

TECHNOCRACY

RELOADED



Storming Utopia in
Mage 20th Anniversary Edition

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...and the Dream is the Theatre...

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...AND THE DREAM IS THE THEATRE...

*Without consciousness there would, practically speaking, be no world,
for the world exists as such only in so far as it is consciously reflected and considered by a psyche.*

– Carl Gustav Jung

PROCESSING

Myths have power.

I know this, because I am held prisoner within one.
The myth of Room 101.

Our Union's boogieman.

"Did you think we didn't know about you, John?"

This is not happening.

"I mean, I'm certain that you knew."

This man is not real.

"You had to know your antics had not gone – unnoticed."

The repetition is a plot. A rhetorical technique. This entire situation is a mind game. The scene is too carefully constructed, too archetypal, one might say, to be real.

"We've been watching you. Your so-called Friends. Your little plans. Did you somehow think we didn't know?"

Processing Engineers do not monologue like villains in escapist cinema. This is artifice. Psychological architecture designed to instill a sense of media-induced familiarity.

None of this is real.

Not even me.

The nanotech bindings are not real. This room is not real. The Processing Engineer who looms above me is as illusory as the light flickering across a television screen. This entire exercise is a construct designed to induce fear blended with a sense of hope.

The reality is that there is no escape from this scenario. No cadre of allies will arrive to set me free. I have run such programs myself on countless occasions. Room 101 exists outside material reality, measured only by dimensions of consciousness. This is, as they say, all in my head. There are no physical doors to break down because not a single element of my imprisonment is physical.

Room 101 is installed in the minds of every Technocratic agent. Even mine.

Especially mine.

After all, I helped make it what it is today.

"I admire you, John. Obviously." The not-man hallucination stands above me, his bald head shining in the glare. Gloved hands caress baroque instruments of pain. Crude theatrics, but they work. I know how well they work. I've employed them myself. "You're a legend. A 'secret agent' who's never been a secret." His fingertips linger on something that would not have been out of place in Dr. Mengel's surgical theatre. "A mad sort of paradox... but then, that is the point, isn't it, John? Paradox. And madness."

He hasn't earned a reaction, so I don't give him one.

"Oh, John." He manages to sound disappointed. "Are we really playing that game now?" He picks up the instrument. "Have we really grown so predictable that I actually have to use this on you? I had hoped we were all advanced beyond such crude theatrics."

Theatrics. This is all theatrics. He knows it. So do I.

There is no table, no instrument, no skin. I am not strapped naked to a table, he is not standing over me, and none of this exists in a physical location. This entire pageant is played out in the truest level of reality: human consciousness. Bodies are illusions. Location is a state of mind. Time, space, form – all of them are ultimately tricks we play upon ourselves.

This is the secret truth we go to war to protect. Because the human mind, unbound by illusions, goes mad. Our necessary illusions save us from ourselves.

“And that is what you are, John,” the Engineer declares, my thoughts as clear to him as this delusion is to us both. “You’re mad.”

ANAHATA

Slip the bonds of flesh, and run.

Breathe in, a matrix of molecules drawn inward to a nexus of thought-given-form. Maya, the Beautiful Delusion upon which we all depend, slides past the precious hairs of one nostril, ventures down, mixes with the gas within my lungs. Hold. Pause. Let the mixture slip out the opposite nostril. Glide into my heartbeat, then move past it, out, and gone.

My heartbeat marks infinity’s drum. The first sound we hear, in the womb, before our birth; underlying pulse beneath the chimes of heaven, singular vibration with multitude frequencies. The bubbles of my body flex a biocrafted symphony — sincere illusions of mortality. On consciousness’ horizon, a John Cage orchestra sets up counterpoint. Chaos and stillness. Silence and cacophony.

We are attuned to separate yet intertwined vibrations, our apparent distance measured by denials of deeper truth. There are no barriers, but that thinking makes it so. In this place-between-places, time and distance disappear.

Back in the illusory shell, a fly prickles on my naked arm. Her infinitesimal hairs bear galaxies of microcosmic filth. Clinging bits of shit and rot leave traces on my skin. All profanity is perfect, though. Even shit is sacred when you live a miracle.

Somewhere close yet far away, my friend talks riddles to himself. His mind is calm. His flesh is screaming. Ministers of pain hijack his reality. I know their tricks, have used them myself. Within the cold Red Wheel, John remains inviolate — for now.

But nothing lasts forever. Time is a powerful illusion, and mortal bodies crumble while pristine consciousness flies.

On tangy sandalwood, my consciousness flees this illusory shell. There is no body, no incense, no sunlit room where that physical illusion meditates. Between particles and distracting thoughts, I glide toward the cold destination where he waits.

A cold man wrapped in colder matrixes of frozen thought and icy malice.

Hang on, John. Help is on the way.

THEATRICS

“Did you actually believe you were one of us, John?” The Processing Engineer has moved on from crude blades to electronic stimuli. The effect is similar, though the fluids involved differ. The illusion of my flesh is a tattered ruin, but this would hardly be the first time it’s been so mistreated. I’m not certain which body I began with so long ago. There have been so many I’ve lost count. “You’re demented, John,” he snarls. “A Marauder. Could you still be sane after all I’ve done to you?”

He’s done nothing except bore me.

This frustrates him.

He takes his frustration out on what’s left of my illusory self.

Amateur.

I haven’t given him a sound. A nod. A gesture. His theatrics aren’t worth the effort it would take to make them.

This is our grand and glorious Union? This is what we’re fighting for? This is why so many minds and bodies have been turned into organic confetti or lost in empty space?

No.

This is Amateur Hour. No skill. No precision. No reality.

None of this is happening.

It’s all for show, and that show is tedious.

And then he stops.

And grins.

“I’m not fooling anyone, am I, John? Especially not you.” The Processing Engineer steps away from the console. The room darkens to a storm — a purple tempest in unearthly skies. His voice shifts pitch to something more familiar. “You’re still mine, Johnny. You always were.”

A black patch seeps across his eye like ink. His bald head shades with short, chopped hair. His

white uniform splits open and goes dark, exposing skin beneath his vest.

This isn't real. None of it is real.

"Johnny," says the Patch-Man Father, "It never was. None of it was real. Your sad heroics. Your legend. It's all bullshit. It's all in your head. You still belong to us. You always belonged to us."

This scenario is new. I can't recall having experienced it before. Even so, it carries just enough familiarity to seem more disturbing than it should.

"John Courage," he continues, "is a myth. We built that myth on top of you, and that floor was designed to fall apart."

He waves one hand. The room goes black.

For the first time since this farce began, I feel something akin to fear.

KSHETRAM

Plumbing the security latticework feels like diving naked under ice. Skeins of virtual razor-thread lace through the depths like piano wire. Closing my eyes against the killing surge of doubt, I disorporate my virtual body into smoke and drift through the security lattice. Chills run bone-deep, but I am neither bones nor body now. That chill, like all forms, is an illusion. My opponents remain confined by patterns. I transcended patterns long ago. That which I feel, I *wish* to feel. And feeling, to me, is ecstasy.

Beyond the latticework, I sense him. Opening myself to sight, I see nothing but an endless black. The Void beckons at the heart of the Technocracy. If this isn't the proof we've been seeking, it's at least an indication we've been on the right track.

John and me, Tiberius and Simpson and long-dead Charlie and so many others, we've been chasing phantoms at the heart of our respective sects. Souls swallowed by the Void, so consumed by extremity that they've forgotten our ideals. War is everything they know, and that war has devoured them. I'm still not certain, personally, whether the shadows we've been chasing are truly Fallen Ones or simply people with too much power and too little empathy. Does that distinction matter? Ultimately, the results are the same. Our world is dying, and our so-called "ascension war" is helping us destroy it.

Around us all, Traditionist and Technocrat alike, the seas rise, and the icebergs melt, and the jungles burn, and the people fight for the simple-minded joy of fighting. Species shaped by several million years go extinct each day, and no amount of magick can bring them back again.

Our world is hate-fucking itself to extinction, and our respective sects cheer them on.

The black Void at the center of this matrix burns cold at the heart of the Traditions, too. Its protections are less rigid but no less obvious.

John helped me escape from mine. Now it's time to do the same for him.

Glide through icy black by the strength of heart and sense of soul. John might dismiss such concepts, but they guide me true.

In the blackened Void, I sense him.

Across infinities, I reach....

CHECK

"You're a distraction, Johnny."

The voice comes from everywhere.

"You're a pawn."

Infinity vibrates with the sound of it.

"You're an idea. Not a man. Not an 'agent,' secret or otherwise."

A distraction, I think.

"Exactly."

A delusion.

"Yes."

A diversion from the real objective.

I hear him smile in the darkness. "From the very beginning, yes."

A trap.

"You know you were."

Not "were." Are. Am. Still am.

"Of course." The voice now seems less certain.

You know, I think back at him, you're actually very bad at this game.

And that's when the blackness goes white.

EKATA TATHA BHINNATA

Across the span of cold and empty dark, five hands reach out.

Catch. Hold. Ignite.

Five points, five minds, five essences connect. The Man in Black. The Ecstatic Seer. The Hunting Templar. The Streetbound Jinx. The Master of the Mad.

Five points. A single connection.

One point which is nowhere yet everywhere. Unity and diversity.

Light in void.
Cold heat.
White fire.
Silence broken by a quiet song.
Five hands reach across time and space.
Form, distance, separation, collapse.
Dis-integrate.
Re-integrate.
Become whole.
Infinite vibrates with a sudden stillness.
The Wheel stops turning.
Freezes in a white eternal instant.
Then, after infinity, begins to turn again.

In a white and blood-caked room, a tall, pale man rises from his table, limbs freed, black suit restored. He checks his surroundings, notes the atomized antagonist, and slides his mirrorshades back into place. He scans the room for signs of life. Nothing. He allows himself a slight, grim smile, strides to the wall, and opens a till-then-invisible door.

In a sunlit, humid temple by a sacred pool, cloaked with sandalwood incense smoke, a woman younger than her years opens her eyes and draws a deep and steady breath. She nods to the gigantic black dog licking blood from his muzzle. The dog nods back with oddly human eloquence. In two worlds, physical and astral, the trap has been sprung and their enemies destroyed.

In a chapel deep beneath the ground, a kneeling black warrior with a fondness for good food whispers a prayer of thanksgiving to his god. Candlelight glimmers on the contours of his armor — not modern but medieval — and the bloodied sword by his knees. The sword has not moved through physical space, nor has it drawn physical blood recently. Still, the blade feels hot to the touch, as if heated by internal flame. The blood steams away as the warrior whispers his prayer to a crucified Savior who is both Lamb and Lion, wanderer and king.

In a graffiti-painted ruin, a young trickster opens her eyes, blows out a heavy sigh, and reaches for a hand-rolled joint. Traffic roars past outside — clattering trucks with loads bound for elsewhere. Seattle speaks in rain and garbage, gleaming glass

and crumbled pavement; her trees rumble with slow contentment as the young Jinx flicks her lighter, ignites her cigarette, breathes in the stinging brace of cannabis, and listens to the rain.

In a comfortably appointed living room, the Master opens his eyes, flexes his hands, and watches flames dance in the hearth. Above the fireplace, an impossible creature stretches out its tiny wings, arcs into empty space, and alights precariously on its Master's shoulder. The Master smiles, tickles the creature's chin, and offers it a bit of chicken from the plate of food cooling on the table before him. Seated on either side of him, his wife and daughter sip their tea — tea the scent and color of fresh blood.

The darkness lingers. It always will. For now, though, its agents have lost the game.

TELESPHORUS

I have been here before. It has never been a pleasant experience. It's no pleasant thing to render a human consciousness into its component parts. Necessary, at certain times, but never pleasant.

Unpleasant necessities are my vocation. I know them well.

"It is better indeed, to conquer oneself than to conquer others. Neither a deva, nor a gandhabba, nor Mara together with Brahma can turn into defeat the victory of the man who controls himself." I have had to master that self. It is literally all I have. I may be a delusion, a distraction, a myth and a trap, but I am myself, integrated, and no degree of dis-integration can dismember who I am.

I am an ideal.

I am an operative.

I am mythology with a pulse in a Union deluded by its own mythology.

But although I realize that ideals are themselves mythology, the greater ideals I strive for are larger than any single myth.

We have won this round. There will be others. Certain forecasts of near-future events suggest that before long each battle we fight will be rendered futile by an extinction we have no powers to prevent.

But I refuse to fall down and die.

Or to let this world, for all its flaws, perish on my watch.

Our Union is not perfect. The Traditions are deeply flawed. The Mad are fatally capricious,

and the unassociated loose cannons present an existential risk. Rot eats at the center of every human endeavor, and only mindfulness can save us from ourselves.

In the dark places of the world, we must be stars flashing from the deep. The Void is hungry, and the darkness eternal without a light. I have been to the edges of human accomplishment, and all that I am is formed by my experiences there.

By all I am. All I have become.

I am the open secret and the agent of resolve.

My shoes make no sound on the metallic floors.
All doors open to me.

Agent Simpson has taken the essential precautions. All records of my session have been erased. My allies in this fight take up their positions for our next operation, their movements and locations secret even from me. It is a strange alliance – by many estimates, unthinkable. Survival, though, often demands unthinkable things. I have survived this long this way, and so I know such tactics work.

I am a walking paradox: The chaotic agent of order. The famous secret. Courage by a common name, speaking scriptures in the name of science.

I like it this way.

My enemies do not.

And so, the game continues.

Is it enough, though? Can we survive our strange human drive toward self-extinction? Will there ever be a breakthrough where our desperate matter and our restless minds transcend this obliterating urge? Can our efforts, however united, sustain us through a greater evolution and uplift our species and this world? Or will the Void have the last laugh on us and turn it all to dust?

Can I – can we – ever be enough?

Even now, as fellow agents prepare our next endeavor, I must admit uncertainty.

But for now, at least, I have to believe we are.





Introduction: Storming Utopia

I'm fascinated by the notion of Civilization as a thin layer of ice resting upon a deep ocean of chaos and darkness.

— Werner Herzog

We're losing.

Yes, I know what you've been told, kiddies: Our magnificent Union cornered the market on Consensus. Mankind's curled up with their smart phones, everyone loves technology, and cybernetic monkeys fly out my ass on command, raining fire on the poor little sorcerers cowering in the shadows of our magnificent Technocracy.

I ask you this: Does it look like we are winning?

Irrationality rules the day. Our world unravels at the seams. If our sad-sack species has formed any kind of consensus, it's that cutting off your nose to spite your face is much more fun when you use a chainsaw in public to do it.

We're partly to blame for this, you know. We got stupid, careless, so caught up in our own propaganda that we refused to see the infection eating us alive.

Worst of all, we got complacent. We believed it would only take a few surgical strikes on the worst offenders, and a wealth of luxuries for the Masses, before humanity would come around and enter a grand age of civil stability.

We were wrong.

Man is fundamentally irrational. He wants ghosts and vampires and boy wizards with English accents. He wants to believe that genital configurations or melanin production define him as blessed in the eyes of nonexistent gods. He doesn't fear Apocalypse — he craves it, so long as he doesn't have to live personally with the results. He's more fascinated with wanking off in the mirror than with looking toward the horizon of what he could be if he'd just get his hand off his cock.

Man cannot be trusted with the future. If we are to have a future, that future must belong to us.

Kids, we dropped the ball. Our enemies have it in play, and they're sprinting toward the goalposts.

If they score one more time, they win.

Our enemies play for keeps.

But, so do we.

So, get back in the game, my friends, and remove your heads from your asses before we lose it all.

Last Best Hope



It began with a promise: An end to mystical tyranny. Haughty wizards felled by arrows. Towers battered by hand-forged cannons. Child-eating hags roasted in the village square or hanged like twitching mallards from gallows shaped by work-roughened hands. Protection for the common people, they said. Elevation for the arts of *men*, not *magick*.

