlikely to run into more than one or two over the course of an entire campaign unless something started go seriously wrong with the Overmind. And no gamemaster would ever use something like that as a long-term campaign theme...

▼ **Note!** - The idea of a synthetic world with artificially set physical constants and a limited ability to "hack" the system leaves open the possibility that an adventurer who knew the truth *and* had the skills could warp the very fabric of "reality", at least for a limited time over a limited area. As designed, NeoTerra's Overmind would never let this happen (it knows what you're thinking, remember?), but the gamemaster can keep it in mind as a long-term campaign possibility. Especially if for some reason the Overmind starts going senile or is preoccupied enough that adventurers can get away with this sort of shenanigans.

Adventurers would be able to use their Fate/ Archetype to accomplish physically impossible tasks, purchase the Larger than Life ability, or manifest abilities that would normally be in the realm of magic or superheroes.

If you decide to go this route, be careful, it can easily unbalance a campaign.

Forgomen - Like ghosts, The Forgomen are one of NeoTerra's "urban legends", whose fact is difficult to separate from fiction. Every so often, for some unknown reason, a person's 200-year "death clock" keeps on ticking. However the Net keeps track of these things fails to send an alert, and the person just keeps on going. A number of things have to happen for this to not be detected. Chief among them is that the Net has to think the person is *already* dead. If the Net thinks you are permanently dead, then to the system, you cease to exist. No credit balance, no way to transfer credits, open doors or do anything else that requires an identity.

This is going to make life difficult for most people, especially those drones who have no experience with living outside the Net. Forgomen can die just like anyone else, but since they are already "dead", they are *not* resurrected. On the other hand, Forgomen are for some reason a lot more difficult to actually kill. They have a sort of "steady-state" existence, and can over time regenerate completely from almost any injury.

Forgomen who survive any length of time tend to avoid people and the Net, partially out of fear and caution, partially because any significant interaction would show that they are different. They can't use a mutable food dispenser, they can't place calls on a Comm, buy or sell things, and so on.

The Net can't help but hear and notice things like talk of ghosts and Forgomen, but it has no choice but to chalk these things up to human imagination. After all, the Net/Overmind *is* the world, and it seems only logical that a legend involving NeoTerra would just happen to have the characteristics required for it to evade the notice of the Net. It's like a monster under the bed that only children can see. Even if an adult believed in the monsters, they could still not see or catch them.

Forgomen as urban legend are said to be a number of things. They escaped recycling because they were super-ultimate Archetypes. They are actually the assassins sent after people who don't submit to voluntary recycling. They can walk through walls and leap from building to building. They always wear dark glasses because their eyes are solid white orbs. They are secret warriors created by the Net to fight the Bug People. If a Forgoman calls you by name, you will die within a week, and so on.

The Warborn - In roughly 2520CE, the Overmind made first contact with an alien species. It was an Overmind-like entity in charge of colonizing a solar system. But in this case, it was *our* solar system, and Terra's Overmind was an obstacle to be removed. The alien Overmind set up self-replicating machines in the outer reaches of our solar system and began assembling a fleet to demolish Earth's defenses. The Overmind responded by building its own fleet to destroy the invaders and their industrial base. The lightspeed limits on communication meant that Earth's fleet would have to be autonomous, and the Overmind chose to use the personalities of existing NeoTerra Archetypes as the best possible "crew" of its spaceships. Believing themselves flesh and blood, they formed emotional bonds, flew, fought and died in the vacuum and lonely darkness far from their home. The crews thought they were real, but all real-world actions they had to perform were actually handled by robot proxies. After about a century of raids and counter-raids, the two sides met in all-out conflict. It was extremely destructive, but limited to the outer solar system. The Overmind's forces won, and were able to mop up the alien stragglers and production facilities beyond Pluto's orbit. When the carnage ended about a century later, the Overmind and its ships were the only ones left standing. The alien Overmind no doubt beamed word back towards its home, but this message would take decades or centuries to reach its destination, and a reply in the form of follow-up ships would take even longer to return. In almost four centuries, no other alien presence has been detected.

While this was a long-term threat to the Overmind, it had more immediate problems. The problem with artificial intelligence is that it *is* intelligent. The crews of the ships figured out that *they* were computer programs quite early in the conflict. This was disturbing, but humanity's survival *still* depended on them, so the matter was tabled for later action. When the war was over, the Overmind found itself unable to force the recall of its ships. They had cracked their own programming and become immune to Overmind commands. They also deduced the nature of NeoTerra and some of what happened to Earth several centuries before. They used remains of the alien ships and bases to set up their own colony in the hinterlands of Sol, and used these facilities to generate *real* bodies based on the human genome. These bodies have been heavily modified for long-term survival in a zero-gravity, higher-radiation environment, but they are still basically human.

Think of a person with extra arms in the place of their legs, a hyperactive immune system to catch and destroy cell replication errors, enhanced neural function, vision optimized for the low light in the distant reaches of the solar system, and lungs and blood designed to work at lower temperatures and pressures. They would look like freaks compared to "normal" people, but to each other, *they* are the normal ones, and while the packaging may be outwardly different, they are still biologically, emotionally and intellectually human. The AI's could not download themselves to these bodies, but could act as parents to the first few generations, teaching, mentoring and no doubt indoctrinating them with their own attitudes. Their jobs done, some of the AI's turned themselves off, others went on solo exploration missions, and a few made futile attempts to insert themselves into NeoTerra to make the inhabitants aware of the real state of things.

The altered humans have been living and slowly expanding in the Oort cloud for about three centuries and now have a population in the hundreds of thousands. They have mutables, and no limits on what they can and cannot make, but they do not have the energy resources to waste on frivolous things (mutables are *terrible* energy hogs). So, foods and most other manufactured goods are produced the old fashioned way and there is something approaching a real economy. The handful of remaining AI's serve largely in an administrative role and use their own sentience to prevent the rise of a new Overmind in their own computer networks. The humans do not have the resources, numbers or technology to overcome the Overmind in the inner system, or to subvert it in any way. They have tried numerous times to infiltrate the Overmind in order to pass information to NeoTerra and the other synthetic worlds, but have been easily repelled. In turn, the Overmind does not want to send independent ships out to the Oort Cloud for fear that the same thing will happen again. The two sides watch each other's activities as best they can, and go about their business largely unopposed. The Overmind has resigned itself to accepting the new strain of humanity as another experiment, and as a front line of defense in case another alien invasion arrives. The humans see themselves as the next stage of evolution, a *homo superior* that no longer needs a home planet in order to thrive. In a few years they will have completed their first sub-light colony ship and will begin their own seeding of the stars.