Somewhere along the way, that promise went bad.

It's not obvious when the well-intentioned Order of Reason went so badly off the rails. By its 20th-century reinvention as the Technocratic Union, though, the promise had ossified into the heartless "black hats and mirrorshades" impression so familiar to the Awakened world. Brutal idealism became mechanized brutality. A Victorian Timetable drove ruthless agendas. Whether or not the rumors of Fallen infiltration were correct, it's hard to see the '90s Technocracy as anything other than an engine of malign totalitarianism.

Unless, of course, you tilt those infamous mirrorshades up a bit and look into the eyes of the people within that Union — people with the hardest job in the World of Darkness, tasked to beat the monsters down and lead humanity — by force, if necessary — into a clean, safe and prosperous future.

This is the Technocratic Utopia: A monster-free bastion of human innovation, achieved through the benevolent management of an Enlightened elite.

The trouble with Utopias is that they always look better in rarefied theory than they do in bloody practice. And the Technocratic Utopia, regardless of its ideals, is drenched in blood and tyranny.

Perhaps, if you were to turn those mirrorshades around and look *into* them instead of *through* them, you might see the monster looking back at you.

That's when the hard work begins: The work of storming your own Utopia to salvage your ideals from the mess they have become.

Welcome, then, to the Technocratic Union at the threshold of the third decade of this 21st century. Neither the shiny monster nor the gleaming knight, but the flawed machine crafted by gifted hands and all-too-human souls of people tasked with illuminating a World of Darkness by all available means.

Welcome to a disunited Union where the future follows unpredictable paths that could lead to majesty or ruin.

Some elements of it seem all-too-familiar.

And others, you've never seen before...

When the Future Comes to Pass

By the third decade of the 21st century, the Technocracy faces an identity crisis. By and large, humanity has embraced technology; *control*, however, seems an impossible dream. In place of order, we have chaos. Technological toys have made the world crazier than ever. Superstitions ride the airwaves. Virtual clashes shed living blood. Nations burn in cybernetic flames while their leaders pray for godly raptures. The once-rarified reaches of the Digital Web enhance humanity's worst impulses, nature rebels against human excesses, and the once-radical Technocratic Union seems downright quaint. Every calculation for this future has proved wrong. Our world has changed, and the Union must change with it or collapse.

What does such transformation look like, though? Does it involve moderation, reorganization, stricter measures, or total collapse? Must the Technocratic Union be dissolved, and what happens if it is? Within the five Conventions, a deadly balance of powers and agendas has guided their "union" for over 100 years. If those agendas change and the balance shifts, devastating powers could be unleashed. And so, Technocratic agents face an implacable calculus of movement and effect. Things *cannot* remain as they are within the Technocracy — and yet, each potential change carries a network of consequences too intricate for even the Statisticians of Iteration X to calculate.

What's an honest Technocrat to do? And are the right moves even possible in a society where power and brutality have paved the way for that culture's existence?

The answers, pros and cons, may be found within your chronicle. This book provides a foundation, but the future is up to you.

Will the Real Technocracy Please Stand Up?

For *Mage* players and Storytellers, the longtime villains of the game have changed. *Mage*'s debut edition presented the "soulless monolith" of static reality, while *Mage 2nd* began giving the Union a discernible face. *Mage Revised* wrenched that face into a genocidal snarl while tempering the Union's excesses with emerging moderation. By *Mage 20th Anniversary*, that early monolith cracked into a kaleidoscope of idealistic horrors that mirror the Traditions in all their heroic and perhaps villainous potential.

Which Technocracy, then, are we dealing with here?

Whichever one works best for you.

In the spirit of M20's *Future Fates* approach, the book in your hands (or on your hand-held computer, you futurist, you)

features options, not dogma. Despite their association with Stasis, this Technocracy operates in Dynamic fashion. Old patterns must assume new configurations or else succumb to Entropy, and so **Technocracy: Reloaded** portrays a Union in transition. Its ultimate form and function depend upon the wishes of each Mage Storyteller, but one thing remains certain: This is not your father's Technocracy. Even the things you may have thought you knew were if not *wrong*, exactly, then are at the very least limited and incomplete.

Although many features of **Technocracy: Reloaded** remain familiar to longtime Mage fans, we've approached this book and its material with a broader spectrum than previous books have provided. **Mage 20**'s emphasis on Technocratic player-character options informs every aspect of this book, which provides material for players and Storytellers alike. Within that insider framework, many elements have been left deliberately ambiguous, with the final decision being left to each individual Storyteller. Depending on that Storyteller's desires, then, the current Technocracy may be:

- A fine idea gone horribly wrong.
- An archaic empire crumbling under its own obsolescence.
- A flawed but necessary bulwark against a world filled with monsters.

- A monstrous paranormal empire with genocidal tendencies and great PR.
- An implacable engine of global domination wherein a few idealists struggle within a totalitarian system.
- An icon of paranoia wherein a wrong move or word might lead to fates far worse than death.
- A vast, corrupt conspiracy in which good principles justify horrendous acts.
- An extremist juggernaut at war within itself.
- A titanic pawn in a Nephantic endgame.
- The last, best hope for human survival.

These possibilities are not, of course, mutually exclusive.

Regardless of its details and direction, this new Technocracy is a creature of the current era. Like the rest of us, it struggles to find its footing in an irrational age. The imperial urge that guided its goals and procedures is as obsolete as a Terminator knock-off. Old Conventions breed new Divisions, and each agent must ultimately decide for themselves which ideals are worth fighting for and which may be—often *must* be—discarded for the sake of future survival. Those who cannot and will not



Speaking of data...

Retronocracy?

Past-era futurism has not aged well. Thus, the Technocracy of the 1990s seems positively retro. **Technocracy: Reloaded** updates, possibly reorganizes, the Big Bad of earlier editions into a sleek Union that changes with the times, has previously unseen dimensions, and is far more sympathetic (though it's still formidable) than old **Mage** fans might previously have believed possible.

To that end, we're going to drop some sacred cows into a shredder, contradict outdated material, and present 21st-century data for a group that, if it were real, would keep changing and adapting despite its supposedly static nature.

Our world moves onward, and so does the Technocracy.

Where's that Damn Pretentious "K"?

Readers may notice that this book does not use the usual k-based spelling of *magick*. That's because the Technocracy doesn't give a fuck about magic. Unit 5 deals with **M20** rule-systems, so we do use the "k" spelling in that chapter, for consistency's sake. Other than that, don't expect any Crowleyesque foolishness in **Technocracy: Reloaded**, citizen. That's superstitionist rubbish, and you know better than to trust that sort of thing by now.

adapt find themselves melted down for scrap or stuck off in a remote corner to rust. In a new century deranged by the very things that were supposed to bring order and conformity, old data must be reloaded, updated, and often purged.

Disputed Data, Future Fates, and Supplemental Data

Throughout this book, you'll find three types of sidebars:

Disputed Data sidebars describe different perspectives of the Technocracy as it's been "officially" portrayed in **Mage: The Ascension** lore. The brutal impression offered in certain sourcebooks may or may not be an accurate perception of the Union as seen from within its own ranks; likewise, the "kindlier, gentler" Technocracy postulated in various sourcebooks could be a deception masking something far more vicious. Disputed Data sidebars, like the Future Fates mentioned below, describe Technocratic lore that might not be accurate in your **Mage** chronicle.

Future Fates sidebars, as shown throughout the **Mage 20** series, mention pivotal events in history and metaplot, typically while presenting three different options to choose from. For example, certain sourcebooks assert that the Union massacred thousands of Crafts mages and their allies, and/or suffered profound damage and transition during the Dimensional Anomaly; other sourcebooks ignore or dismiss those allegations, or else offer an ambiguous metaplot where those things may or may not have occurred.

Ultimately, each **Mage 20** Storyteller is the final arbiter of what did and did not happen in their chronicle. These sidebars address things that may or may not be true in yours.

Supplemental Data sidebars contain references to material in other books. This sourcebook, large as it is, builds upon material presented in **Mage 20**, **The Book of Secrets**, and other publications, so in order to avoid redundancy and keep the word count down, certain sidebars refer our readers to those other books.

Foundation Principles



At its core, the Technocratic Union (and its earlier incarnation, the Order of Reason) maintains two foundation principles: *Enlightenment* and *control*. The first principle guides flawed beings toward ultimate perfection, while the second principle asserts discipline over a monstrous cosmos. Many of the Union's apparent contradictions are best understood through these essential principles; if, in fact, Fallen corruptors have turned the

Technocracy into an Extinction Level Entity, those corruptors still use the Union's core principles to undermine its stated goals.

Enlightened Advancement

Despite its mechanical allure, the Technocracy does not pursue science for its own sake. Technocratic researchers explore the applications of scientific technology for many reasons, including curiosity about the way our cosmos functions. The guiding purpose of such research, however, involves understanding the capacities of Enlightened humanity, the limits of earthly potential, and the ways in which a significantly advanced elite can use the first to expand the second.

The five modern Technocratic Conventions serve an array of purposes. Among them, the most important—though least obvious—purposes include five distinct, though interrelated,

approaches to human Enlightenment and the advancement of our species:

- Iteration X approaches Enlightenment by upgrading the physical body.
- The Progenitors seek Enlightenment by evolving the biological form.
- The New World Order seeks Enlightenment by advancing a unified and controlled consciousness.
- The Syndicate seeks Enlightenment through upgrading the human material condition through social and economic means.
- The Void Engineers seek Enlightenment through satisfying curiosity and advancing human knowledge and influence into unknown regions.

These paths toward deeper understanding and accomplishment inspire the tools, beliefs and practices inherent in each group. Although it's hard, if not impossible, to see those paths from the outside (especially if you're staring at your own reflection on a Black Suit's mirrorshades or a cyborg's metallic skin), the ideals within each Convention express that group's vision of transcendence of human limits in an effort to achieve sublime perfection. This provides the backbone of each Enlightened operative's faith in the Union's mission and each Convention's place within the whole.

"Faith" sounds like a funny word to use in reference to the Technocracy. Even in the 21st century, when the Union's attempts at imposed atheism have given way to a tolerance for slight spiritual inclinations, we don't often associate the Technocracy with ephemeral things like faith. Any mage, however, realizes that faith is the bedrock of conviction — and conviction, in turn, makes all things possible for a mage. Technocrats, of course, seldom, if ever, refer to themselves by such Deviant words; in meta terms, however, an Enlightened Technocrat is a mage, and no matter which faction your character prefers, *Mage* is literally the name of the game.

Control and Command

Warm-and-fuzzy terminology aside, the Technocracy is an engine of control. Gods, men and Nature are far too random and chaotic to be given freedom. Therefore, the Union's goal is bridling chaos and steering humanity's future toward something other than impending extinction.

Technocracy agents have seen first-hand just how absurd this cosmos is. Union operatives fight undead corpses and pan-dimensional godlings as a matter of course, and so the pleasant delusions of security in this world are for other people, not for them. Though it might be true that certain operatives serve that existential chaos instead of countering it, the Technocracy's official stance involves a protective parental role — a harsh one, at times, and usually a thankless one, but a sincere ideal of control nonetheless.

The five modern Conventions strive to control the following all-too-random factors:

- Iteration X instills flawed systems with mathematical precision.
- The Progenitors purge the flaws of physical design through a constant process of controlled evolution.
- The New World Order adjusts broken institutions and restless thoughts into controllable patterns and mindful discipline.
- The Syndicate governs the flux of economic commerce and the whims of human materialism.
- The Void Engineers expose hidden things while also hiding things best unseen by lesser minds.

That's the theory, anyway. Reality, of course, takes a different course. That fact doesn't keep dedicated Technocrats from pursuing those goals with a firm, often frightening, sense of purpose.

Themes: Power, Progress, Corruption, and Extremity



How can a bunch of 1990s future-shock concepts remain relevant in 2020 and beyond? As specific elements move with the times, certain themes remain vital and consistent within our Technocracy.

Power

Power is the Union's greatest strength and weakness. Technocrats command

unprecedented power, especially in the current age. From financial wealth to military might to their global influence on the Masses' hearts and minds, the Technocracy is the most obviously powerful faction of the Ascension War. That kind of power is cool; as Brian Campbell points out in *Mage 20*, it lets you play with the coolest toys on the biggest stage imaginable — so long as you keep playing, that is, by their rules.

Yet power is also their downfall, because the Union's foundation depends upon asserting the power of unified

technology (material and otherwise) under the dominion of an enlightened elite. By definition, the Technocratic Union cannot share power or trust such power to parties outside its ranks. Richard the Lionheart's declaration that "Power is the only fact" is gospel to the Technocracy. As a result, the Union has a long history of cutting its own throat while demolishing anyone standing in the way of its domination.

Progress

Technology changes the world, and the world changes technology. Although the Technocratic Union strives for perfect understanding and control, most Technocrats also realize that progress involves forward motion, not the stasis they're so often associated with. Although Tradition mages assert that their supposedly soulless rivals seek to freeze Creation in an unyielding block of metaphysical ice, Union operatives know that science and technology move humanity forward. Progress, then, is both an essential ethos for the group and a historical fact of their existence...

...so long as said "progress" remains under the Technocracy's control, of course. Progress without discipline or limits is dangerous, even catastrophic. And so, the Union continues to press toward a controlled sort of progress, not the freewheeling feel-good chaos embraced by the Traditions. Yes, any Technocrat will tell you, progressive change is a desirable end. In order for there to be progress, however, there needs to be control. Humanity has proven itself to be incapable of such discipline, and rival mages are even worse. True Reality Deviants (Marauders, Nephandi, most Tradition and Disparate mages, and pretty much every other creature of the night) are actually *regressive*, striving to return humanity to a primal state of fear and bondage. In that light, the Technocracy, not the Traditions, remains the true source of progress in this world. Everyone else keeps dragging it back into the dark.

As noted throughout *Mage 20*, *The Book of Secrets*, and *Guide to the Technocracy*, the Union actually *is* progressive in many respects. Back when women and foreigners were considered subhuman at best (and, more often, fodder for the nearest bonfire), the Order of Reason affirmed the potential wisdom of any suitably Enlightened soul, regardless of culture, gender or creed. While various Traditions still wrangle with issues of gender, culture and faith, the Technocratic Union has a strict policy (not always enforced, of course) that bigotry within the ranks is forbidden. Two of the Union's most luminous leaders — Isabella of Castile and Queen Victoria — were women at a time when women were often barred from ranks higher than "wife of the king and mother of his children." Although it's been downplayed in previous editions, the Technocracy's history and crafts are as rooted in China, India, and the Muslim world as they are in the imperial legacy of Western Europe. As the colonial era fades into ancient history, the true face of technological progress — Enlightened and otherwise — becomes clear.

Corruption

Despite its best intentions, the Technocracy does a lot of truly evil shit. The prosperity it offers has a price that's paid by everyone who opposes it, many people who work for it, and those who don't even know it exists. The Union's history is bloody as hell, and that "black hats" impression didn't come from nowhere. Power corrupts, they say, and if the Technocracy's ideals are Utopian — and they *are* — then the power to craft such Utopia has corrupted those ideals, perhaps beyond redemption.

Is the Technocracy externally corrupted (as in, infiltrated by the Nephandi, as has been suggested in several sourcebooks)? Or is that extremity solely on the Union's head? Regardless of the metaplot behind an individual *Mage Storyteller*'s game, the Technocracy remains guilty of genocide, fratricide, xenocide, and more. Even in its most sympathetic light, the Union is an authoritarian regime for which the ends most certainly justify the means. From a sympathetic angle, this makes a certain degree of sense; after all, we're talking about an organization dedicated to saving humanity from vampiric predators, rampaging man-beasts, demented sorcerers, malignant aliens, and its own enduring stupidity. What is one life, a thousand lives, even a million lives, when compared to extinction-level events? And make no mistake — the Technocracy *is* preventing extinction-level events. Part of the drama inherent in a Technocracy-centered chronicle comes from the epic stakes involved. Technocrats *are* trying to rule reality, yes — in order to save it from itself. However corrupt the organization may have become, that ideal is common ground between almost every Technocrat alive.