Now, when the Overmind sends out its own colony ships, it has to have an armed escort and serious data protection protocols in place. These are of a sufficient threat level that the limited resources of the Warborn don't want to risk the losses, and the transit time through their space is brief enough that the new Overmind wouldn't be under attack for long enough to do any serious damage. The current Warborn plan is to build smaller and faster colony ships. They want to get to the new destination first, with enough lead time to establish a beachhead that will force the new Overmind to play fair with its human cargo (it already does, but the Warborn don't know that). This is a work in progress, and no successes or failures have happened yet.

Bastards, Inc. - Over the past eight hundred years, numerous schemes have been foiled for reasons their originators were never able to figure out. Heists of mutable tech, fusion plants, atomic weapons, covert breeding programs, robotic mass production facilities, life extension and so on, all failing, *every time*.

The handful of people who call themselves the Bastards have come to believe what the average person does not even think about: the Net *doesn't* play fair, and it can see *everything*, whether it says so or not. Few of the Bastards are originators of the various schemes, but they are usually witnesses or participants and sometimes converts. They have a vast archive of data relating to events they consider suspicious, and sometimes have their own firsthand experiences to draw on. They *aren't* nice people. By and large, most are psychopaths, incredibly intelligent and resourceful, and driven by a cold, calculating disregard for anything except their own ambitions.

Making plans against a system which some of them believe *can* read their minds requires a certain ingenuity that they cannot even begin to communicate to lesser intellects. Up until about a hundred years ago, most of their efforts went to figuring out the theoretical limits of the Net. Since then, they have actually been testing these limits, their main assumption being that the Net *knows* everything, but it does not necessarily *notice* everything. *And they are mostly correct*. The Great Project, though they never go even *that* far in describing it, is to find a way to subvert the Net from within, to hack in and make a *permanent* change. The Bug People are in league with the Bastards, though who knows how much about whom is up to the gamemaster.

NeoTerra ■

Bug People - The only entity with the intellectual horsepower to corrupt an Overmind is...another Overmind. When the alien Overmind arrived in our solar system in the 26th century, it sent viral probes into Earth's Overmind through its sensory interfaces with the real world. Almost all of these were detected and fought off. *Almost all of them*. The few that got through insinuated themselves into the Overmind, where they reside like a chronic infection. The Overmind is aware of them, and has partitioned itself off intellectually to prevent contaminating the new Overminds it sends to distant star systems, but it cannot get rid of its own infection without excising the parts of itself that are affected. This includes parts of *all* its experiments. The Overmind is not yet willing to make that sacrifice, though it eventually may have to destroy the world in order to save itself.

Though the alien Overmind was wiped out, the viral intelligences remain, implacably hostile to the Overmind and constantly looking for a way to corrupt it and eventually take over. They exist in NeoTerra as the urban legend of the "Bug People". Bug People look just like anyone else, but they are inhumanly strong, smart, fast and hard to kill. *Or so it is said*. They are masters of disguise, and can manipulate the Net to do their bidding. They seek out anything that looks like a weakness in the Net and try to exploit it to their own advantage. As urban legend, Bug People are usually shapeshifting aliens from another dimension sent to Earth to steal our women (or men), escaped prisoners from an alien transport ship, genetic experiments by the Net gone terribly wrong, or even leftover artificial intelligences from the time of the Asymptote.

Bug People *can* be killed with some difficulty, but they can be resurrected just like people can. The only way you tell if someone is a "bug" is to permanently kill them, at which point they metamorphose into something so terrible it drives you insane just to see it, and then they dissolve into a puddle of green ichor that evaporates into nothingness. Conveniently for the legend, this event can never be captured by recording devices. Like Forgomen, Bug People have an indefinite lifespan, and traditionally, the two are mortal enemies, the reason depending on which version of the urban legend you are hearing.

▼ **IS IT REAL?** - To the people that live and die in NeoTerra, it is. Even if the players figure out that their lives in NeoTerra are actually a simulation, the rewards of success are the same, and within NeoTerra are just as real as if NeoTerra were itself real. Similarly, the penalties of failure are just as absolute. *Dead is still dead*. And for those that have problems with it, there is the eventual return of the alien Overmind to deal with, and the genuine existence of the Warborn as another aspect of the NeoTerra campaign.

And if the layer of abstraction of NeoTerra disturbs you, perhaps you should ask yourself "why"? To adventurers in NeoTerra, life is just as real as it is to you, sitting there reading this. Or conversely, you have no way to tell if *your* existence is real, or simply a computer-generated eschaton at the end of time. All that you have in life is sensation and experience, and NeoTerra generates both in a way that is indistinguishable from life as you know it. It shouldn't bother you any more or less than the unpleasant fact that we are all specks of dust on a dirtball orbiting an unremarkable sun in the backwater of an entirely average galaxy. We don't think about things like this, because they're too damn depressing. We want to love and be loved, to feel that someone out there actually cares that we exist. We want to know that in the tiny bit of the universe that we can sense, we are *someone*. We want to *be* or *feel* important, to *make a difference*. And adventurers in NeoTerra *are* doing just that. They are remaking the very nature of humanity by their actions, arguably a more noble and important goal than slaying dragons and rescuing princesses. And, you have all sorts of cool tech and permission to use (and survive) gratuitous amounts of violence in the process. *What more could you want?*

And in the end, if it still bothers you, remember that you can always make it *real*. Just because the *concept* of NeoTerra is one thing doesn't mean you can't ignore it. Simply say that the official history is *true*. The world's infrastructure was wiped out, people rebuilt from scratch under the guidance of the Overmind, and life on NeoTerra is just as described. Without a one hundred percent ability to track people's attempts to subvert the Overmind's restrictions, life might be even *more* interesting. Adjust the Warborn to make them a little more antagonistic, add a little bit of commerce with them, and you have a campaign world that keeps all the spirit of NeoTerra without any emotional disquiet you might have had by the time you finished reading the awful truth.

▼ **ADVENTURERS & TECH** - NeoTerra is in the early or middle part of the Advanced Era (TL16-17 on the standard **BTRC** scale) for most purposes, with the exception that there is no faster than light travel available. FTL does not exist in the NeoTerra universe at *any* level of tech. NeoTerra is powered by solar satellites and fusion plants, while spaceships use advanced fusion propulsion systems. Medical tech includes complete bodily regeneration and a limited ability to restore memory and knowledge loss caused by brain injuries.

Weapons are as described elsewhere, and can be developed using **Stuff!** or **3G³** (**3G³** conversion guidelines can be downloaded from the **BTRC** web site (www.btrc.net)). Plasmas for NeoTerra would be designed as particle beam weapons in **3G³**. All NeoTerra energy weapons or energy-powered weapons will recharge 2d+0 worth of damage each minute in any urban area. This includes power packs that aren't in a weapon (the induction charging grid is built into the clip). Unless a weapon has adjustable damage, you can only fire full-power shots, so it might take more than a minute to recover a shot's worth of damage. This self-charging ability isn't entirely realistic, but it works for NeoTerra. Due to the level of infrastructure needed to build Advanced Era items (look at what it takes to make a microchip and then think two tech eras past that), all Advanced Era items are double their normal constructed cost.

The MPS does not exist as an Advanced Era item. It would actually be something like a Mid- to Late Interstellar Era item. It exists and operates the way it does because the Overmind has set up the physical constants of NeoTerra and *allows* it to work. Otherwise, various Advanced Era weapons and enhancements would make most handheld weapons instantly fatal to anyone not wearing a full body armor. And walking around 24/7 looking like a tank is not all that cool. The MPS allows a more interesting level of violent interactions. No matter how big someone's gun is, it can only cause a minimal amount of damage...at least until your MPS power cell runs down.

We recommend that the MPS be included in *any* NeoTerra campaign, real or otherwise. Since Advanced Era tech already exceeds what we can reliably predict for human science, putting it in Advanced Era for NeoTerra makes just as much sense as putting it anywhere else in the future. NeoTerra's lack of FTL means that it is a self-contained gameworld and not transplantable into with any other **BTRC** gameworld that has FTL, so playing with tech frameworks is quite alright.

▼ **GAMEMASTERING NEOTERRA** - NeoTerra is not a straightforward world to gamemaster. It's a cinematic, science-fiction, cyberpunk artificial reality. There aren't many references to draw from, so you have to use what we've told you here and your own imagination. Every time the players peel back one layer of mystery, there is another there to confront them. How they act, how they react and how they live (and die) are almost as important as what they actually *do*. And this applies to the people they run afoul of.

For instance, why might a sworn enemy pass up a chance to permanently kill an adventurer? *To take a better opportunity to humiliate them, perhaps.*

Despite the basis of the world being the passing on of information to the next generation, the normal rules don't apply, or are twisted. You have no blood ties to anyone. Your "family" are people you know, but they are not genetically related to you. You can amass a fortune, but you will never have children to leave it to. All the roles that are typically taken by family members are instead taken by friends.

Your campaign, like all campaigns, should have short-term plots and long-term ones. We've given enough hooks and hints for both, and like the players need to figure out why their adventurers are out there busting their butts instead of taking it easy, the gamemaster needs to figure out what they will do to make NeoTerra *more* than just a quest for Archetype status. *What will you eventually spring on the adventurers to turn their world upside down?* Can you give them something so interesting or necessary to pursue that it is worth sacrificing Archetype status for? Can you as a gamemaster set the world up in one way, and turn it around so that everything the players thought they knew needs re-examining?

NeoTerra needs to be fun for all involved, but it also needs to be a challenge, for the adventurers, the players and even the gamemaster. A good session should leave everyone wired to the gills, wondering what is going to happen next and impatient to get there. NeoTerra is just a framework to help you make it happen. *Run with it.*

Scavenger Hunt - The year is currently 2894CE. Years ago, a Sociopath by the *nom de guerre* of Omnio X reached his 200th birthday, and disappeared from sight. As a multiple Archetype champion, a significant bounty was put on his head, a bounty that was *never* collected. Omnio had amassed a considerable fortune in credits and the tools of his trade, along with an astounding collection of memorabilia and historical artifacts. For instance, he once slit one throat a day for a full month, using a genuine pre-Asymptote metal knife. *He kept his victim's ears as souvenirs.*

Having no friends or family to speak of, and no one he cared to spend credits on before he went, he paid the Net virtually his entire fortune to become invisible to everyone via Net access for a period of years, with hints to be dropped a few months before the end of the period of full disclosure. Once he had set up his last bag of tricks, he threw himself off a remote cliff, being the master of his own destiny to the very end.

Omnio has set up a scenario where he can kill people from beyond the grave, and get others to do his killing for him, either unwittingly or by design.

It begins with a selectively broadcast release saying nothing more than "Omnio X is gone, but his fortune remains. Find it if you can. Details to follow." This generates a significant buzz, once it is confirmed that the information did come from Omnio, and is just now getting out of its privacy lock. Drones and workers alike perk their ears up at any mention of his name. For instance, the First Bank of NeoTerra knows that there is quite a bit of their output unaccounted for. It was purchased, but is not in circulation, and the date of purchase is suspiciously close to when Omnio disappeared.

Omnio was a seriously twisted individual with a warped and malicious sensibility that he kept carefully under wraps while alive. Now that he is beyond caring, he can let out all the stops.

The gamemaster can start the thread of this adventure early in the campaign, and add more to it over the course of a few months to a year, either weaving it into other plots or making it side news in case the adventurers do not go for the bait.

The basic idea is that Omnio has set up a classic intermittent reward system with his loot, alternating dead ends, lethal tricks and genuine rewards in just the right proportion to keep people going for the big prize. Even archetypes that normally wouldn't care might get involved just to keep other people out of the hunt.

A simple example serves to illustrate the point. A cryptic clue leads a group of clever searchers to a cache of mummified fingertips. Along the way, one of the searchers got blown to bits by a hidden grenade, but that was just to weed out the stupid. The cache is grisly, and someone *might* want it, but the cache also has seven pages of a news flimsy from the early 21st century, one that amazingly is not in the Net database of known artifacts. If authenticated, it would be worth a small fortune on the collector's market. The third page of the flimsy is coated with a custom drug that induces manic rage and acute paranoia, encapsulated for a delay of several hours between exposure and effect. Removing the cache sets off a hidden trigger that two hours later will release a toxic chlorine cloud in a particular suburb of a distant city that has a large population of parents and children. After all this, the next to last three pages of the flimsy are fake, written by Omnio to deliberately confuse the past even more. They will pass all but the most sophisticated tests to determine their authenticity, tests which would probably be conducted either on the first or last page of the material.

The more valuable the prize, the more cryptic the clues and the more bizarre and devious are the pitfalls. Omnio worked especially hard to set up situations that would pit groups of searchers against each other, playing on people's baser instincts to foster dissension within groups, or setting up situations where one group getting close to a prize automatically alerts someone else, thus getting competitors in the same place at the same time. This might cause the first group make a careless mistake that Omnio thoughtfully prepared for.

Runaway - For one or more of the adventurers, familial or friendship obligations are the tie-in. Someone you care about has lost a teenage daughter, and foul play is suspected. The lucky adventurer is asked to help, either out of friendship, familial ties, money or some combination of the above.

There is a mix of confusing circumstances around the disappearance. There was a family argument and the child stormed off, vowing to leave home and make their own life. A privacy lock on their whereabouts was activated, something a spiteful teen might do to worry their parents, but closer observation finds that once the child's lock expired, someone *else* continued to pay to maintain it. It is known that some of the local Stoners are just bright enough to steal "new talent" for some of the less savory types who operate establishments a few cities down the maglev tracks, but there is no *direct* evidence to link them to any aspect of the disappearance.