"Almost every Technocrat" because the Union just *might* be infested with extinction-minded infiltrators; if it *is*, though, then that infestation has grown from the very real mentality of saving the human world, regardless of the cost. The worst sorts of corruption grow from ideals that have been ironically perverted but never actually lost.

Beneath ruthless yet understandable ideals, there's the lure of petty corruption too: financial greed, smug superiority, personal pride, social elitism, the simple pleasures of luxury and really cool stuff, and so on down the line. Technocrats are disciplined, yes, but they're still human, and human beings enjoy cool stuff and a sense (totally accurate, in their case) that they are indeed superior to most, if not all, other human beings. Beneath their sleek exterior, Technocratic operatives remain convinced that their Union is the last, best hope humanity could wish for. Sure, that tends to make them callous, arrogant, even apparently sociopathic by other standards of humanity. When you know you're the best at what you do, though, and you know for an endlessly proven fact that you actually *do* stand between the Masses and their utter annihilation, then the moral compass that guides other people really doesn't apply to you — does it?

Who's to say that's "corruption," anyway?

If you need real-world analogs, just look at what real Americans, Russians, cops, CEOs, Christian fundamentalists,



Islamic State soldiers, and all their many supporters justify on a daily basis when their ideals come into conflict with other people's lives. The ultimate horror inherent in the Technocracy (and really, in *Mage* in general) is that real people in real nations already justify genocide, racism, torture, rape, pollution, atrocity, even the ultimate agonized extinction of "those people" while remaining convinced—with evidence to back it up—that they're still the Good Guys in the story of our world.

Extremity

No matter how we might sympathize with the Technocratic agents and ideals, no matter how sexy and fun we make them, the Technocratic Union employs extreme measures on an essentially daily basis.

These are folks who clone people so they can erase dissent; who torture even their own members to obtain information and compel obedience; who sell drugs, upset economies, manipulate markets, blackmail potential rivals or converts, wipe minds, install memories, rewrite history, conceal data, create killer robots and hybrid human monsters, and generally wrap reality in knots when it suits their purposes to do so. This isn't propaganda—it's the way the Union works. The old saying *Extremity in the service of liberty is no vice* is a minor variation on the Technocratic code: *Extremity in the service of reality is no excess*.

What, then, does "extremity" really mean, especially when you might be on one side of the gun one day and the other side of that same gun tomorrow?

How to Use This Book



Divided into two sections, **Program 1: General Access Data** and **Program 2: Restricted Access Data**, this sourcebook presents material for both players in general (Program 1) and Storytellers alone (Program 2). Any reader, of course, may access the second section if she likes, but might find spoilers therein.

Beyond the **Prelude** and this **Introduction**, **Technocracy: Reloaded** contains:

- **Unit 1: The Operative's Handbook** provides an introduction to the Union on a personal level – or at least one as “personal” as the Technocracy allows itself to be.
- **Unit 2: Targets, Assets, Tactics, and Plans** describes how and why Technocratic operatives fight the good fight.
- **Unit 3: Theatres of Operation** explores the Technocracy’s global operations in the 21st century world.
- **Unit 4: Internal Matters** features information about the Technocracy’s inner workings and the policies that govern that organization and its diverse membership.
- **Unit 5: Q Division** displays an array of hypertech procedures and toys for the agent on the go.
- **Unit 6: Human Resources** collects characters and templates for Technocratic storylines.

• **Unit 7: Mission Control** advises a **Mage Storyteller** about potential tactics and techniques when dealing with the Union and its operatives.

• **Unit 8: The Parallax View** reveals potential metaplots for the Technocratic Union, some of which may shake the foundations of the World of Darkness itself.

As befits an organization whose entire existence involves rewriting reality in a controllable impression, **Technocracy: Reloaded** includes hosts of contradictions, inverted expectations, and potential “truths” that may or may not be “true” from different perspectives.

One of the first contradictions a member of the Union must confront is the gulf between an ideal of singular, controlled, formalized reality and the multiperceptual, chaotic, messy realities that actually exist once you leave theory on the whiteboard and step out onto the street. As a member of an organization whose existence depends upon balancing several realities at once while insisting that only one reality is “real,” a Technocratic operative navigates a hall of mirrors while staring at a fixed point and declaring that point to be the only one that matters. That operative might not ever use the Deviant term “mage” to refer to herself, but in a world filled with such apparent contradictions, that’s exactly what she is: a living contradiction of a mage.

Media Inspirations

The following media inspirations give insight into both playing as a Technocrat and running games based around the Technocracy.

Books, Fiction

Ben Aaronovitch (*Rivers of London*)

Isaac Asimov (*The Caves of Steel*, “I, Robot”)

Iain M. Banks (*The Player of Games*)

Max Barry (*Jennifer Government*, *Company*, *Machine Man*, “Attack of the Supermodels,” “A Shade Less Perfect”)

G.K. Chesterton (*The Man Who Was Thursday*)

Bret Easton Ellis (*American Psycho*)

Cory Doctorow (*Little Brother*, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*)

Harlan Ellison (“Repent, Harlequin!” Said the Ticktockman,” “Soldier,” *Mefisto in Onyx*, “I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream”)

Neil Gaiman (*A Study in Emerald*)

Mira Grant, AKA Seanan McGuire (*Feed*, *Parasite*, and the other Newsflesh and Parasitology novels and collections)

Joe Haldeman (*The Forever War*)

Robert A. Heinlein (*Starship Troopers*, *Friday*, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*)

Joseph Heller (*Catch-22*)

Franz Kafka (*The Trial*)

Maurice Leblanc (*Arsène Lupin, Gentleman-Thief*)

Ursula K. Le Guin, (*The Lathe of Heaven*)

Seanan McGuire (*Middlegame*)

Ramez Naam, (the *Nexus* trilogy)

China Mieville (*Perdido Street Station*)

George Orwell (*1984*, *Animal Farm*)

Books, Nonfiction

Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business, and *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*, both by Neil Postman

Ancient Inventions: Wonders of the Past! by Peter James and Nick Thorpe

As the Future Catches You: How Geonomics & Other Forces are Changing Your Life, Work, Health & Wealth, by Juan Enriquez

A Secret History of Consciousness, *Dark Star Rising: Magick and Power in the Age of Trump*, and *Politics and the Occult: The Left, the Right, and the Radically Unseen*, all by Gary Lachman

Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe, by Robert Lanza, MD, with Bob Berman

Concise History of the World (National Geographic), edited by Neil Kagen

The Cuckoo's Egg, by Clifford Stoll

The Cult of Information: A Neo-Luddite Treatise on High-Tech, Artificial Intelligence, and the True Art of Thinking, by Theodore Roszak

The Dark Net: Inside the Digital Underworld, and *Radicals Chasing Utopia: Inside the Rogue Movements Trying to Change the World*, both by Jamie Bartlett

From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life, by Jacques Barzun

Gravitation and Spacetime, by John Archibald Wheeler

Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies, by Jared Diamond

The Holographic Universe: The Revolutionary Theory That Explains Everything, by Michael Talbot

Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow, and *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, both by Yuval Noah Harari

The Infinite Resource: The Power of Ideas on a Finite Planet and *More Than Human: Embracing the Promise of Biological Enhancement*, both by Ramez Naam

Information Doesn't Want to be Free: Laws for the Internet Age, by Cory Doctorow

The Medical Book: From Witch Doctors to Robot Surgeons, by Clifford A. Pickover

The Technological Society, by Jacques Ellul

Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy, by Cathy O'Neil

What if, by Randall Munroe

Wired magazine (an influence on *Mage* since the game's inception)

The World: An Illustrated History, edited by Geoffrey Parker

TV Programs

Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., *Altered Carbon*, *Android Kikaider* and *Kikaider 01*, *Archer*, *The Avengers*, *Black Lightning*, *Cloak & Dagger*, *Connections*, *Daredevil*, *Dollhouse*, *Eureka*, *The Expanse*, *Fringe*, *House of Cards*, *Hustle*, *Jessica Jones*, *Kamen Rider Gaim*, both *La Femme Nikita* (1990s version) and *Nikita* (2010-2013 version), *Luke Cage*, *Mad Men*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *The Middleman*, *Mr. Robot*, *Orphan Black*, *Person of Interest*, *The Prisoner*, *Profit*, *Punisher*, *Runaways*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *Stargate SG1*, *Stranger Things*, *Succession*, *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, *Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan*, *Torchwood*, *Utopia*, *Westworld*, *The X-Files*

Movies

Aliens and *Alien: Resurrection*, *Avatar*, *All of the Avengers* films, *AI*, *Batman: The Dark Knight*, *Black Panther*, *Contact*, *The Corporation*, *Dark City*, *Deadpool* and *Deadpool 2*, *Dredd*, *Enemy of the State*, *Enthiran*, *Equilibrium*, *Event Horizon*, *Ex Machina*, *Frankenstein's Army*, *Gattaca*, *Ghostbusters* (all of them), *Ghost in The Shell*, *Gravity*, *Hardcore Henry*, *Hellboy*, *Her*, *Inception*, *Iron Man 1-3*, *John Wick 1-3*, *Jurassic Park*, *Kikaider Reboot*, *Kingsman: The Secret Service*, *Kingsman: The Golden Circle* and *The King's Man*, *Logan*, *Lucy*, the *Matrix* trilogy, *Men in Black* and *Men in Black: International*, *Moon*, *Pacific Rim* and *Pacific Rim: Uprising*, the recent *Planet of the Apes* films, *The Raid: Redemption* and *The Raid 2: Barandal*, *Robocop* (original, please), *Splice*, *Spy Kids*, *Spy Time*, *Starship Troopers*, *Suicide Squad*, *The Terminator* and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, *Thank You for Smoking*, *THX-1138*, *Tinker Tailor, Soldier Spy*, *The Truman Show*, *Upgrade*, *Wall Street*, *Wicked City*, *The Wolverine*, and pretty much every James Bond movie ever (except the one with Woody Allen).

Technocratic Lexicon

Although most Technocratic terminology can be found in *Mage 20* (pp. 30-33), certain terms are new, have been altered by recent events, or feature more prominently in *Technocracy: Reloaded*. These terms and phrases include:

Adjustment: A subtle or coincidental act of Enlightened Science.

Anthropic Principle Theory, the: Proposed (in real life) by Brandon Carter in 1973, this theory asserts that: 1) humanity's position in the universe is privileged enough that we can act as observers within it, and so... 2) this universe must therefore be compatible with our existence and our ability to observe its principles. The first observation is known as the *Weak Anthropic*

Principle, and the second as the *Strong Anthropic Principle*. In **Mage**, both mystic and tech-focused mages realized a variation on this Principle millennia ago, though they refer to it in different ways, and have squabbled over how best to use their especially privileged talent for *altering* that universe, as opposed to simply observing it. (See **Enlightened Anthropic Field Theory, the.**)

Black Dagger: Elite stealth-unit Black Suits with devastating psychic assault capabilities. (See **IECSSC**.)

Black Suit protocol: The NWO practice of training new members as identically dressed and groomed Black Suits, regardless of gender or ethnicity, in order to foster a sense of collective identity and a subtly menacing presence.

cc-amalgam: A cross-Convention amalgam — a mission group featuring at least one team member from each of the five Conventions.

Doctrine of Mutuality, the: The core ethic of behavior among Technocratic operatives. Ideally, mutual behavior benefits the Technocracy as a whole, while unmutual behavior undermines the integrity of the whole.

Enlightened Anthropic Field Theory, the: Technocratic theory positing that sentient beings (usually, but not necessarily, human ones) determine the shape and nature of our universe. Under this theory, the sleeping Masses determine reality unconsciously, while Enlightened humans (and other beings) have both the ability to determine it consciously and the responsibility to do so for the greater good. Those who abuse that responsibility are therefore Reality Deviants, because they choose to alter the universe for selfish reasons rather than for the greater good — a greater good that is, of course, determined by the Technocracy. (See **Anthropic Principle Theory, the.**)

field op/Field Op: A common phrase with two distinct but related meanings: lower-cased, *field op* is short for “field operative” — an agent working in the field, as opposed to in an office, lab, or distant construct. Capitalized, *Field Op* is short for “field operations,” which are the sorts of missions a field operative goes on in the field. (See also, **CTA: FO**.)

Gandalf: A sneering reference to mystic mages. (See also **Harry/Hermione**.)

Harry/Hermione: An inexperienced but potentially dangerous young mage.

Holographic Universe Theory, the: The concept that the universe we experience is a “flat” and limited information structure imprinted on lower energies of the universe’s gravitational horizon. The real-world version of this theory involves string theory and complex mathematical principles; certain **Mage** paradigms assert that “reality” as we experience it is essentially a projection of natural and perhaps anthropic principles, and thus is subject to alteration by people Enlightened and educated enough to understand and manipulate those principles. (See **Enlightened Anthropic Field Theory, the.**)

low light/low lighter: A freshly initiated Enlightened operative, so named because that person is “en-lightened” but not yet terribly bright. Mildly derogatory, the term is typically used by upper-tier Technocrats who aren’t terribly susceptible to complaints from the lower ranks.

Master’s Edge, the: A combination of confidence and style practiced by Black Suits and Syndicate operatives; done properly, it’s effective enough to break a target’s spirit just by walking into a room.

Matrix-Invested Operatives: Living beings invested with Quintessential energy; in mystic parlance, Soulflowers. (See **MIO**.)

Operative/operative: Standard-issue name for Enlightened Technocratic personnel. Often capitalized in older applications (especially among the NWO) but typically lower-cased in current terminology.

Overton Window, the: Named for Joseph P. Overton, who postulated that an idea’s viability depends on whether the public finds it abnormal or unthinkable. It describes a range of ideals that the majority of a population finds acceptable. Here, it’s used to describe the edges where PSYOPs operate.

Procedure: a blatant or vulgar act of Enlightened Science.

prodigy: A young operative raised and trained within the Technocracy, either from birth or from early childhood onward. Not all prodigies are Enlightened, but all are considered T1 operatives until they Awaken. After adolescence ends, the ones that do not become Enlightened remain extraordinary citizens for life, but are no longer referred to as prodigies.

terranorming: The process of establishing a localized Consensus by setting up appropriate ideas and then reinforcing them with combinations of charity, technology and force until the local populace accepts the desired idea.

‘tis full: The spoken version of the acronym TISFL: (the) *Technocracy IS For Life*. An expression that recognizes the stark reality that you can’t simply quit the Technocratic Union.

Virtual Agents: Technocratic operatives existing only on the Digital Web; personified programs with discernible identities. Named, in part, as a mockery of the Virtual Adept Tradition.

CTA: Common Technocratic Acronyms

The Union loves its acronyms. Especially in the 21st century, Technocratic protocols and targets are often condensed into English-language acronyms that often express subtle, sarcastic critiques of the subject at hand. CTAs include (but are not limited to):

6TP: The Six-Tier Pyramidal structure of Technocratic Rank.

AAR: After-Actions Review — a post-mission overview of how well or poorly things went during the mission, focusing on what agents did right and potential improvements for subsequent operations.

AFET: Acceptable Force Escalation Threshold – the amount of force authorized for a given target and/or mission.

AO: Area of Operations – the staging and performance zone for a field mission.

AW: Asset Weaponization – determining which assets to use on a mission.

BRQ: Baseline Reality Quantum – that is, an unEnlightened human. (See **PRA**.)

CCC: Cleanup, Containment, and Compensation – the process of minimizing and repairing damage inflicted on a mission zone, making sure the damage and aftermath doesn't spread outside the AO, and compensating innocent bystanders whose lives and property have been impacted by Technocratic operations. Considered a costly but necessary step in securing and maintaining Consensus among the Masses.

CI: Collateral Impact – the amount of damage and death inflicted on civilian life and infrastructure as a result of Technocratic operations. Something to be avoided as much as possible, if only because cleanup is a bitch.

CLE: Civilian Law Enforcement – cops who are not part of the Technocracy's ranks or affiliates.

CMURD: Craft-Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant – a mage from one of the Disparate Crafts.

DOM: The Doctrine of Mutuality (see Lexicon, above).

DTFT: Designated Target Force Threshold – the amount of force expected to deal with an expected target.

FO: Field Op(eration)

HE: Hemophagic Entity – a vampire.

HOAR: The Hierarchy of Assets & Resources

HSKIN: Holy Shit Kill It Now – a Marauder, Nephandus, or other malignant yet powerful mage considered too dangerous for anything except immediate termination.

IECSSC: Infiltrations / Exfiltration Covert Strike Specialist Corps, AKA the **Black Daggers**.

IG: Information Gathering Operations

JMARD: Juxtapositional Manifestation Paraconsciousness Reality Deviants – ghosts.

MIO: Matrix-Invested Operatives

MURD: Magic-Using Reality Deviant – a mage.

NAMURD: Non-Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant; a mage with no obvious associations to another faction – an orphan.

NEI: Neglect, Error, Intent – an evaluation technique to determine how to correct unwanted behavior.

OPTEMPO: Operational tempo – a “productivity quota” that measures the number of missions a given operative or

team accomplishes per fiscal quarter. Managers and planners live by OPTEMPO quotas. Field operatives know OPTEMPO is bullshit.

PC: Precious Cargo – something (or someone) that is the target of a mission.

PDE: Pan-Dimensional Entities – possibly aliens, or just weird stuff that defies explanation.

PEE: Paradox-Effect Entity, also referred to as **PEM** (Paradox-Effect Manifestation) by Managers and operatives who can't bring themselves to use the official tag. Despite protests to change the designation, PEE remains the acronym employed in most Technocratic archives and operations. Even Mirrorshades need a chuckle now and then.

PRA: Potential Reality Assets – unEnlightened humans whose beliefs define the strictures of Consensus. (See **BRQ**.)

PTMURD: Potentially Talented Magic-Using Reality Deviant – a potential mage not yet Awakened but showing every indication of Awakening soon. In short, an ideal recruit.

RAN: Repeat as Needed

RDE: Reality Deviant Episode; a synonym for **RDI**, below.

RDI: Reality Deviant Incident. Depending on whom you ask the “I” might also stand for Incursion, Invasion, or Insurgency.

REMURD: Random Element Magic-Using Reality Deviant – a mage or hedge magician with no clear affiliations and unknown powers and identity.

RoE: Rules of Engagement

RP: Rally Point – the place where field ops gather.

RSP: Req Spec Phase – time before a mission to request new gear.

SAMETO Protocol: Some Animals More Equal Than Others – a sarcastic and unmutual reference to the HOAR.

S&C: Secure & Contain

SDS: The Six Degrees of Separation

SSP: Secure Scene Protocols – Secure / Stabilize / Contain / Deny.

TAMURD: Tradition Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant – a mage associated with the Nine Traditions.

TBE: TinkerBell Entities – faeries.

TE: Target Exploitation – determine a target’s weaknesses.

TI: Target Identification – determine your target in an IG.

TISFL: (the) Technocracy IS For Life (See ‘tis full.)

UC: Unenlightened Citizen/Civilian

VHS: Van HelsingS – civilians who are amateur monster hunters.

XMDD: eXtraordinary Material Distribution Database



THE OPERATIVES
HANDBOOK

Unit I: The Operative's Handbook

"You lost another one, Stephen?"

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry, sir."

"What happened?"

"Same as last time, sir. Even after all the... er, education he's received, he wasn't willing to give up contact with his family and friends. Specifically, he sees himself as having a responsibility for their well-being, and doesn't believe that abdicating it would contribute to the greater good."

"I... see."

Stephen would be surprised if his supervisor had said otherwise. After all, it's the old man's job to see everything. "It's a shame, sir" Stephen answers. "He would have been stellar as an operative. He received top scores in all his testing."

"You have a point?"

"Well... yes, sir. To my own knowledge, our department alone has lost at least eight trainees just within the past five years. From conversations with members of other departments, this isn't an unusual rate of failure. We're devoting significant resources to recruitment and training, then losing some of our best candidates... and all to the same general issue. I believe we need to start looking into solutions. What we're doing now is inefficient and wasteful, and the mission is suffering because of it."

The manager looked at Stephen over his steepled fingers, tapping them together thoughtfully. After several long moments, he turned slightly and started typing.

"I'm cutting you new orders. I need to see data. How many trainees we're losing each year, split out by department, at what point in their training, the reasons they're giving for leaving, and the accumulated costs for these failures. Have the report completed in one week."

Stephen knows better by now than to hesitate. "Yes, sir."

From Us, To You



Welcome, operative.

If you're reading these words, and you have the proper security clearance to understand them, you've obviously been accepted as an Enlightened agent within the Technocratic Union. Congratulations! If you don't yet have the proper security clearance, don't worry. Remain exactly where you are. Operatives are being dispatched to your location to help you transition into the next stage of your existence.

Before we release you back into the Front Lines to save the world, your local HR department has a few guidelines for your careful consideration, so we can ensure you don't stray from the straight and narrow path. As the author of the *Orange HR Handbook* for Construct Orange, I've been asked to summarize our HR procedures for agents on similar Constructs. You may feel some slight anxiety about reading this document, but you can relax. You won't be tested at the end of it. No, you'll go about your business for a month or two, and then you'll have random quizzes as part of our *Internal Loyalty Review Program* (ILRP). If you've got nothing to hide, you've got nothing to fear. Whether you're destined to hunt Reality Deviants or work behind the scenes, remember that your friends in HR have your back.

Establishing Consensus

First and foremost, you must remember the following:

Reality, as we know it, is formed by the collective belief of humanity. Billions of people define the boundaries of Consensual Reality; the world you see around you on Earth is the world mankind wants. Seven billion people look up at the sky each day and know it should be blue (even when it's a little gray and rainy). Seven billion people instinctively know that gravity works. The parameters of our universe are consistent with conditions for life as we know it — the universe sentient humans observe and inhabit — and, according to Anthropic Field Theory, human consciousness directs the flow of Earthly phenomena. Consensual Reality is the reason for everything we see and experience around us.

In the world of our Union, we know this is true because we have seen people who want an alternative: individuals who defy and deviate from this Consensus. Reality Deviants rework and reshape the world around themselves through sheer force of will, for better or for worse. When all things are possible, whenever one person defies the collective belief of over seven billion people, it's usually for the worse. If one person who believes that magic is real summons a dragon in the heart of Manhattan, you know what happens next: Nothing good. Both humanity and reality actively resist that deviant act. That's why the Paradox Effect exists.

Hidden from humanity, monstrous creatures lurk in the shadows, and they know their survival depends on secrecy. The vast majority of humans don't believe in the existence of creatures like werewolves or ghosts, so the world has forces to make sure they remain hidden. Enlightened agents can predict the activity of paranormal creatures with a high degree of certainty and monitor them when that's necessary. Except in times of crisis, they are not our highest concern. Humanity has other occult forces to worry about: enemies they can neither detect nor fully oppose. Entire occult societies exist to keep these horrors hidden, and for every danger we see, even greater ones exist.

"Magick," as they refer to it, is, in its most potent form, one of the greatest threats to human existence. Defying reality, one individual can do the impossible. That defiance carries a risk: reality can strike back. Witnesses accumulate. Paradoxes manifest. Belief itself is challenged. Humans remain asleep and dreaming of a world where magic does not exist, but when those sleepers awaken, innocent citizens get hurt. While the Masses find the fictional forms of "movie magic" entertaining, and while they may serve as acceptable and profitable safety valve for oblivious minds, true Reality Deviance is dangerous. Thus, it must be suppressed, controlled, converted or, in some cases, destroyed.

Agent, we know that you do not look to the past. We know that you accept the present, and you share our vision for the future. When you act, you protect humanity from madmen and monsters. You work to build a reality where men and women can be masters of their own world. You must be subtle. You must be unseen. You must keep those ordinary citizens safe.

Fortunately, we have our own strengths: Unity, purpose, galvanizing ideals, a sense of responsibility, and technology that's decades ahead of what the rest of humanity possesses. When we act, we don't turn back the clock. The more we use our Enlightened technology, the more powerful and possible our technology becomes. Eventually, what we envision and create will be accessible by all of humanity. Ordinary men and women then become masters of their own world while our Union continues to march towards tomorrow. We're always innovating our advanced technology, and we're leading the way to the future.

A Disclaimer: Think Globally, Act Locally

Our Enlightened secret societies have remained hidden since the dawn of civilization itself. Only Enlightened minds can see what we've seen and be where we've been. However, we might not always have been so unified. Some academics in the NWO's Ivory Tower are often quick to point out that reality was not always a global phenomenon.

Long before the advent of the internet, airplanes, or the global economy, geography kept distant parts of the world

Disputed Data: Magic, Monsters, Paradox, and Human Belief

According to official Technocratic policy, most human beings do not believe in magic or monsters. The Paradox Effect is a protective reflex of the *Enlightened Anthropic Field Theory* (detailed in **Mage 20**, p. 93), and thus asserts human will over Reality Deviant behavior. Technocratic procedures and hypertech, therefore, enforce the desires of human belief, bringing about the reality most human beings want.

That's nonsense on many levels. For starters, most human beings *do* believe in magic and monsters, always have, and probably want to do so, if only because those concepts explain a lot of things people don't want to think about too deeply. It could be argued that Paradox and other forces shelter and nurture such phenomena because humanity *wishes* them, perhaps in the Jungian shadow-side of consciousness that cloaks undesirable elements from open recognition. Paradox could be a protective reflex that slaps *too much* magick back into line, but magick, regardless of what the Technocracy might say, has always been acceptable, if not always admissible, part of human belief.

Off the books, the Technocracy knows this too.

Technocratic claims of reality domination, though possibly true in terms of their influence upon mortal technology, are vastly overstated. Even in our real world, the vast majority of people believe in supernatural phenomena — gods, ghosts, spirits, demons, and other paranormal forces; imagine how many *more* people would believe in them (and believe more strongly in them than we do) in a world where parasitic supercorpses and lycanthropic killing machines are real. The Technocracy may enjoy a stronger hold on modern paradigms than their witch-and-wizard counterparts, but that hold comes at a price few Technocrats openly admit: Their Enlightened hypertech is just as susceptible to the Paradox Effect as any mystic's magick spells — just less-likely to provoke a state of disbelief in citizens accustomed to modern technology.

There's an uglier side to this state of control: As detailed in **Victorian Mage**, the shift in favor of modern hypertech was won through slavery, conquest, genocide, mass indoctrination, and cultural extermination. Although some Technocrats admit as much, the true scope of those horrors, and of the Union's role in them, is about as welcome a topic in the Technocratic ranks as, say, discussions of the 1919 Elaine massacre would be in white rural Arkansas. The officially benevolent view of the Technocracy's arrangement with the *Enlightened Anthropic Field Theory* overlooks the titanic bloodshed involved in the current situation. Whether or not the Technocracy is secretly infested with Nephantic influence, the Union won a large share of influence over reality by killing a lot of people with opposing beliefs. Yes, modern technology has made life better for many human beings, that improvement has benefitted the Technocracy, and the Technocracy has benefited humanity in turn. Still, few Technocrats want to recognize how much those benefits have cost the world at large, and none of them openly admit how precarious the current situation really is, or acknowledge that Enlightened Technocrats are also, by their own definition, Reality Deviants.

separate from each other. The life of a villager on the West Coast of Africa was, in many ways, different from the life of a merchant in the heart of 15th century London. The collective belief of those villagers resulted in a reality different than the one that existed on the streets of London. Today, however, a shaman in the wilderness and a brain surgeon in Chelsea must contend with the same limits on the world around them. Primitive rituals that might have worked 500 years ago are now anachronisms. Take some solace in the fact that the world has changed. Welcome to the future.

Each major geographical area on the planet has at least one major Technocratic Construct assigned to it;, most of them hidden in heavily secured locations on the Front Lines. Our marketing department in Construct Orange likes to call those places the *Regions of Reality*. Keep in mind that just as all Constructs are not created equal, reality may have minor

variations from one region to another. In the same way, while the policies represented in this handbook originated on Construct Orange, other Constructs you visit may have their own training and handbooks. Through the *Regional Management Initiative* (RMI), Management collectives reporting to different symposia also have the authority to articulate and implement their own policies, subject to the review and approval of their superiors. When traveling to another region, make sure you're aware of any minor changes. Your reality may vary.

What's that, you say? Does that sound unmutual? It certainly does. Someday, reality will be standardized around the planet. Someday, the loyalty you see in a refuge like Construct Orange will be seen on every street in the civilized world. Until that day, however, each and every Construct is an experiment in progress. We intend to make sure yours succeeds, and you're here to help us achieve that goal.

A Mutual Alliance



At the height of the Ascension War, Nine Traditions of Deviant mages allied against our Technocratic Union, even though each “tradition” had a different vision for reality. Suffice it to say that those conspirators included many disparate crafts and a legion of fiercely individual solitary practitioners. They wanted to save the world but could never quite agree how to do it. In the 20th century, although unified by their common goal to destroy our Technocracy, their campaign failed. In the 21st century, our Union protects the world. Granted, representatives of the five Conventions may disagree over minor political issues, but we all work toward a set of common goals, as defined by our Mission Statement: *The Precepts of Damian*.

DOM: The Doctrine of Mutuality

Fellow operative, you have learned through your training the importance of mutual behavior. The word “mutual” comes from the Latin root *mutuus*, which means “to exchange.” We, as the Union, provide you, our agent, with training, resources, allies, purpose, and protection in exchange for your loyalty, sacrifice, and service. Although the Union is formed from five Conventions with different scientific specialties, we act for a common purpose. Under the *Doctrine of Mutuality*, we stand united despite our differences. This Doctrine assures order, stability and respect between all operatives. We all share in our Union, and our Union shares mutual commitment with all of us.

Victory requires vigilance. On behalf of HR, be advised: You may encounter agents in the field whose loyalty has lapsed. We have a collective responsibility to document and report such behavior. We cannot tolerate unmutual behavior. Selfishness, disloyalty, rebellion – all of these behaviors are obvious signs of an unmutual mind. Minor transgressions should be reported to your team leader or manager; major infractions merit a message to higher authorities. Often, you can resolve these indiscretions by confronting an unmutual agent, but you must remember to follow through: Document these incidents and indiscretions. We’re all in this together, friend.

Signs of Potentially Unmutual Activity

Forewarned is forearmed, so let’s take a moment to make sure you can see the signs of unmutual behavior. Our psychologists have been analyzing the five categories of conventional agents, and with the aid of a little data mining, we’ve noticed disturbing trends within each of the five Conventions. Ideally, we should all be on the same page, but we’ve learned that some agents have strayed, so to speak, from the playbook. If you see any of the following warning signs, contact your supervisor. As the old saying goes: *See something, say something*.

Iteration X

Our colleagues in Iteration X are masters of machinery; their Convention acts with the efficiency of a machine. Their guns aimed with optimum accuracy, they fulfill their plans with all the precision of a Time-Motion Manager. So how do we know when an Iterator is unmutual? Perfection is their watchword. The first sign of unmutual behavior is a reduction in productivity.

Everyone makes mistakes, but when those lapses become a habit, that agent’s failures become a threat to us all. Is someone showing up late? Is accuracy decreasing, or vigilance waning? We applaud the loyalty of our Iterator comrades, and we recognize the recent shifts in the Convention’s old approach to situations. Just in case, however, keep an eye out for sloppy performance and imprecise activities. For want of a nail, a ship is lost. If one nail is out of place, let’s hammer it down.