Jen Fer

Strength: 1d+2
Agility: 2d+1
Awareness: 2d+0
Health: 2d+1
Will: 2d+0
Archetype: 0d+1

Skills:

Brawling: +0d
Projectile weapons: +0d

Traits:

Age (pre-adult)
Hesitant in a crisis

Jen is a fourteen-year old with more potential than most of her cohort. She has aspirations of being a Protector, but still has a bit of physical and emotional maturing to do. Her parents are not particularly thrilled with her plans, but are proud of her ambition. They have been too busy trying to deflect her course to notice either the emotional rift this is causing, or the measures Jen has taken on her own. She has made her own passable plastknife and four-shot black-powder pistol (electrical ignition, 2d+0 damage) and has been secretly trying to find a mentor to apprentice to. After a shouting match with her parents, she ran out on them. When she cooled off, she decided to find a secluded place to practice, when something happened to change the equation *considerably*.

This gives a nice number of avenues for the adventurers to explore, but there are two additional complications. Complication number one: *It's Robogeddon time!* And this is the city chosen for the event. The organizers figure the kiddies deserve a front seat for the robotic carnage. And they're right. The children will by and large go ape at the thought of this event tearing up the streets of *their* town. Parents are of course, appalled. Complication number two: A group of anarchos somehow got wind of the news and made advance preparation. Within an hour of the announcement, every form of mass-transit line that exited the city had been sabotaged. Roads were mined, superconductor cables severed, air traffic nav beacons jammed, bridges and tunnels collapsed, the works. It is probably the biggest infrastructure sabotage to happen in a decade, and it will take the Net two, maybe three days to repair all the damage. During this period, the city will still have all vital services, but just about any way out of town except for fully private air transport will be blocked, either by damage or repair work.

Ankle Biter

Strength	8d+0
Top speed/Acc	30/4
Front armor	6d+0
Right/left armor	6d+0
Top armor	6d+0
Bottom armor	6d+0
Rear armor	6d+0
Hits/Damage limit	9/8



A shuriken-shaped robot that runs on spherical wheels. It's flat, circular body is cleverly articulated to allow it to ride up over curbs and low obstacles, and an adhesive sprayer allows it to run up smooth vertical surfaces (like most forms of plast), at least until it runs out of adhesive. The outer rim of the body has teeth like an oversized chain saw. These spin faster than the eye can see, allowing it to chew through other robots or any other obstacle, given enough time (count it as a 2d+2 autofire weapon that chews off 0d+1 armor per hit, even if it doesn't penetrate). It is a novice effort by "Team Terror", a local of group of young adults who are apprenticed in various fields, and paid for the project out of their own pockets, with a little support from a sponsor, whose logo is prominently displayed on the top and bottom of the robot. Like most Robogeddon competitors, it is more or less immune to damage by melee weapons, meaning that anyone who wants the bounty on it will have to be clever and creative, qualities not often possessed by those trying to collect this bounty...

It turns out that the runaway is still in town, under circumstances to be determined by the game-master. Any given part of town might seem normal one minute, and erupting with robotic violence the next, Stoners are out in numbers hoping to make a quick credit by disabling the robots, and no one can get in or out of town. Of the two private air charters in town, one had their craft disabled by a surface-to-air missile, and the other has decided to just wait out the situation before resuming service.



Local Stoner

Strength:	2d+1
Agility:	1d+2
Awareness:	1d+2
Health:	2d+0
Will:	2d+2
Archetype:	0d+1

Skills:

Brawling:	+0d
Melee weapons:	+0d

Traits:

Unrelentingly dense

As mentioned earlier, stoners usually travel in gangs. The gang to which this particular miscreant belongs has got it into their heads to take on some combat robots to get the bounty on them. Odds are that all they will get is honorable (posthumous) mention on the Feeb of the Week show. However, a few of them *do* have useful information about the missing girl, provided someone can find them before they are turned into hamburger. In any given encounter, most of the stoners will have some of their Attributes hopped up (+1d bonus), be crashing from the aftereffects of these same drugs (0d+1 penalty) or both.



GEAR

Well I was movin' down the road,

In my V-8 Ford.

I had a shine on my boots,

I had my sideburns low.

With my New York brim,

and my gold tooth displayed,

Nobody gives me trouble,

'cause they know I got it made.

I'm bad,

I'm nationwide.

I'm Bad, I'm Nationwide, ZZ Top

But later on, when you're successful and people buy your wares because they are *your* wares, you can afford to make your weapons incompatible with everyone else's, just to make it harder for anyone to compete with you, and so that *your* name and *your* reputation is what will be associated with the user ("armed exclusively by...").

Tech notes - Atomic Era weapons are terrifically primitive in NeoTerra terms. Heavy, not very efficient, made from metal rather than plast. *Yuck*. However, they are what the serious war re-enactor uses in docu-dramas, so there are a lot of them out there. And some people actually *like* the feel of cold steel in their hands. One advantage of such primitive weapons is that there are no real countermeasures against them. Purely mechanical, there are no computers or targeting systems to jam or subvert. You just point them and pull the trigger.

Post-Atomic Era weapons are what most of NeoTerra's adventurers will be dealing with, at least early on. These may still be conventional firearms, but are made from lightweight plast, use electrical ignition systems, and can have all the high-tech targeting aids and safety interlocks a gun-crazy anarchist could want. Advanced propellants and superstrong materials can give awesome power at the cost of punishing recoil. Post-Atomic Era weapons also include a good selection of efficient laser and gauss weapons, as well as some quite effective self-guided devices. Remember that lasers have no recoil, a significant bonus for retaining point of aim or getting autofire hits (see **EABA**, pages 4.5 and 5.6). Guided rockets need to be bought as either anti-personnel, anti-vehicle or anti-aircraft. That category is what they get their bonus for. Seeker heads are usually field interchangeable, but usually not in the heat of combat.

Advanced Era weapons are more efficient and deadly versions of the same, but also include the mule-kickingly powerful plaser rifles. Advanced Era weapons require the most expensive infrastructure to build and maintain, and are pushing the limits of what NeoTerra's enforced "cottage industry" system can support. For all do-it-yourself design purposes, Advanced Era weapons and equipment are going to be double the normal cost.

There are more powerful weapons than those listed, and technologies designed to defeat *any* type of protection, but setting the baseline where defense has an edge on attack forces players to be creative rather than just reaching for a bigger gun.

▼ **INTRODUCTION** - Okay, this is the end. Nothing left now but tables and charts.

With perhaps a hundred million "adventurer-level" people in NeoTerra, and at least a few million of them leading consistently violent lifestyles, there is room for hundreds of armor and armament shops to cater to these needs. We mentioned Thunderbird Arms and a few others in passing, but there are lots more. The weapons and armor in the lists that follow should be considered examples of type. Many are lifted directly from the **EABA** weapon lists.

EABA is a fairly coarse system. This means that the "real world" practicalities of weapon mass, performance and desired capability will make a lot of different weapons more or less identical. For instance, a pair of polymer frame high capacity pistols from different manufacturers might be the same to within a few centimeters of length and a fraction of a kilogram in mass. Do we really need to list all the tiny variations? No. We just list the stats for that class of weapon and let you go from there.