The NWO

The New World Order continually finds new ways to gather information. There’s no substitute for the footwork and bookwork done by Black Suits and other agents in the field, but new technological innovations provide access to more information about Reality Deviants and the Masses than we have ever had before. Every cell phone, every laptop camera, every post on social media all provide a rich tapestry of insight into the workings of the world.

An agent must accept that the Information Age is an open book, so ask yourself: *Are the agents on your team being open with you?* Do you suspect they’re hiding information? Are they not sharing something that would benefit the collective? Have you found evidence of an agent communicating with someone who doesn’t appear to be there? We’ve noticed a trend of secrecy through our Unions, so be advised: *We’ll be watching and listening*.

The Progenitors

Some of the most visionary scientists in the world have found safe harbor among the Progenitors. They heal us, they help us, and sometimes, they redefine the limits of our human abilities. Unlike the deranged Deviants in organizations like the Virtual Adepts or Etherites (or whatever they’re calling themselves this week), these scientists and field operatives work with advanced technology that will one day be safe enough to distribute to the Masses. A few geniuses have particularly unusual ideas, and although we support their endeavors, we’re also here to make sure their expectations are kept realistic.

You may have heard some ridiculous urban legends about bat-winged chihuahuas and other teratological terrors. No such beasties exist here within *our* Construct! That’s because our Progenitors know the value of discretion. You should ask yourself, the next time a Progenitor uses science to do the impossible: *Are they being discreet?* What would a typical citizen

Disputed Data: Magick, Procedures and Extraordinary Citizens

As far as the Technocracy is concerned, Union operatives do not use "magick" and are not "mages" of any kind. That perspective involves a fair amount of cognitive dissonance, and a few early **Mage** books suggest that Technocrats are simply mages deliberately fooling Sleepers into believing that what they do is not magick. Officially, however, the Union does not recognize — ever — that Enlightened technology is a variation of what other mages do. Syndicate agents might be able to get away with throwing the M-word around in a snide, ironic fashion (and may privately admit that money is essentially an act of magick with that will-working "k" attached at the end), but the Technocratic party line is that Enlightened Science differs radically from "magic." Magic(k)al powers are Deviant; Enlightened Science is technology, and any good Technocrat draws a bold distinction between the two.

That said, the Union *does* recognize that their procedures hold the same reality-altering qualities that magick does, and that their science is subject to the Paradox Effect. Likewise, they realize that mages can be Socially Processed into discarding magick in favor of Enlightened Science, and that the most effective applications of that Science do require Enlightenment / Awakening. A heretical few even dare to look back at the accomplishments of their illustrious predecessors in the Order of Reason and admit that what those forebears were doing was essentially "magick," too. Never will that acknowledgement, however, be made in a public or official capacity. Maintaining a distinction between Enlightened Science and Deviant "magick" is essential to the Technocratic mindset — which, in game terms, is one reason why Technocratic characters cannot outgrow their need for a technological focus (**Mage 20**, pp. 329 and 567).

Although the Technocracy recognizes Enlightenment as an essential component of their most advanced hypertech, their extraordinary citizens can be trained to employ and collaborate in the most basic applications of Union hypertech even when those citizens lack the greater levels of Enlightened Genius. This recognition, combined with the intense training (and often Social Processing) gives the Union a formidable edge in terms of personnel, for while wizards and witches proclaim that someday all people will Awaken to the arts, it's the Technocracy that puts the tools of Enlightened Science into the hands of people who can employ them to some degree without becoming mages in their own right.

think upon witnessing that creation? Does such technology constitute a vulgar, blatant display of power? You don't have to make that judgement on your own, but if a Progenitor seems reckless, notify your supervisor and management immediately.

The Syndicate

Working within our Union offers many great opportunities for wealth. Although a handful of Symposiums distribute wealth among their citizens through a system of "equality disbursement" you may find questionable, we've found it's useful for meritorious agents to earn the right to their own personal wealth and (monitored) bank accounts. Syndicate agents, in particular, hone their skills by managing financial assets; especially when a Syndicate rep is appointed as a team leader, such skills provide excellent practice for resource management and profit / loss projections and calculations.

Some academics question the value of a system where some agents are wealthier than others, and you may have noticed unmutual agents using the system for their own personal gain. And so, you should ask yourself: *Is someone on your team flaunting personal wealth?* Are they putting something on an expense account that really should be tackled by personal initiative? Are they spending more than they should to impress the unenlightened? Reckless spending may be a sign of unmutual behavior, so remember: an audit can come at any time.

The Void Engineers

We've heard some rather unmutual talk about the contributions made by our friends in the Void Engineer Convention. HR would like to remind you that wherever you are, there's a barrier protecting you from another dimension. When you're on the Front Lines of Earth, you are perpetually surrounded by the opportunity for a Reality Deviant to enter or leave your dimension. Your Void Engineer rep on the local Symposium would especially like to stress what a massive responsibility it is to watch against such incursions. This obligation is so great that it might distract a Void Engineer on your team from their responsibilities in what you see as "the Real World."

Ask yourself: Does your Engineer seem distracted? Does the threat of invasion from another dimension seem more pressing than the matter at hand, enough that the agent isn't performing adequately on the Front Lines? And most importantly, are Sleepers noticing? The more they believe they're at risk, *the more they are actually at risk*. If the stress is too much for an agent on your team, you may need to notify management before that human resource hits its breaking point. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so look for gaps in the chain that need to be reforged.

A Friendly Invitation

At some point, you're going to receive an invitation from Human Resources to talk about your current mission. In addition to a delicious beverage and a tasty snack, we'll also offer you a series of questions about the behavior of your colleagues. Don't worry:

Everything you say will be kept confidential... unless, of course, we believe there's a strong and compelling reason to disclose the names of our anonymous informants. You can send an email to us at any time about suspected unmutual behavior — but even if you forget to ask *us*, we won't forget to ask *you*.

Organizational Structure



In service to our goal — the most important goal imaginable — our Union follows an important rank-and-file organization. Within that chain of command, upper-echelon managers direct Technocratic resources (human and otherwise) in the most effective ways by employing their skills and experiences, while operatives with less skill and experience carry out those orders to the greater benefit of everyone involved. Given the importance of our task, it's vital that those orders

be carried out swiftly and with as little complaint or argument as possible. Although you were probably used to a certain amount of rebellious latitude in your old life, we don't have the luxury to argue about little things when the Big Picture is at stake. Things are different in the Technocratic Union, and the individual freedoms so many people take for granted among the Masses are a liability among us here.

Behave, is what I'm saying here. Or else you won't like the consequences.

As you've already learned in your initial orientation, our Union features five Conventions, various subgroups, and certain ranks within each Convention. Before going forward with this welcome packet, we should present a brief review of the Technocratic structure. We're aware that the following is remedial data for those of you who've already been introduced to our Union and its ranks. Still, it's always helpful to go back over the basics, if only so that the pertinent data is close at hand and fresh in your mind.

6TP Rank Structure

T0	unEnlightened personnel
T1	extraordinary citizens and low-light Enlightened ops
T2	trained operatives
T3	supervisors and Managers
T4	upper Management and Symposium personnel
T5	Masters and oversight

6TP: The Six-Tier Pyramid

The best representation of our Technocratic ranks is a simple pyramid: A strong, broad base of staff and associates supporting

a narrower range of extraordinary citizens, Enlightened operatives, and a gradual slide upward through managerial ranks until we reach the Inner Circle's pinnacle. Those at the top depend upon support from the lower ranks, and the lower ranks receive stability and purpose from the top of the pyramid. Every associate or operative has a place somewhere on that pyramid, and that pyramid serves everyone involved while maintaining constant vigilance over the world as a whole. From the base to the peak, our structure makes perfect geometric sense, which is as things should be.

In HR, we refer to 6TP: six *Tiers* within that Pyramidal structure. This simplified six-tier scale makes it easier to form amalgams and manage agents throughout their career. Simply put, those six Tiers are as follows:

- **Tier Zero / T0: UnEnlightened Personnel:** The largest segment of our society comes from our base of unEnlightened personnel. These employees do not know the full extent of our activities, and we monitor them to make sure our secrecy is not compromised. UnEnlightened citizens outnumber any other tier of personnel, and most of them live day-to-day on the Front Lines of Earth. Tier Zero individuals typically do not have a "rank" in the Union. They are the baseline; they are Zero.
- **Tier One / T1: Low-Light Operations:** A slightly smaller populace has the clearance to work directly with Construct personnel. For the sake of classification, HR refers to them by two categories: *Extraordinary citizens* are not Enlightened but have proven their loyalty and skills during their time among initiated operatives. They receive special training and are sometimes integrated with cybernetic and / or biotech enhancements. *Enlightened initiates* include personnel who are Enlightened enough to perceive and analyze supernatural threats, but who lack the tools and procedures to fully oppose or affect significant threats in the field. Instead, these agents provide noncombat assistance, intelligence-gathering, crowd-control, and other essential support roles.
- **Tier Two / T2: Agents and Operatives:** Here's where you come in. You've recently been promoted to a position where you can play your part in the Ascension Conflict with a team of other agents and operatives. Each time



you're assigned to one of these teams (in official terms, an *amalgam*), we'll provide you with a stated goal — investigation, acquisition, infiltration, elimination, or another role—and at least one mission. Most of you will be working in the so-called “real world”—the realm that humanity knows as Earth. Down on the Front Lines, you'll also come into contact and conflict with Reality Deviants, including anachronistic and Deviant mages who would destroy our one reality in favor of countless self-destructive alternatives. You know the drill. Each time you complete a mission, there's a chance you might be assigned to another amalgam; after all, it's the surest way to further your career.

- **Tier Three / T3: Supervisors and Managers:** Operatives who display impressive leadership, loyalty, and skill may become *supervisors*. In some rare cases, this means directly managing an amalgam in the field. In others, it might mean living day-to-day in a front shared by one or more teams. Most supervisors have proven their loyalty enough times to earn a more permanent position in a major Construct, and the highest-ranking supervisors become key Managers within a given construct, ship, or headquarters.
- **Tier Four / T4: Management and Symposiums:** Supervisors and Managers, in turn, report to *Management*: a collective that remains geographically and physically removed from your own daily activities in order to sustain and enhance their objectivity. In any large geographical area (such as a city, state, province, or nascent country), the highest-ranking Managers form

a *Symposium* to oversee operations. On a day-to-day basis, you do not need to think about these leadership bodies. We trust in our leaders. Remember that each Symposium includes at least one representative from your Convention, and they are there to advocate for *you*.

- **Tier Five / T5: Masters and Extradimensional Oversight:** You do not currently have sufficient clearance to fully understand the eye at the top of the pyramid. Suffice it to say that it sees all. The eye is a metaphor. The pyramid is a metaphor. There is not a literal pyramid with a literal eye. This is all you currently need to know about T5 personnel.

Let's explore those Tiers in detail before proceeding further.

TO: Affiliates and Citizens

We couldn't function the way we do without our support staff of amazing *citizens and associates*. Millions of these people worldwide (and quite a few of them off-world as well) provide support and resources for Technocratic programs and technologies. The vast majority of these people have no idea what we're doing, of course, and it's best for everyone involved if they stay out of the loop, as it were. Like most people outside our Union, these citizens and associates just want to live their lives, get a paycheck, take care of their families, and treat themselves to something nice now and then. No one benefits if these people wake up to find angry werewolves in their living room, so it's up to us to make sure that support-staff citizens remain as insulated as possible from the often-messy business we pursue on the upper ranks of our organization.

Disputed Data: Recruitment and Diversity

Despite its global scope, the Technocratic Union has Western European origins. Until recently, those origins favored white men (and occasional women) from upper-caste society. For centuries, secret societies within the Order of Reason recruited Enlightened minds harvested from the ranks of the rich and powerful, and tended to promote their operatives accordingly. This propensity has proved... *counterproductive* at best. And so, the modern Technocracy stresses capability and dedication over superficial concerns like melanin, gender, and social rank. As Agent Blossom (of Construct Orange) says in her *Orange HR Handbook*: "When we recruit, we are looking for one factor above and beyond any other: the degree of your Enlightenment. Our methods don't see the color of your skin or who you love or how you define your identity — we want you for your mind. That isn't a recent development; it's set us apart from more Traditional societies for a very long time."

Enlightened people can often (though not always) sense when another person is likewise Enlightened. And so, there's often a metaphorical "dance" to scope out a potential recruit's abilities and talents. During the days of the Order of Reason, such exchanges often employed the trappings of secret societies: displaying "cries of distress," making literary allusions in conversations, speaking in mystical innuendo, and so on. These days, Technocracy recruiters favor aura-reading technology, subtle mind-probes, and other tools of metaphysical discernment.

During the 20th century, the Union developed technological methods of scanning through large populations of humans for potential recruits, such as the Ivory Tower's ability to sort through masses of students applying to college using standardized testing to find the brightest and most Enlightened candidates. In the 21st century, Progenitors now maintain genetic databases stocked by voluntary contributors searching for information about their ancestry and origins. Drug companies sometimes scan these databases for signs of medical conditions and complications; through similar methods, the Technocracy can seek out signs of potential Enlightenment, and then follow through with active recruitment. As this Enlightened tech has advanced, the results of recruitment have become increasingly diverse.

Allies, Assets, and Associates

At the fringes of our Union, we depend on countless *allies*, *assets*, and *associates*. Known sometimes as *sympathizers* (especially among old-school operatives) or, more recently, *affiliates*, these parties are not actual Technocrats and know little or nothing about our organization, its scope, or its purpose. It's a good idea to keep them in the dark as much as possible, because although they serve many valuable uses for our Union — especially when they command a significant degree of influence among the Masses — allies, assets, and associates tend to be undisciplined at best and occasionally counterproductive in the long term. In such cases, we need to cut them off as quickly and cleanly as possible.

In Union terminology, an *ally* is someone sympathetic to the Technocratic cause who has some ideas about who we are and what we do; an RD technoshaman agrees that the internet needs to be protected from corruption might become an ally. An *asset* provides useful resources but remains ignorant about what he's providing it for; a gangster with influence among the local teamsters is an asset; finally, an *associate* works for some group or organization that secretly works for us; a security guard at a Syndicate front company is an associate. All three advance the needs of our organization without actually being part of it.

This level represents an apparent contradiction to Technocratic protocol because many assets and allies are Reality Deviants of some kind: animated corpses, alien entities, rogue mages, that sort of thing. Technically, we are not supposed to deal with RDs in any friendly way; in a practical sense, though,

it's sometimes in our best interests to have "a friend on the inside," as it were. That vampire might have valuable intel about our enemies; that alien could teach us about an environment we have not learned to master yet. Although certain parties are completely off-limits — *Nephandi mages are never to be engaged in any friendly fashion, EVER!* — a skilled and clever operative might make use of RD contacts if the asset in question aids the Technocratic cause. Those sorts of alliances are forbidden at lower ranks, of course, but once you prove yourself and advance further up the pyramid, you may find yourself involved with allies, assets and associates who provide helpful, if temporary, assistance to your missions and the greater good.

Rank-and-File Support Staff

Within the unEnlightened Masses, we employ several million people (and certain animals) to handle most of the everyday business the Technocracy requires. Office staff, warehouse personnel, security guards for mundane locations, artisans and technicians, factory specialists, journalists, academics, law-enforcement personnel, etc. etc. etc.; these citizens provide the lowest but most important tier of our pyramid. Many operatives look down (so to speak) on these people, but that's a mistake. The information scrolling across your VDAS feed comes from data gathered and sorted by these associates. If you call for backup (and you will), request gear (and you will), require cleanup (and you will), the rank-and-file support staff supplies those needs even if you never see them personally (and usually, you won't).

Thinking Globally, Recruiting Locally

Since its inception as the Order of Reason, the Technocracy has favored one quality above all others: Enlightenment. Considerations of age, gender, identity, ethnicity, and so on are essentially irrelevant. The Union cares only for the brilliance of your Enlightened mind.

Despite such progressive thinking, a Construct that oversees a specific region of the globe (or more precisely, the Symposium leading it) may choose to recruit its members and affiliates largely or exclusively from the local populace. In these cases, most of the agents and assets for that Construct predominantly reflect the culture they're supervising. In theory, the Technocracy does not discriminate; in practice, certain Symposiums and Constructs do, especially along lines that reflect the culture and prejudices of the Masses nearby.

These insular Constructs still accept agents transferred from other parts of the globe. The transition might be rough for the agent in question, especially if that person belongs to a gender or culture that is, shall we say, unpopular in the region. Managers sometimes use such transfers deliberately, as punishment for an errant operative. Technically, that's unmutual. Good luck, though, if you're the agent on that particular shit list and trying to get someone to address your complaints.

Despite Technocratic standardization practices, each Construct has a great degree of latitude when it comes to personnel and other locale-specific elements. Thanks to the Regional Management Initiative, an individual Symposium may choose to define its parameters for identity within

its Constructs as it chooses. This means a Symposium may set quotas (or eschew them), choosing agents all of one gender, an equal divide of genders, or setting a percentage of agents from a specific ethnic group; each of those Constructs might promote its operatives solely on metrics unrelated to gender or ethnicity. A merit-based metrics system is the most common mode of operations, but it's not the only one. As Management says, "your reality may vary."

To complicate matters: When a Construct is augmented by a caste of unEnlightened clones or other artificial personnel, that Construct's social parameters may be more extreme. An Iteration X Construct may have a cadre of exclusively male clones; a Progenitor research laboratory might decant clones with no discernable gender characteristics; an Ivory Tower research Construct might insist its cloned librarians have equal representation of binary gender. In each case, the ruling Symposium has made a deliberate choice.

Storytellers Note: From an in-game perspective, enforced or apparent personnel quotas and discrimination can upset players as well as characters. Although dramatic stories can be made around a discriminatory Construct and its leadership, this is "check in with your players" territory. Now, the Technocracy is, at heart, a dystopian authoritarian nightmare conspiracy state. Even so, Storytellers should be sure, before proceeding, that such potentially problematic themes won't kick off real-life problems around your table.

For more data regarding the protocols surrounding gender and ethnicity among the Union's ranks, see Unit 4, p. 106.

Generally, we refer to these people as *citizens*. Some Technocrats prefer older terms like *proles*, *pawns* or *human resources*, but we discourage such terminology these days. Citizen implies a certain level of respect; a citizen belongs to something bigger and more civilized than a simple individual can be, and so calling these people "citizens" sets them aside from the mundane Masses. They might not be as individually valuable to our Union as you are, but our citizens play valuable parts in this Technocracy's operations, so whether they realize their place in it or not, it's up to us to remember their role in the Union we all share.

T1: Low-Light Operatives

Fresh recruits, young prodigies, skilled citizens, and recently Enlightened operatives still in the training stage of their newlives fit into the T1 classification.

Extraordinary Citizens

Certain people within our staff have been introduced into the hidden elements of our Technocratic Union. These tens of thousands of highly trained and motivated *extraordinary*

citizens help us handle the endless tasks associated with a global organization that operates on several dimensions at once. Without these people, we could not do the things we do. While it's helpful to keep up the appearance that we have countless thousands of Enlightened operatives working our factories and labs, the truth is the people like you are far too rare and precious for support-work roles. Even at the lowest ranks, we need Enlightened operatives to focus on urgent and specialized tasks. Extraordinary citizens fill that gap between the mundane Masses and Enlightened personnel.

Unlike rank-and-file employees, extraordinary citizens literally believe in what we do. Generally, we promote such people from within the ranks of normal employees when a given individual shows special promise, dedication, and aptitude. Once provided special perks and training, these citizens can handle a bit of the heavier lifting that comes with employment within our Union; where the typical receptionist comes to work, works mundane desk duties, and goes home safe at the end of her shift, an extraordinary receptionist deals with confidential correspondence, has special security clearances, and probably employs a few bits of basic hypertechnology. Naturally, we keep a close

Prodigies: Born This Way

According to most sources, Technocracy agents begin outside the Union and then abandon their oldlife for a new identity within their group. Some Technocrats, however, are born and raised within the Union; they don't have an oldlife because the Technocracy is all they've ever known. You can find out more about those prodigies in Unit 4, p.110.

eye on our extraordinary citizens. Those who continue to display talent — perhaps even the stirrings of Enlightenment — receive greater access, training, clearance, and privileges. Those who prove disappointing... well, our Union has use for them, too, but it's best not to talk too much about that.

While Enlightened operatives such as yourself enjoy a higher status and greater perks within our Union, extraordinary citizens are the foundation on which we rest. In addition to the tasks they perform, these people maintain, enhance and perpetrate our vision for reality — a vision where technology enhances human progress and superstitionism gets banished back to the Dark Ages where they belong, forever.

Within our ranks, each Technocratic Convention has its own methods for enlisting highly intelligent and motivated people as extraordinary citizens. Everyone employs technicians and office-support staffers, of course, with other enlistees coming from fields which support the goals of the Convention in question. Iteration X favors inventors, mathematical savants, programmers, engineers, security guards, and other people with that Convention's signature taste for precision and perfection. The NWO recruits law-enforcement officers, media professionals, spies, office personnel, political consultants, bloggers, pundits, and other specialists in information and control. The Progenitors split their support staff between field work, offices, and laboratory facilities, while the syndicate promotes executives, PR and HR specialists, fashion consultants, personal assistants, bodyguards and other intimate associates. The Void Engineers man their vessels, labs, and outposts with hundreds of extraordinary citizens who have learned that "science fiction" pales in comparison to the realities we understand. Each Convention tests its people often for aptitude and loyalty, with generous rewards for both. Thanks to the efforts of these extraordinary citizens, our Union commands dozens of Constructs, thousands of businesses, and millions of offices, labs, and bases around the world and outside its most obvious borders.

Low-Light Initiated Operatives

The few, the proud, the Enlightened — that's us — people who understand our true capabilities on a cellular level and grasp the deeper implications of what we can truly do. Where unEnlightened citizens provide a foundation for our Union, we are the stone from which it's made. That awareness makes us valuable in ways other

people could never be. Enlightenment, though, comes with big responsibilities. The future of our world depends on what we do.

We tend to call our recently Enlightened agents *initiated operatives* because they've been initiated into a greater understanding of our task. The word *initiate* is a relic from the days of the Order of Reason. Although it's employed infrequently as a word that refers to everyone of this rank, each Convention has its own designation for this type of agent. Recently, supervisors have begun using the term *low lighter* to refer to newly initiated operatives. The "initiated" personnel might be working on a team of agents who share similar degrees of training, or they may be assigned to work with higher-ranking agents.

Oh, and that upper-case Enlightened "E"? That's to distinguish you from people who think they understand how the world works but really don't. Trust me, there's a huge difference between some kid who takes a yoga class and a Technocratic operative who comprehends our true place in the cosmos. Even at the lowest ranks in our Technocracy, you are precious. You are valuable. You are one of us.

Each Convention tends to work differently with freshly initiated Enlightened operatives:

Iteration X

The "Clockwork Convention" programs its *ciphers* to do their grunt work. Often lacking full independence, these initiates are like hard drives waiting for the right program. Because Iteration X has a very collective ideology, ciphers who have been raised or instructed within this Convention's Constructs need to earn the right to define their own identity from the amalgam around them. As a cipher seeks upgrades and further Enlightenment, they eventually find an alternative: being the programmer who makes everyone else get with the program.

Although Iterators occasionally recruit new members from outside the Technocracy, many of the group's initiates have been raised with it their whole lives in one way or another. Even outside recruits, however, surrender their individual identity at the lower ranks. Ideally, Iterators try to get their people thinking of themselves as cogs in a larger machine. Although the idea of people as machines is beginning to fall out of favor even within the Clockwork Convention, there's a lot to be said for starting your people off at the same level and then incentivizing them to work upwards from there.

The New World Order

NWO initiates begin intense training for their bodies and minds. After a year or two of training, these *Black Suit* initiates get sent out as support teams on missions in the field; those initiates work with extraordinary citizens and upper-ranked Black Suits in order to gain the skills and disciplines they need. The best of these Black Suits become full-time field agents — the kind who inspire legends about “the Men in Black.” Most remain in the offices or labs, dressed in identical black suits regardless of gender unless they’re training in the gym or getting a few hours of much-needed sleep.

In the New World Order, the Black Suit rank constitutes an especially rigorous boot camp for agents who will go on to greater things. Newly initiated agents handle the tedious parts of investigations, dedicating their time to “bookwork and footwork” until they graduate to supervised support roles in the field. Agents who display an aptitude for field work often stay at the Black Suit rank but receive increasingly higher degrees of training, responsibilities, and rewards. Those who demonstrate especially fine people skills may be trained as secret agents or media operatives instead, granted more latitude in individual fashion and appearance while being “introduced back into the wild” under new personas and newlife names.

This “black suit protocol” began at the end of the Victorian age, as a way of getting our agents to stop thinking of themselves as individuals and identity themselves as a collective. Until a few years ago, all freshly initiated Black Suits had their heads shaved; Iteration X ciphers still do. Short haircuts, though, remain mandatory until an agent graduates from Black Suit status to the *Operative*, *Reporter* or *Grey Suit* rank. By the time a NWO agent earns the right to a distinct hairstyle and personalized grooming, that agent has acquired formidable mental disciplines, impressive physical combat skills, and the sort of social acumen that a Hollywood agent would kill to receive. Easily underestimating “faceless” people is one of the points of the Black Suit protocol. Anyone who understands our Union, though, knows better than to ever, *ever* underestimate a person in a black suit. You never know entirely whom you’re dealing, or what that person is capable of doing — and that, fellow operatives, is *also* part of the point.

The Progenitors

Where Iterators and the NWO prize uniformity, Progenitors prize individuality. Sure, they make clones, but initiated members of this Convention must show personal initiative and achievements. To that end, they start their initiates out as *research assistants*, *street ops*, and *recruiters*, tailoring the position to that initiate’s abilities but still forcing them to confront their limitations and either rise above them, wash out, or die.

Of all Conventions, the Progenitors are the group most focused on academic pursuits and laboratory work. The pressures their initiates face are more often mental than physical. This

is a group, however, that believes accelerated evolution is the key to the future, and so assigns their beginners to street-level positions among gangs, First Responder teams, or both. Most of these low-light agents eventually obtain the kind of formal education and laboratory facilities enjoyed by higher-ranking students; first, however, they must prove themselves on the Front Lines, where even the geekiest lab rat must get her hands dirty.

The Syndicate

The Money Men and Women sign paychecks for capital-A *Associates*; the most profitable Associates are colloquially referred to as “Magic Men,” whatever gender they might be. Yeah, the Syndicate is like that, but we love them anyway because *no one* is better at bringing in funds and securing the best deals. As you can imagine, running the Technocracy is an expensive proposition, so this Convention is especially good at gathering and managing the financial resources we need to keep the lights on and the monsters away.

Like the Progenitors, the Syndicate prizes individualism; in many ways, they’re polar opposites of the collective-minded Order and Iterators. Where Iteration X seeks efficient cogs, the Syndicate demands ambition, charisma, and personal excellence. If you step into the high-end polished shoes of Syndicate initiation, you’d best be prepared to prove yourself every day, in every task, with every word you say — not by conforming to a uniform ideal but by proving you’ve got what it takes to make things happen.

In the other Conventions, new initiates leave their oldlives behind. You probably did it when you arrived, and so you know what I’m referring to: That split between the person you were before joining our Technocracy, and the operative you are among us now. Sometimes, though, the Syndicate lets its initiates keep their oldlives and all the connections the old identity possessed. Connections, after all, are everything in business, and especially since so many Syndicate operatives come from wealthy families, crime families, or wealthy crime families, those connections are useful to the Syndicate as well as to its *Associates*. That’s not true all the time, though; many Syndicate agents begin at the bottom of life’s applecart but get recognized for the potential to be something great if presented with the right opportunities. Those initiates go through the usual oldlife/newlife process, stepping out as freshly minted *Associates* hungry for a chance to prove their worth. You don’t want to get in the way of *those* Syndicate *Associates*, believe me! A shark has more compassion than a Magic Man with a brand-new life and the chance to make his bones at your expense.

The Void Engineers

This Convention is out of this world. Literally. Even its initiates leave the world as they knew it behind during the first part of their orientation. In space, there is no “oldlife,” and while plenty of VEs stay behind and explore the secret regions of this world,

the idea of leaving who you used to be in order to become who you are now is an essential part of the Void Engineer experience.

Void Engineer Students, Technicians, and Marines need to be ready for nearly any kind of assignment — sometimes, they do fieldwork in other dimensions. Misinformed agents from other Conventions think of these initiates as a bunch of functionaries in jumpsuits, living somewhere off in space, but VE students still have a lot of work to do as part of their internships in Earthbound space. Anywhere you go on Earth, there's a barrier separating this world from other dimensions and the Pan-Dimensional Entities that come with them. Some of those students join the Border Corps Division straight-off as the Marines taking the fight to extradimensional intruders, and so the VE initiation/orientation process resembles the basic training process required of Armed Forces recruits among the Masses. Striking a balance between the collective identities of the Iterators and NWO, and the individualism preferred among the Progenitors and Syndicate, new VE operatives adopt new identities and uniform dress and behavior while retaining a sense of themselves as individuals within a group-focused effort — a lifetime campaign to save the Earth from hostile forces on all sides of existence.

Cross-Training Between Conventions

Each Convention has its own methods for recruiting and training initiates. To broaden an operative's skillset, however, most Constructs allow their operatives to cross-train with members of other groups. More often than not, cross-trained agents serve in

mixed-Convention groups, go on missions together, and sometimes even share living quarters. Decades ago, such "fraternization" was unusual, even suspicious; in the current era, though, we've found that it creates a sense of flexibility, cooperation and unity that the old "stick with your own kind" mode could not match. And so, as you probably know from your own experience, cross-training and mixed-Convention amalgams are the rule, not the exception, within the Union we all share.

We'll talk more about amalgams below. For now, just keep in mind that you'll be working with each other in all kinds of situations, so remember: Our Union and its mission depend on cooperation between everyone involved, so play nice with one another!

T2: Agents and Operatives

The most skilled and versatile Technocrats work in the middle of the pyramid as *agents* and *operatives*; the two terms are more-or-less interchangeable. Formally, each Convention has its own terminology for describing specialists with various methods and Methodologies; for simplicity's sake, though, most Technocrats at this level are known simply as agents or operatives, and they fill a wide range of roles — soldiers, scientists, diplomats, healers, and visionaries, just to name a few.

When possible, an operative's initial training begins in Horizon Constructs and other off-world headquarters. These days, however, the vast majority of our agents live and die among the



Masses in Earth's primary and material dimension. We call this world "the Front Lines" because that's what it is. In your oldlife, you may have remained unaware of the paranormal infestation of the so-called "everyday world." As initiated Technocratic operatives, you know better now. This world is a battlefield in which Reality Deviants strive to pervert Reality into a thousand disparate visions. Whether you hunt them in the streets, research them in a laboratory, create weapons in a factory, or counter this pervasive RD influence from a classroom or media center, the "Front Lines" are all around you — always.

Newlife Fronts and Amended Society

In time, if you desire to do so, you can earn the right to take your newlife out into the Masses again, this time with a job that won't lay you off on a whim, a decent paycheck, excellent health benefits, and rent-free living space. Especially these days, the ability to start over again with a stable home, income, and medical care provides a massive incentive for new recruits. Chances are good that you joined us to gain those things, and I promise you this: If you take care of the Technocracy, the Technocracy takes care of you.