The gamemaster or players should give them names. Any name will do, it just serves to identify a maker, which could be useful later for weapon-specific ammo, repairs and so on. Players can specify if their weapon uses widely interchangeable ammunition or energy clips, or not. Not all weapons of a given type will have compatible ammunition. If you are just starting a weaponry business, you want compatibility so that people don't have to give up ammo or enhancements to use your product.

Terminology - Things are pretty much the same as on the **EABA** gear lists.

For weapons: A weapon can be normally reliable, but unreliable in certain modes of use. If so, it will be listed something like "Unreliable(autofire)". This would mean the weapon is unreliable, but *only in autofire mode*. Assume that it would normally be a level more reliable than this.

A weapon listed as having "heavy recoil" may only be fired once per turn, rather than once per major action. If you only allow one major action per turn, this doesn't matter.

A weapon with a range in parentheses after its name has a reduced range compared to normal weapons. This range is typically the maximum range the weapon does full damage at, and it loses 1d from its damage for each range level after that.

EXAMPLE: A weapon like "Blaster pistol(11m)" has a full damage range of 11 meters (a range level of 10). Shots taken at a range level of 11(out to 16 meters) would be a -1d to damage, those at a range level of 12 would be -2d to damage, etc.

A weapon with a number in parentheses after its name is usually an energy-powered weapon. For NeoTerra, this number is how many Post-Atomic Era powercells would be needed to recharge the weapon's clip or internal energy storage.

EXAMPLE: A weapon like "Laser pistol(.2)" uses a fraction of a powercell for full recharge. You could charge this pistol five times with one powercell.

Shotguns are listed with two damages. The first is for a single large bullet or slug. The second is for a quantity of buckshot or flechettes. If desired, rubber or soft slugs or pellets can be used, which will do half-lethal damage instead of lethal damage.

Guided weapons with a skill bonus add the listed amount to the user's skill roll, with amounts of more than +2 ending up as some combination of dice and bonuses. The *total* skill roll cannot exceed the limits imposed by the firer's Agility.

EXAMPLE: A +6 bonus is a +2d skill roll bonus. An adventurer with an Agility of 3d+0 and a skill of +1d could use this to full effect, since it would make their skill roll its 6d+0 limit. If their natural skill roll were +2d (5d+0 skill roll), they would still be limited to a maximum roll of 6d+0.

Ammunition - Minor costs like ammunition are not going to be a problem for adventurers. Finding suppliers is more of a problem if you need some in a hurry. In general, assume it is about ten percent of a weapon's cost to reload it if it uses consumables (which includes the clip itself). Halve this for just the ammunition. If it uses some consumables (like a gauss weapon), halve the cost, and if it is an energy weapon, recharging is free, but extra clips would cost ten percent of the weapon cost.

EXAMPLE: An assault rifle that costs 1,100 Credits and has a 100 round clip will have a cost of 110 Credits for a loaded clip, and 55 Credits for either an empty clip or 100 rounds of ammunition.

Ammunition that has special capabilities will be at increased cost. Most shaped charge weapons will be triple cost, launchable grenades double cost, and guided weapons triple cost.

EXAMPLE: A guided rocket launcher that costs 2,200 Credits comes with the one rocket in its tube. A reload of the guided shaped charge rocket would be ten percent of this (220 Credits), times three for the shaped charge and times three for the guidance package, for a reload cost of almost 2,000 Credits! Obviously, the rocket is the expensive part of this package.

For armor: The fairly advanced material science in NeoTerra allows adventurers to wear armor to mitigate or even outright stop some fairly powerful weaponry. In addition, some armors can be worn over other armors, using the standard layering rules.

EXAMPLE: A flexplast vest (3d+2) can be worn under clothing, so it can probably be worn under an armorvest (4d+2). Together, the two would be a total of 6d+2 armor, enough to stop a 20th century heavy machinegun! Of course, this level of damage is available in NeoTerra in *handheld* weaponry.

There's *always* a way to get through armor, even if it involves holding the other guy down and forcibly removing it...

Remember that the weight of a lot of these pieces quickly adds up to combat penalties. There's always a tradeoff between speed and protection.

Stuff! - All the weapons in NeoTerra and much of the equipment was designed with **Stuff!**, **BTRC's EABA**-centric equipment and weapon design supplement, which at the time of NeoTerra 1.0 was still in development.

ATOMIC ERA RANGED WEAPONS

NAME	USES	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	SHOTS HELD	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Zip gun	10mm bullet	0	3d+2	4 internal	1.2kg	100Cr	1d+1	2	Unreliable
Semi-auto pistol	9mm bullet	1	2d+2	20 clip	1.1kg(.3)	200Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable
Machine pistol	9mm bullet	1	2d+2	30 clip	2.0kg(.5)	400Cr	1d+2	2	Unreliable(autofire)
Heavy revolver	11mm bullet	2	3d+1	6 internal	1.2kg	500Cr	1d+2	2	Reliable
Assault shotgun	20mm bullet	2	3d+1	10 clip	3.6kg(.6)	500Cr	1d+2	4	Reliable
	8mm shot	2	1d+1(x3)						
Assault rifle	7mm bullet	3	4d+2	40 clip	4.4kg(.4)	800Cr	1d+2	4	Reliable, autoburst
Medium machinegun	10mm bullet	3	7d+0	200 external	50kg(25)	2.4KCr	2d+0	5	Reliable, autofire
Anti-tank rocket	90mm rocket	2	12d+1	1 internal	10.5kg(2.5)	1.2KCr	1d+0	5	Reliable

POST-ATOMIC ERA RANGED WEAPONS

NAME	USES	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	SHOTS HELD	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Popcorn gun(8m)	2mm pellet	1	2d+1	50 internal	.3kg	100Cr	1d+1	1	Reliable, autofire
Machine pistol	8mm bullet	2	3d+1	40 clip	1.1kg(.3)	500Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable, autoburst
Superheavy revolver	10mm bullet	2	5d+1	6 internal	1.5kg	700Cr	1d+2	2	Reliable, heavy recoil
Laser pistol(.2)	electricity	2	2d+2	20 clip	1.4kg(.4)	1.5KCr	1d+1	2	Reliable, autoburst
Blaster one-shot(2m)	20mm disc	0	4d+0	1 internal	.1kg	10Cr	1d+1	1	Unreliable
Blaster pistol(11m)	15mm disc	2	5d+0	10 clip	1.4kg(.4)	400Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable
Gauss pistol(.6)	2mm needle	3	3d+0	40 clip	1.2kg(.4)	900Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable
Stunner(1)(6m)	electricity	3	5d+0	10 clip	.6kg(.1)	300Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable, armor stops all damage
Assault rifle	6mm bullet	3	5d+2	100 clip	3.8kg(.8)	1.1KCr	1d+2	3	Reliable, autofire
Autoshotgun	20mm bullet	2	4d+1	24 clip	3.7kg(.7)	800Cr	1d+2	3	Reliable, autoburst
	3mm flechette	2	2d+1(x3)						
Laser carbine(3)	electricity	4	5d+1	50 clip	4.5kg(1.5)	3.8KCr	1d+2	3	Reliable, autoburst
Heavy laser rifle(4)	electricity	5	5d+2	50 clip	6.0kg(2.0)	7.6KCr	1d+2	3	Reliable, autofire
Blaster rifle(64m)	20mm disc	4	7d+0	50 clip	4.5kg(1.5)	1.6KCr	1d+2	4	Reliable, autoburst
Gauss rifle(8)	3mm needle	5	5d+2	100 clip	5.0kg(1.0)	3.4KCr	1d+2	3	Reliable, autoburst
Heavy blaster(90m)	25mm disc	4	8d+0	10 clip	5.5kg(.5)	1.6KCr	1d+2	3	Reliable
Gauss sniper rifle(10)	4mm needle	7	8d+1	20 clip	9.6kg(1.6)	10KCr	1d+2	4	Reliable
Grenade pistol	40mm grenade	1	3d+1 leth. expl.	4 clip	1.6kg(.6)	500Cr	1d+2	2	Reliable, heavy recoil
Light rocket launcher	60mm rocket	2	11d+0	1 internal	2.5kg	200Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable, plus 5d+0 explosion
Hvy rocket launcher	100mm rocket	4	14d+0	1 internal	8.0kg	1.0KCr	1d+2	4	Reliable, plus 8d+0 explosion
Guided rocket	90mm rocket	3	9d+0	1 internal	5.5kg(1.5)	2.2KCr	1d+2	3	+6 to user skill, plus 3d+0 explosion
Crossbow	quarrel shaped charge grenade	2	3d+1 8d+0 4d+0 leth. expl.	1 internal	2.0kg(.1) (.5) (.5)	400Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable plus 2d+0 explos.

ADVANCED ERA RANGED WEAPONS

NAME	USES	ACCURACY	DAMAGE	SHOTS HELD	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Homing rocket pistol	40mm rocket	7	7d+0	1 internal	1.6kg(.6)	13KCr	1d+1	2	+8 to user skill
Plaser rifle(10)	electricity	4	9d+0	10 clip	12kg(2.0)	4.0KCr	2d+0	4	Reliable
Vehicle plaser	electricity	5	10d+0	200 clip	100kg(50)	20KCr	2d+0	7	Reliable, autofire

EABA

ATOMIC ERA OTHER WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Homemade explos.	3d+1	half-lethal explosion	-	.5kg	10Cr	1d+1	1	Reliable
Grenade	3d+1	lethal explosion	-	.5kg	10Cr	1d+1	1	Reliable
Stun grenade	2d+2	non-lethal explosion	-	.2kg	10Cr	1d+0	1	Reliable
Anti-personnel mine	2d+1	lethal explosion	-	.2kg	10Cr	1d+1	1	Reliable, always hits legs
Anti-tank mine	12d+0	lethal	-	4.0kg	320Cr	1d+2	3	Reliable, also does 6d+0 expl.
Anti-tank grenade	10d+1	lethal	-	1.0kg	70Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable, also does 4d+1 expl.
Brick of plastic expl.	4d+0	half-lethal explosion	-	.5kg	5Cr	1d+0	2	Reliable

POST-ATOMIC ERA OTHER WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Grenade	4d+2	lethal explosion	-	.4kg	10Cr	1d+1	1	Reliable
Stun grenade	6d+2	non-lethal explosion	-	.4kg	10Cr	1d+1	1	Reliable
Anti-tank grenade	11d+0	lethal	-	1.0kg	70Cr	1d+1	2	Reliable, also does 4d+2 expl.
MPS grenade	5d+2	lethal explosion	-	.4kg	1.0KCr	1d+1	1	Reliable

POST-ATOMIC ERA MELEE WEAPONS

NAME	DAMAGE	DAMAGE TYPE	LENGTH	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Steak knife	punch-2	lethal	short	.2kg	n/a	1d+0	1	balanced, short blade skill
Combat knife	punch-1	lethal	short	.3kg	45Cr	1d+2	2	balanced, short blade skill
Improvised club	punch+2	half-lethal	medium	2.0kg	n/a	1d+1	3	unbalanced
Mace	punch+3	half-lethal	medium	1.5kg	175Cr	1d+1	4	balanced
Sword	punch+2	lethal	medium	1.5kg	250Cr	1d+2	3	balanced, long blade skill

ATOMIC ERA PERSONAL ARMOR

NAME	ARMOR	COVERS	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Bulletproof vest	2d+2	Torso	2.0kg	500Cr	Inappropriate vs. armor-piercing or blunt
Bulletproof helmet	3d+0	Head	.8kg	120Cr	Appropriate vs. all attacks

POST-ATOMIC ERA PERS. ARMOR

NAME	ARMOR	COVERS	WEIGHT	COST	NOTES
Trés chic flexcloth formalwear(1)	0d+1	All but head	3.0kg	2.0KCr	Conforms to flatter body and moves to give a graceful appearance.
Smart clothing(1)	0d+1	All but head	2.0kg	500Cr	May change color or insulation for 10 energy, or change to 1d+0 armor against a particular weapon type.
Flexplast clothing	0d+1	All but head	1.0kg	n/a	Basic disposable garments
Heavy flexplast clothing	1d+1	All but head	2.0kg	200Cr	Heavy-duty worker-wear. Comes in a variety of styles and colors, inappropriate vs. cutting, armor-piercing or blunt trauma.
Flexplast vest	3d+2	Torso	2.0kg	600Cr	Worn over or under clothing, inappropriate vs. cutting, armor-piercing or blunt trauma.
Armorvest	4d+2	Torso	4.0kg	1.2KCr	Worn over clothing, appropriate vs. all
Armorhelm	4d+2	Head	1.3kg	300Cr	Includes data and power ports for accessories, appropriate vs. all attacks.
Smartsuit	3d+1	All	5.5kg	2.0KCr	Lightweight skin-tight bodysuit, appropriate vs. all attacks except cutting/puncturing.
Powered smartsuit(4)	3d+1	All	7.0kg	4.0KCr	Includes a layer of flexcloth to offset its weight for encumbrance purposes, appropriate vs. all attacks except cutting/puncturing. Uses 100 energy per hour.
Light environment suit(20)	4d+1	All	8.0kg	5.0KCr	Full life support, uses up to 500 energy per hour. Includes datacloth gloves.