A newlife "front" depends a lot on your station and aptitudes. Most Syndicate operatives work in some capacity of the business world, while many VE Neutralization Specialists live incognito among the Masses, their gear and weapons hidden until a cross-dimensional incursion occurs. Lower-ranking agents share housing — a situation common among the highest levels of Iteration X and non-covert operatives of the NWO. Upper-tier operatives from the Progenitors, Syndicate, and media and spy divisions of the NWO, however, can earn their own apartments, homes, or even (for operatives whose fame and wealth are important aspects of their jobs) mansions, penthouses, and estates. All those properties are strictly monitored, of course, and filled with Technocratic employees and assets. Still, if you want a fresh start with a new identity and the chance to live well in an uncertain era, the opportunity to get those things is close at hand!

Again, this level of freedom is a privilege, not a right. Agents who do well for the Union can do very well for themselves, too — and agents who don't appreciate the Union's gifts can lose those gifts, sometimes permanently. Amended society is what they call the punishment for ingratitude, so if you know what's good for you... well, you can guess the rest.

T3: Supervisors and Construct Managers

Everyone needs to report to someone, and so each amalgam reports to at least one upper-level operative: the

supervisor. That supervisor provides the team with a mission, oversees their requisitions for equipment, and evaluates their degree of success. In some Constructs, a separate supervisor (possibly from a different Convention) might oversee one or more of those tasks. An agent needs to do more than prove himself in the field before he can be promoted to the rank of supervisor. Any Construct can devolve into political struggles, and sometimes, an ambitious agent needs to make sure he's backed the right horse.

Within a mixed-Convention Construct, each Convention has its own role to play. And so, different supervisors often offer different types of missions. Iteration X might oversee a shockwave attack on hidden clutch of Reality Deviants; a Void Engineer might need the team to step across the Gauntlet to investigate extradimensional activity; an NWO supervisor may need a team to investigate, abduct, or even process a potential recruit, and so on.

At the height of the Ascension Conflict, supervisors managed their teams from the Horizon, high in orbit above the earthly battlefield. In recent years, that situation has changed. These days, a more localized, earthbound approach is preferable to the distant monitoring of previous decades. Even so, supervisors must be kept safe from rampaging monsters and RD attacks. Most of them, then, work in offices and laboratories filled with hypertechnology and luxurious furnishings, communicating through telepresence with their agents in the field. Ideally, you should aspire to similar rewards for your service to our Technocracy.

The Construct Manager

In each Construct or VE vessel, there's at least one supervisor who has worked her way up the ladder, as it were. This supervisor is often (though not universally) accorded the rank of Manager although she still operates independently of the T4 Management collective. This Manager essentially (perhaps literally) functions as the captain of the ship — the ultimate authority within that Construct or vessel. Although this Manager retains a degree of contact with her subordinate operatives, a supervisor of this rank deserves privacy and safety while she ponders the complex matters her position demands.

T4 and T5: Symposiums and Management

Nearing the top of the pyramid, we find the Managers... or, more accurately, we don't find Managers — Managers find us. Most of what Management does is above our security clearance level, so I'll just say that when you need to know more about the peak of the pyramid, your Managers will let you know.

Actions Have Consequences



You are a loyal and trustworthy citizen, even when you notice some of your colleagues stray from mutual behavior. Everyone has their own personal reasons for conforming to the rules, and everyone knows what happens when they don't. We encourage you to now say the following words out loud: "Actions. Have. Consequences."

Although we're all one big happy family here, we're like an American Thanksgiving dinner: Dad still sits at the head of the table, and someone's got to sit at the kids' table. Ideally, everyone knows their place at those tables. For the times when an unruly "kid" needs to be reminded about how the family works, it may be necessary to move that person further away from the head of the table – or, if no other measure works, to send that person away from the table permanently. Certain disruptions and misunderstandings are to be expected; no family is perfect, after all. If those disruptions threaten the security of the family and the table, however, then a wise parent is a stern parent.

SDS: The Six Degrees of Separation

Following this eminently logical approach, loyalty to and within our Union is tracked by a system called the *Six Degrees of Separation* (SDS): Degree 1 agents have attained perfect loyalty, or at least, as perfect as perfect can be. Agents who are demoted to "Degree 7" are no longer be with us, because there is no Degree 7. You'll no doubt see their impending exit before it occurs, and once they have been "termed," you thankfully never have to think of them again.

Because no organization can remain truly static, especially not in tumultuous times such as ours, we're constantly redefining the districts and boundaries of our upper management. No doubt you've heard some recent chatter about the *Regional Management Initiative* (RMI). If you haven't, let's summarize: Each large geographic area is overseen by a Symposium, a board of directors where each of the five Conventions are represented. With the aid of expert advice from HR, each Symposium has the clearance to provide certain degrees of flexibility with regards to the guidelines employed when internal promotions and demotions are handled within a given Symposium. We're all working towards a common vision for reality, but management is empowered to choose their own methods, which may vary from one region to the next.

The most common system is very simple: You and your team receive a mission. If you succeed, there's a chance of promotion. If you fail, expect a demotion. Most teams (or amalgams) start out at a default of Degree 3. If you fail on your

first mission, expect your questionable behavior to demote you to Degree 4. You've received your first strike, and if you get two more strikes, you'll receive your final warning with Degree 6. Each time you fail, another demotion awaits.

Of course, you don't need to worry too deeply about such things because you're planning for success. You've got a positive attitude, and it shows. If you *didn't* have a positive attitude, that would be unmutual, but you and HR now have a mutual understanding. If you succeed, your chances of promotion increase. The top three degrees – 1, 2, and 3 – provide evidence of your loyalty and efficacy, and such promotions have commensurate privileges.

Because of some admittedly archaic views in the Ivory Tower, the first three degrees are sometimes known as the *Inner Circle*; the next three degrees are sometimes called the *Outer Circle*. As you move towards Degree 1, you "move inward"; as you lapse towards Degree 6, you "move outward." Sometimes, that last colloquialism is quite literal: Degree 6 agents may find themselves reassigned to the most distant or least desirable locales in the Union.

Inward and Outward

Degree 1 verifies your *total loyalty*. It's our highest honor for agents and an indicator of trust. The difficulty for all your attempts to requisition equipment is reduced, and your surveillance is minimal. You often have a choice of assignments for your next mission. Only a limited number of amalgams can attain Degree 1, so keep in mind that we may compare your performance statistics against others.

Degree 2 indicates your *assured loyalty*. You've consistently succeeded on your missions, or perhaps you've resolved your first mission in a spectacular manner. Your financial compensation is substantial, and you'll have the option of maintaining your own residence on the Front Lines.

Degree 3 is the name of the training process for our new recruits; it's also the default level of loyalty. We call it that for a reason: after completing your training and answering all our questions, you'll feel like you've received the *third degree!* This is, of course, a popular joke within our ranks. Never let it be said that Technocratic operatives have no sense of humor. (No, really – *never* let that be said. And yes, that is a joke. Sort of.)

Degree 4 agents have demonstrated *questionable loyalty*. You've either failed in your first mission, or you've lapsed from success and mutual behavior. You're not going to slip to the fourth degree just because of one unmutual act or thought. When you've got an objective to fulfill on a mission and you obviously fail at it, you'll see that demotion before it happens.

Degree 5 agents are on the "red list" because their loyalty is doubtful. Every Construct has tough jobs that need to get

Disputed Data: Degree Absolute

Waste is not an efficient use of resources. Especially when those resources involve tremendous investments of money, time, and training, it's wasteful to turn Enlightened operatives into puree for the smallest errors. According to rumor, the Technocratic Union pulps its agents after a handful of infractions, often turning them into spare parts, wiping their minds, feeding them to lab-born critters, or simply sending them into the line of fire to get rid of them. Early Mage books maintained this impression, and the threat of literal termination remains a major tactic when keeping Technocrats in line.

However, although *Degree Absolute* is an actual solution to troublesome operatives, it's not something the Technocracy as a whole employs except in the most extreme cases. Individual managers and Symposia might maintain an especially bloodthirsty protocol, especially with regards to unEnlightened personnel. When it comes to punishing Enlightened operatives, however — particularly operatives with impressive skills and resources — careless treatment and disposal is a waste of resources that even the Union cannot generally afford.

In place of outright termination, upper-level Technocrats prefer methods that keep the errant agent productive while limiting that agent's ability to damage the Union further. **The Book of Secrets** details those methods from a game perspective (pp. 223-230), and so when (not "if" — when) Technocracy characters screw up in your game, those increasingly draconian punishments reflect the true forms of Technocratic justice — a justice more concerned with efficient use of resources than with the human cost of discipline.

done, and some are tougher than others. In addition to various chores you must undertake in your formerly free time, we may offer you a mission with a higher level of difficulty, so you can show us how much you want to settle your account.

Degree 6 agents are disloyal and unmutual. You (and possibly your amalgam) may be reassigned to a particularly challenging environment. When you reach your new assignment, you may find that the rules have changed, your privileges have been reduced, or your identity has been altered. Don't let that get you down, though. Think of it as a motivation to work harder.

Degree 7 is also known as *Degree Absolute*. Under the metaphor mentioned earlier, this involves being sent away from the table. The penalty, though, is much stiffer than a night without dinner or the attendant whipping some of you might recall from your younger days. If Degree 6 represents profound disappointment, Degree 7 represents terminal incorrigibility, and is addressed with appropriate severity.

As we mentioned earlier, mistakes are inevitable. Slip-ups occur and can be forgiven. Our Union holds a significant investment in each one of our operatives, and so we are neither capricious nor careless with our Degrees. Because that investment must be protected, though, our Union must remain strict. In a world filled with, and surrounded by, Extinction Level Events in not-quite-human form, strict vigilance is what keeps our family — and every human family — alive.

TDS: The Damian Scale

When preparing for your next mission, you should know that your supervisor will occasionally be very specific about which activities in the field may result in demerits and/or demotion. You should be grateful for these warnings, because a supervisor is under no obligation to disclose the metrics they employ for evaluating your behavior. Nonetheless, one commonly used

metric is worth mentioning at this stage. Employed since the days of Victorian England, it measures your use of Enlightened Science, and we call it the *Damian Scale* (TDS).

As we've articulated quite clearly earlier in this document, unEnlightened citizens remain safest when they are kept away from open manifestations of what Reality Deviants call "magick" — that is, the careless reality fluctuations performed by so-called "mages." We don't want the Masses to question the nature of reality; that way quite literally leads to madness. Instead, we want to the Masses to remain secure in the vision of stability for which we assert control. Pandimensional whims must be contained, as must the people (and other less-human creatures) who exert them at the cost of innocent mortal lives.

Agents in our Technocracy don't need "magick," of course. We employ Enlightened technological procedures, principles and devices. Untrained citizens can't make that tech work, but *you* can. As you'd expect, advanced technology provides powerful tools, but it can be indiscreet when used carelessly. When an innocent citizen sees something that looks like a science fiction movie gone berserk, he starts to question reality in ways that can create complications for everyone involved. We call these advanced methods "blatant procedures"; some agents colloquially refer to them as "vulgar."

If you use vulgar or blatant procedures repeatedly, especially in front of unenlightened citizens, this adversely affects your performance rating. Managers track the number of blatant procedures, weigh their impact on localized reality, factor in the number of witnesses, and reach a performance rating between 1 and 10. For now, you don't need to worry about the exact algorithm employed — just keep those numbers low. Be discreet. Act unseen. When necessary, remove evidence of paranormal or allegedly supernatural phenomena. If you can't control the localized results of your procedures, your manager will certainly note your lapses in performance. For more details, contact your team leader, supervisor, or management.

TDS Ratings

- | | |
|----|----------------------|
| 1 | Vanishing point |
| 2 | Undetectable |
| 3 | Subtle |
| 4 | Clever |
| 5 | Acceptable threshold |
| 6 | Careless |
| 7 | Reckless |
| 8 | Dangerous |
| 9 | Deviant |
| 10 | Terminal Deviance |

NEI: Neglect, Error, Intent

Like many Union organizations, we employ the *NEI* system to correct unwanted behavior. Periodic unscheduled Evaluation Reviews analyze each operative's behavior and interactions, paying special attention to the inevitable infractions that result when human imperfections meet the purity of our ideals.

This simple three-step system shows the three most common consequences of unmutual actions:

- If you were careless enough to unintentionally *neglect* the rules, perhaps because you were unaware or uninformed, your punishment is a corrective measure, which prevents you from relapsing in future.
- If you have chosen poorly and made an *error*, you have shown you are not worthy of trust. You will receive demerits or an immediate demotion.
- If you willingly break Union protocol with *intentional* disobedience or destruction of collective property, we reserve the right to do more than demote you. Correction is harsh and possibly terminal. Social Conditioning may be required. You have been warned.

We have been informed that some agents refer to the HR representatives who perform these Evaluation Reviews as "NEI-sayers." That joke is not recognized as humorous. You are now being informed that such terminology is unmutual, and evidence of this transgression cannot be treated as neglect. Demerits will result in temporary reassignment to maintenance chores for the betterment of the Construct.

Infractions and Reprimand

As previously mentioned, a certain amount and degree of infractions are inevitable. And so, punishment is inevitable, too. Despite rumors to the contrary, we don't use errant operatives for spare parts every time someone makes a mistake. That would be silly. And wasteful. We only do that to operatives who don't learn from their mistakes.

I'm kidding. Sort of.

Obviously, good service outweighs certain errors. Each operative is an investment for our Union, and operatives who make that investment worthwhile are considered more valuable to the Technocracy than operatives who do not. It's simple mathematics, and we all want to keep our numbers high. Compliance adds to your value as an agent.

Keep in mind that when you *do* receive a punishment (and you will), we reserve the right to reverse or cancel it if you respond with mutual, meritorious, or conspicuously gallant service.

- **Reprimand:** When you cross a line, we'll let you know. You may be invited to a private session where one of your supervisors directly and emphatically tells you the nature of your transgression. Further lapses in judgment are then no longer mere *neglect* – they are then *errors*. Note that referring to these sessions colloquially to other agents using terms like, "taking the lashes," "getting chewed out," "getting called on the carpet," and so forth is unmutual, and may be redressed with further reprimands.
 - **Report:** When an official complaint is filed against you, that's going in your permanent file. Other amalgams or supervisors may have access to this information before working with you. In time, the possibility of deleting this file may be offered as a reward for meritorious or hazardous service.
 - **Restriction:** When you show that you cannot be trusted with loyalty, we can no longer trust you with privileges. A restriction may be a temporary alternative to a full demotion. Keep in mind that some Constructs do not offer as many freedoms as others; such privileges must be earned, not provided as a default.
 - **Surveillance:** We're watching you. If you act in suspicious or unmutual ways, we need to increase your surveillance. On Construct Brown, for example, the default 24/7 surveillance is augmented with additional methods of surveillance, such as psychic scans, biometric data mining, full "sensoround" recording, and/or body cams. Construct Orange, by contrast, prefers to reward loyalty with privacy instead.
- Note: The previous paragraph should not be taken as tantamount to a "Terms of Service" agreement, nor are we obligated to disclose the frequency or intensity of your surveillance.
- **Forfeiture:** Within a typical Construct, property is mutual. When you behave unmutually, you can no longer enjoy that mutual property. We reserve the right to enforce loyalty by restricting access to goods and services on the Construct. If you've been authorized for personal wealth on the Front Lines, for example, we can make that a privilege instead of a right: your bank account,

vehicle, or home access may be temporarily remanded to other operatives within the Union.

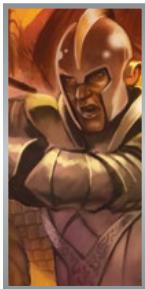
- **Demotion:** For further elaboration on this consequence, please reference our earlier materials regarding the “Six Degrees of Separation.” Failure to do so may result in reprimand.
- **Amended Society:** When you demonstrate suspicious or unmutual behavior, we reserve the right to amend your personal life or increase your social monitoring on the Front Lines. People you know and places you go may become data points we use to evaluate you. Associates with harmful ideas can be removed or amended within your personal life.
- **Reassignment:** As we mentioned earlier, success can result in reassignment to better missions and/or quarters; failing to succeed in your assignments can lead to more adverse assignments and surroundings for you and your amalgam.