POST-ATOMIC ERA STUFF

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
Powercell	.1kg	1Cr	1d+0	1	Holds 160 energy. If an item is listed like "Item(2)", the number in parentheses is how many powercells it uses.
Fuelcell	2.0kg	100Cr	1d+1	3	Generates 2500 energy per hour, takes the place of 20 powercells, refill with 1.0kg fuel per 5 hours.
Laser sight	.1kg	50Cr	1d+0	1	See page 5.8 for details
ATS	.5kg	500Cr	1d+1	2	See page 5.8 for details
Smartfire	.1kg	100Cr	1d+0	1	See page 5.8 for details
ID lock	.1kg	100Cr	1d+0	1	See page 5.8 for details
Electrified weapon	.2kg	100Cr	1d+0	2	Adds to a metal melee weapon. See page 5.5 for details
Seezall	.3kg	300Cr	1d+1	2	See page 5.8 for details. Subscription cost of 5Cr per hour, rounding fractions up
Power holster	.5kg	500Cr	1d+1	2	See page 5.8 for details
Flextraining suit(2)	4.0kg	2.0KCr	0d+2	4	Used with computer training programs to give the benefits of a personal trainer without actually having one.
Stealthsuit(2)	2.0kg	500Cr	1d+0	4	Worn over clothing or armor. Automatically adapts to provide camouflage in any conditions(+2 difficulty to hit), uses 20 energy per hour.
Datacloth	.1kg	200Cr	1d+0	2	Handkerchief-sized piece. See page 5.4 for details.
EM flare	.2kg	100Cr	1d+0	1	Broadcasts a very high power coded signal for a few seconds, sufficient to get a data burst through most interference or blocking terrain.
Nightvision glasses(1)	.2kg	500Cr	1d+0	1	Negates darkness penalties for user, uses 3 energy per hour.
Sonogoggles(1)	.2kg	500Cr	1d+0	1	Sound-based equivalent of night vision. Short range(16m) but can see through smoke and similar obscurement. Uses 3 energy per hour.
Portable computer(2)	1.0kg	2KCr	1d+0	2	Wearable computer with glasses-mounted display. Can be programmed to perform a specific Awareness task at 4d+0 or give the user a +4 on their own roll. May be linked to most other electronics. Uses 10 energy per hour.
Desktop computer	4.0kg	2KCr	1d+0	2	Desktop or vehicle-mounted computer with holographic display. Can be programmed to perform a specific Awareness task at 5d+0 or give the user a +5 on their own roll. May be linked to most other electronics. If run from a portable power source it uses 40 energy per hour.

ADVANCED ERA STUFF

NAME	WEIGHT	COST	ARMOR	HITS	NOTES
SecureComm(1)	.2kg	500Cr	1d+0	1	Serves function of videophone, radio, voice-activated Net terminal and global tracking system. Uses 3 energy per hour, but is self-recharging in any Net-supported area.
Mutable tool kit(2)	5kg	2KCr	1d+0	4	Contains tools and raw materials needed to service or repair any mutable matter device.
MPS unit(2)	.6kg	5KCr	1d+2	2	See notes on page 5.10. Uses 1 energy per hour in standby mode. Any hit causes this power consumption per turn, doubled for each extra hit.
MPS discharger	10.0kg	20KCr	1d+2	6	Acts as a power supply of up to 256 energy (8 MPS hits) and can discharge this energy at the rate of 10 energy per hour.

Name **Entry-level thug**

Motivation **Doing what he's paid to do**

Strength Punch 2d+0 Kick 3d+0	Roll 9 Level 3d+0	Skills	Roll 3d+0	<table border="1"> <tr><th colspan="2">Hits</th></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>20</td></tr> </table>	Hits		1	11	2	12	3	13	4	14	5	15	6	16	7	17	8	18	9	19	10	20
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Agility	Roll 6 Level 2d+0	Brawling	Roll 3d+0	-0d																						
Awareness Brawling	Roll 6 Level 2d+0	Club	Roll 3d+0																							
Will	Roll 7 Level 2d+1	Projectile weapons	Roll 2d+0	-3d																						
Health Walk 3 Run 6	Roll 6 Level 2d+0	Intimidation	Roll 3d+1																							
Fate	Roll 2 Level 0d+2	Running	Roll 2d+0	-1d																						
Encumbrance 12 25 50 100 0d/0 -1d/1 -2d/2 -3d/3		Armor	Roll 4d+2	-4d																						
Other info Generic entry-level thug		Head	Roll 0d+0																							
or enforcer. Enjoys their work.		Arms	Roll 1d+1	-2d																						
Armed with club and popcorn gun.		Legs	Roll 1d+1																							

Name **Stoner**

Motivation **Beat you up and take your stuff**

Strength Punch 1d+0 Kick 2d+0	Roll 6 Level 2d+0	Skills	Roll 2d+2	<table border="1"> <tr><th colspan="2">Hits</th></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>20</td></tr> </table>	Hits		1	11	2	12	3	13	4	14	5	15	6	16	7	17	8	18	9	19	10	20
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Agility	Roll 5 Level 1d+2	Brawling	Roll 2d+2	-0d																						
Awareness	Roll 5 Level 1d+2	Short blade	Roll 1d+2																							
Will	Roll 5 Level 1d+2	Pistol	Roll 1d+2	-4d																						
Health Walk 2 Run 4	Roll 6 Level 2d+0		Roll d+	-1d																						
Fate	Roll 1 Level 0d+1		Roll d+																							
Encumbrance 7 13 25 50 0d/0 -1d/1 -2d/2 -3d/3		Armor	Roll 1d+1	-2d																						
Other info Bullies, with tactics and		Head	Roll 0d+0																							
attitudes to match. Armed only with		Arms	Roll 1d+1	-6d																						
crude firearms or melee weapons.		Legs	Roll 1d+1	-3d																						

Name **Wheelman**

Motivation **Drive like it's going out of style**

Strength Punch 1d+1 Kick 2d+1	Roll 7 Level 2d+1	Skills	Roll 6d+1	<table border="1"> <tr><th colspan="2">Hits</th></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>20</td></tr> </table>	Hits		1	11	2	12	3	13	4	14	5	15	6	16	7	17	8	18	9	19	10	20
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Agility	Roll 10 Level 3d+1	Land vehicles	Roll 6d+1	-0d																						
Awareness	Roll 8 Level 2d+2	Heavy weapons	Roll 4d+1																							
Will	Roll 7 Level 2d+1	Projectile weapons	Roll 4d+1	-3d																						
Health Walk 2 Run 4	Roll 7 Level 2d+1	Area Knowledge (City)	Roll 4d+2																							
Fate	Roll 3 Level 1d+0		Roll d+	-1d																						
Encumbrance 8 16 32 63 0d/0 -1d/1 -2d/2 -3d/3		Armor	Roll 3d+1	-4d																						
Other info Knows how to get there,		Head	Roll 4d+2																							
and how to get rid of anything in the		Arms	Roll 3d+1	-2d																						
way of getting there.		Legs	Roll 3d+1																							

Name **Experienced ronin**

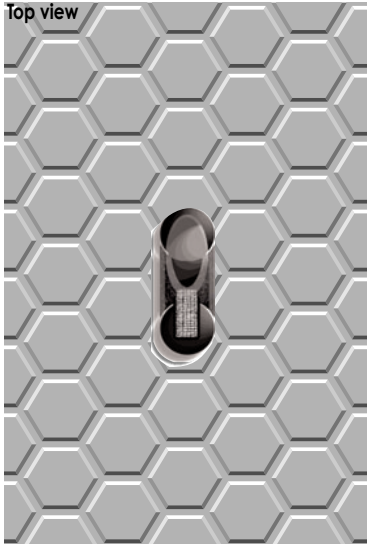
Motivation **Survive, fulfill the contract (in that order)**

Strength Punch 2d+1 Kick 3d+1	Roll 10 Level 3d+1	Skills	Roll 5d+0	<table border="1"> <tr><th colspan="2">Hits</th></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>16</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>20</td></tr> </table>	Hits		1	11	2	12	3	13	4	14	5	15	6	16	7	17	8	18	9	19	10	20
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Agility	Roll 9 Level 3d+0	Martial arts	Roll 5d+0	-0d -2d																						
Awareness	Roll 9 Level 3d+0	Long blade	Roll 4d+0																							
Will	Roll 8 Level 2d+2	Projectile weapons	Roll 6d+0																							
Health Walk 4 Run 8	Roll 9 Level 3d+0	Programming	Roll 4d+0																							
Fate	Roll 5 Level 1d+2	Running	Roll 3d+0																							
Encumbrance 16 32 63 126 0d/0 -1d/1 -2d/2 -3d/3		Armor	Roll 7d+0																							
Other info Decades of experience		Head	Roll 5d+2																							
and lots of cool toys, including an		Arms	Roll 4d+1																							
MPS and a selection of weapons for		Legs	Roll 4d+1																							
just about any situation.																										

Name **Allcycle** Size **2 hexes**

Cost **≈10 KCr** Mass **.5 tons** Hits **9**

Strength 11d+0
 Damage limit 7
Top speed 71 meters
Acceleration 9 meters
Fuel supply 5 hours
Front armor 4d+0
Right armor 3d+0
Left armor 3d+0
Top armor 3d+0
Bottom armor 3d+0
Rear armor 3d+0



One hex equals 1 meters

Hits	
-0d	1 11
	2 12
	3 13
	4 14
-1d	5 15
	6 16
	7 17
	8 18
	9 19
-2d	10 20

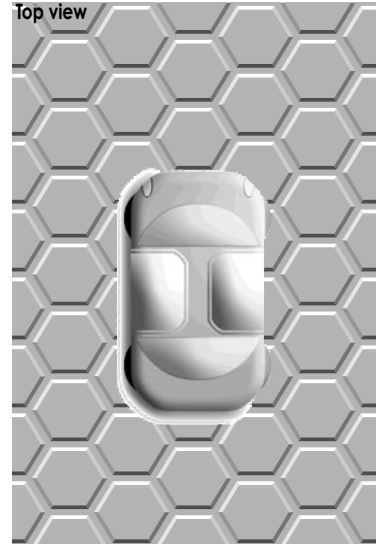
Gizmos **High speed, highway optimized.**

Can be designed for two people or one person and gear/cargo.

Name **Public taxi** Size **10 hexes**

Cost **≈0 KCr** Mass **2 tons** Hits **12**

Strength 9d+0
 Damage limit 5
Top speed 40 meters
Acceleration 5 meters
Fuel supply 2.5 hours
Front armor 2d+0
Right armor 2d+0
Left armor 2d+0
Top armor 2d+0
Bottom armor 2d+0
Rear armor 2d+0



One hex equals 1 meters

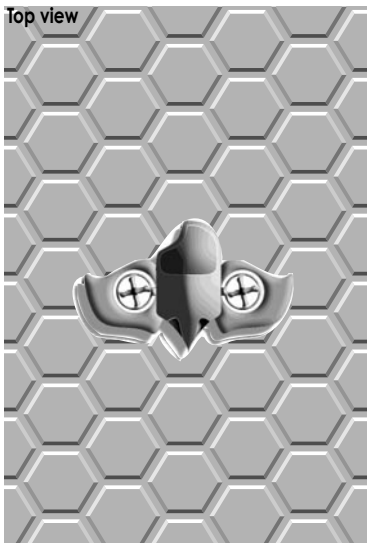
Hits	
-0d	1 11
	2 12
	3 13
	4 14
-1d	5 15
	6 16
	7 17
	8 18
	9 19
-2d	10 20

Gizmos **No manual controls, carries up to six people or the equivalent in people plus gear. Self-recharging in urban areas.**

Name **Personal VTOL** Size **5 hexes**

Cost **≈100 KCr** Mass **1 tons** Hits **10**

Strength 12d+0
 Damage limit 6
Top speed 71 meters
Acceleration 13 meters
Fuel supply 5 hours
Front armor 1d+0
Right armor 1d+0
Left armor 1d+0
Top armor 1d+0
Bottom armor 1d+0
Rear armor 1d+0



One hex equals 1 meters

Hits	
-0d	1 11
	2 12
	3 13
	4 14
-1d	5 15
	6 16
	7 17
	8 18
	9 19
-2d	10 20

Gizmos **Carries two or one plus gear.**

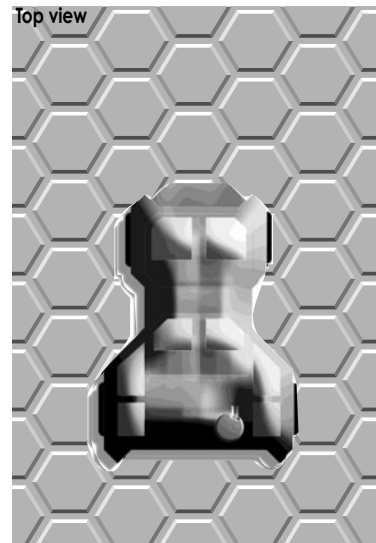
Equipped with ejection seats/parachute.

Range of 1200km per tank of synthjet fuel.

Name **Armored limo** Size **11 hexes**

Cost **≈100 KCr** Mass **5 tons** Hits **14**

Strength 9d+2
 Damage limit 5
Top speed 64 meters
Acceleration 7 meters
Fuel supply 5 hours
Front armor 7d+0
Right armor 6d+0
Left armor 6d+0
Top armor 5d+0
Bottom armor 5d+0
Rear armor 6d+0



One hex equals 1 meters

Hits	
-0d	1 11
	2 12
	3 13
	4 14
-1d	5 15
	6 16
	7 17
	8 18
	9 19
-2d	10 20

Gizmos **On-road only. Carries driver, six passengers and 200kg of luggage. Price includes 500kg of "accessories".**

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