• **Reprogramming:** The New World Order has elaborate methods of programming, deprogramming, or reprogramming agents. Social Conditioning can upgrade your identity, your memories, or your reactions to specific phenomena.

• **Duplication:** You may have heard that Construct Brown has the authority to erase unmutual agents and replace them with conditioned clones. We would like to assure you that this punishment is not enacted in most Constructs, especially not exemplary locales like Construct Orange. Any clones you may encounter are duplicates of existing agents, not replacements.

• **Degree Absolute:** You have not seen any evidence of The Seventh Degree, otherwise known as Degree Absolute. Any agents that are not currently in your Construct have been reassigned elsewhere. Do not trouble yourself by discussing the current status of these agents. Doubt is unmutual. Questions are a burden. And actions have consequences.

There's No “I” in Team: Your Amalgam



No agent should ever need to work alone. Even scouts and deep-cover operatives receive remote backup from their support team. When you first enter training, you’re assigned to a crèche of trainees all working and learning together. During that training period, you are assigned to a block of habitation cubes where you all share resources as neighbors. Training can vary widely, of course, depending on the Construct and Convention involved: day-to-day work among Iteration X clones is nothing like life on the bold frontier here on Construct Orange! Eventually, though, you’ll most likely find yourself back on the Front Lines, now with a new understanding of just how weird and perilous the “real world” really is. And so, we make certain that our operatives – especially the new ones who are still learning their role in this deeper state of existence – never have to face those dangers alone.

Amalgams come in many configurations, but share several criteria. First, your superiors must designate a supervisor to oversee the briefing and resource allocation for the team. Before you leave the Construct on your first mission, you are assigned one to oversee your progress. Your amalgam may decide who’s in charge in the field, but ultimately, you need to report back to your team’s supervisor. That individual may not be the one who’s responsible for bringing your team together, but they’re your point of contact until the mission is complete and your debriefing has occurred.

Once your supervisor is assigned, they must work with your Construct’s human resources team to select agents. Possible configurations include:

The Cross-Conventional Amalgam

The most common configuration involves a team in which each of the five Conventions is represented by at least one agent. Each Convention has its own specialty, so supervisors find this sort of structure tends to function best in the field. Debriefing is also easier because each agent can report directly to their local Construct representative in addition to their supervisor’s debriefing.

Some “cc-amalgams” require agents of at least a minimal rank in the Union; that’s one of the reasons why we have a universal designation of five ranks. (You may have heard chatter about Technocrats above Rank 5; you need not concern yourself with these rumors.) The most common configuration for a cc-amalgam is one in which all agents are at least Rank 3. As one would expect, when a supervisor sends a communiqué to all the agents on your current team, you are “cc’d” on the message.

The Conventional Amalgam

Sometimes, one of the Conventions has a vested interest in an opportunity or crisis related to its specialty. A Void Engineer amalgam, for example, may be assigned to explore a location in the Deep Universe, or to defend an extradimensional location. An Iteration X amalgam could include a team of cyborgs and



soldiers trained to work closely together against a paranormal threat. It's only natural for you to feel a sense of loyalty to your first cross-Conventional amalgam, but your local Convention representative may require you to spend some time away from your regular assignment crucial to the division that recruited, trained, and provisioned you.

The Low-Light Amalgam

Rank 1 and Rank 2 agents sometimes lack the training to join a cross-Conventional amalgam. They may have been held back because of errors during the training period, or perhaps they aren't Enlightened enough to fully understand the technology we use. We collectively refer to these individuals as *low-light* agents; while they are valued citizens, standardized testing reveals that their diminished levels of Enlightenment exclude them from higher-security tasks. Enlightened Rank 2 agents often end up working with a pool of unEnlightened sympathizers, such as clones, lab assistants, or Black Suit clone operatives. You may be asked to oversee or coordinate with one of these teams in the field.

Within your Construct, we also have low-light citizens who carry out day-to-day operations within the Union. While most of these positions are filled by unEnlightened or extraordinary citizens, we have some fronts and Constructs where anomalous, paranormal, or just plain *weird* activity nearby requires the intellect and insight of low-light agents. Nonetheless, we all need to do our part, so those agents may be tasked with clerical work, laboratory maintenance, routine surveillance, financial management, janitorial duties, and so on. These teams are also known by another designation:

The Internal Amalgam

Finally, we should mention the hard-working teams that find a rewarding, fulfilling career by living and working full-time within the Construct. This category of collective includes citizens who carry out maintenance, secretarial, and graduate student studies within our collective home. Higher-ranking agents may form an internal amalgam because of an advanced research program, the maintenance of targeted groups or locations, or supervisory duties. When evaluating one of these teams, you may want to review the guidelines for the *Hierarchy of Assets and Resources* (a.k.a. the HOAR report), which assesses the relative value of parties within the Union.

The Shockwave Amalgam

Lest we forget their service and sacrifice, let's also hear it for the amalgams who train for outright war on the Front Lines. Only the bravest, best and brightest of our soldiers need apply. These teams tend to be dominated by Iteration X shock troops and Void Engineer marines, but if you know how to point and shoot a gun — and we *know* you do! — then your citizenship no doubt compels you to service. Who's going to make sure your team follows the rules? Who's going to make sure everyone's motivated and loyal? That's you! The chances of survival are admittedly low, but the chances for glory and promotion are at an all-time high!

Please note that the team to which you're assigned may only be temporary. You might work together for one mission, a limited number of missions, or an infrequent sequence of missions. It's not uncommon for an agent to be reassigned after a briefing, especially if their actions have affected their

Degree of Separation. Keep your numbers up on the Damian Scale, and you may find yourself up for promotion. You may even be able to choose your next assignment.

RSP: Requisitions and Resources

If and when you earn the ability to begin a newlife outside your assigned Construct, you have opportunities to prepare for your next mission. Our marketing department calls this opportunity the *Req Spec Phase* (RSP): The opportunity to request gear and other resources beyond those you are normally assigned by your supervisor.

Under normal circumstances, Construct-based operatives are assigned such resources by their supervisors. Under RSP protocols, however, you can make some requisition requests yourself! With a little bit of planning, you can leverage our mutual resources to prepare for your next contact with the Front Lines. Even field agents have these opportunities if they've achieved sufficient Rank and goodwill to do so. Although we all need to return to our local Construct when called in for duty, the same RSP benefits apply to operatives who've earned the proper Rank. Whether you're hidden on the Front Lines, safe at home, or exploring the galaxy, we want to make sure you have everything you need to succeed.

Outfitting

First, speak to your manager about your basic supplies, technological and otherwise. You are geared up with the essential equipment you need for your mission. We draw on mutual resources, so please remember to return that gear in better shape than you received it. You do not personally own those resources, so we reserve the authority to withdraw your access to them at any time. Your Degree of Separation measures the degree to which we trust you, so once you've fallen to the 4th, 5th or 6th degree, we won't risk our best gear on you. Mundane supplies may include (but are not limited to) cars, weapons, communications equipment, and tools.

Requisitioning

We know that agents come from a variety of backgrounds, and that sometimes you may want to draw upon your own. If you have experience with requisitions, you can make one attempt to justify the acquisition of additional equipment or assistance before the start of your mission. The final decision, of course, resides at your manager's discretion, so please contact your supervisor for more details.

Outsourcing

Each Convention has its own special tech – such as a Black Suit's surveillance gear or a Void Engineer's Dimensional Science hypertech. Loyal agents of the Syndicate, however, often have the resources to attempt requisition of a piece of tech from

Supplemental Data: Requisitions and Discipline

In game terms, a Technocratic character's ability to RSP comes through in the system for requisitioning temporary Background Traits. Details about this process can be found in the **Mage 20** entry "Membership Has its Privileges" (pp. 302-303), while the disciplinary process that can cost your character such privileges can be found in **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 223-230).

another Convention. Again, consult with your supervisor for more details.

Personal Contacts

You may also be tempted to call upon more personal backgrounds for gear, such as former allies, personal contacts, old mentors, or private patrons. Please limit your interaction with individuals from your oldlife. We are watching for threats to our security, and many consider these interactions to be suspicious. When possible, favor and reinforce connections with your newlife. The Union provides everything you need. If we don't provide it, you don't really need it.

Sleepteaching

Some agents have access to temporary knowledge instilled by devices known as *sleepteachers*. Q Division can provide you with more details. The time between the meeting in which you receive your assignment and the time you return to the Front Lines – AKA your *Req Phrase* – is the best time to take advantage of this training. Keep in mind that sleepteaching is a time-consuming process, so such instruction may affect the time you have to acquire other resources. Also, you may be authorized to download some of your personality or memory into a database for storage before a hazardous mission. Use these opportunities wisely!

Sympathizers

Every Convention has low-level agents and unEnlightened personnel who can help with missions. Such resources may be granted to Degree 2 or Degree 3 agents under specific circumstances, although those resources are temporary, typically for the duration of one mission. Once you've shown you're loyal enough to handle the responsibilities of a Degree 1 agent, you can manage your own resources in the field on a more permanent basis. Once you've proven you can see the big picture, you can direct these loyal associates to do your grunt work.

Internal Affirmation



Citizen, every morning, you should look in the mirror and tell yourself how lucky you are to have found your newlife within the Technocracy. If you feel the need to talk to yourself in your private chambers, we encourage this kind of open introspection. Keep a blog! Write a diary! Feel free to document all your feelings and experiences! Our Enlightened agents include a high percentage of highly intelligent humans, so you may notice more unusual manifestations of self-affirmation. Geniuses can be eccentric, after all. Let's be honest with each other, shall we?

Have you seen someone talking to themselves? Do you feel the need to talk to someone who isn't there — or someone allegedly only you can see? Do you have dreams that you're someone else, or are somewhere you've never been before? Do you see and hear someone other operatives cannot detect? You are not alone. Feel free to confide these revelations to others. Because isolation and secrets are unmutual, we have trained specialists who can help you. If talking can't cure you, we have medicine that can.

Little Fragments of Genius

Here in HR, we like to say that every agent has a little fragment of Genius. Some troubled people see manifestations of this "genius" as other, separate entities. Flashes of genius or insight might not be personified as another individual, however; such phenomena could appear as a pattern, a vision, or an encrypted message. We know everyone can benefit from a little bit of scrutiny, just in case they're exhibiting this kind of suspicious behavior. The Union has learned to tolerate a certain measurable amount of eccentricity, but it's vital to know where the limits of eccentricity begin.

Reality Deviants use far more disturbing rituals for dealing with these revelations. According to our interrogations, many so-called mages believe their "souls" harbor Awakened Avatars. Each Deviant mage believes that they have some sort of mystical spirit guide to aid them on their life's journey. Pretty crazy, huh? Pulsing crystals, talking animals, the ghosts of dead friends, and stranger creations confront them on a regular basis. It's no wonder so many of them go insane.

If you find yourself talking to someone who isn't there, or hear voices in your head, seek help. If you find yourself deviating from the kind of sanity you normally enjoy within the safe boundaries of your Construct, please seek help *immediately*. Everyone has the odd dream now and then. Even the most stable individual might be found talking to himself. If you find your sanity slipping or your instability increasing, however, you may have begun to deviate from acceptable, mutual behavior.

True Genius comes from within. Through dreams, contemplation, study, and isolation, a Technocratic agent channels the

power of pure Genius: Enlightened insight that illuminates the path to truth. While there are many benefits to collaborating with the diverse collective of Enlightened minds around you, you'll find your greatest breakthroughs in isolation. Within the safe and supervised environment of your local Construct, we offer you plenty of time and resources to fuel that innovation. This way, when those breakthroughs come to you, the environment around you won't carry the risks of the "real world" outside of our Union.

Anachronistic mages are far more reckless and vulgar than we are. They chase after any fleeting phenomenon that gives them more power. Whether they're wallowing in mud, tripping on psychoactive chemicals, or making deals with devilish alien entities, Reality Deviants look for messages from the mystical, supernatural world around them. They believe they are powered by "Avatars" or "powerful souls," and, allegedly, they claim that puts them in touch with arcane forces — a delusion that manifests in various personality disorders.

The Epiphany

In your oldlife, many of you underwent a relatively sedate and reasonable experience when you first realized the benefits of Enlightenment. You had trained in science and reason, cause and effect, observable phenomenon and the scientific method. There was a moment when you had a great breakthrough. This involved more than jumping to the end of a math problem or fixing a machine that was broken. You had an *Epiphany*: a moment of clarity where your mastery of technology instantly leapt far ahead of the tech around you. For a rare few of you, your Epiphany didn't involve a machine at all: you had a flash of psychic insight or a peek into the mind of another.

That was a dangerous time for you, though. If you had remained alone, you would have Deviated. You could have fallen into self-destructive behavior, risked everything for a dangerous innovation, or fallen to temptations of power. Fortunately, we found you. We shepherded you away from the temptations of your oldlife and introduced you to the safety, security, and community of your newlife. You may have continued to go about your daily business until your transfer to this Construct, or your departure may have been more sudden and dramatic. Either way, you found you were not alone, and you joined a new family in your local Construct. By mutual agreement, we now work for each other.

Citizen, we must warn you: Every Technocrat carries the risk of lapsing into unmutual behavior. Any one of us could fall into delusion or Deviance. On the Front Lines, Reality Deviants indulge in any pursuit they believe gains them power, and form associations that reinforce their delusions, like cults grasping at the keys to creation. Our Union is here to make sure you don't walk down that path as well, because it leads to a dark and dangerous destination. Instead, you look to the future with your



colleagues beside you, sharing your insights and creations for the betterment of all. We are creating new technology, and with your vision, we shall reshape it into a form that the Masses will one day possess. Until that time, we always live a little farther in the future than the rest of humanity manages to do.

Yet at the end of the day, unless you're in a barracks with other soldiers, campus housing with other scientists, or a similar communal environment, you're rewarded for your hard work with the opportunity to walk back into your private quarters or your personal laboratory. As a citizen in good standing, you hold those privileges. Even when you begin your first assignment outside the Construct, it's important to have some alone time as part of your work/life balance.

Examples of Epiphany

In private moments, flashes of Genius occur, and you must remember that they come from within. No doubt you've heard the legend of Archimedes in his bathtub, Franklin with his kite, or Newton getting hit on the head with an apple under a tree. This sort of thing is perfectly natural among brilliant people. So long as you remember that it's all a symbolic representation of insight that's shaped by your Enlightened imagination, you have nothing to fear from such Epiphanies.

Your own flashes of Genius can manifest in many different ways:

- You may experience a revelation in a dream.
- You may see the solution to a problem in a way that others cannot.
- You may daydream about another time or place in which your vision is made manifest.
- You may notice a pattern in words or numbers that offers clues to the truth.
- You may imagine a conversation with a deceased friend or relative.
- You may perform your duties as if by instinct, at a level far beyond your previous performance.
- A seemingly natural phenomenon may give you a sudden insight.

Of course, it's theoretically possible that someone else could try to mislead you with false revelations or Epiphanies. And so, we train you to notice the difference between your own mind revealing the truth, and some Reality Deviant trying to lead you astray. Because you are Enlightened, you learn to tell the difference between personal inspiration and external sources of potential corruption.

We trust you to be wise, and insightful, and safe.

Our Job: The Everyday Impossible



In that spirit, I'd like to conclude with a brief personal observation:

Anyone who tells you we won the fight for the Masses is lying to you. We didn't win—we just gave people vaccinations and smartphones. The fight for humanity has always been about more than merely ensuring that science develops. In our Union, we ensure that *humanity* develops—that the spark of curiosity and compassion develops, while also making sure that humanity doesn't cut its own throat. Sure, we may have had mobile communications before the Masses, but only the most deluded zealots try to convince you that we could see what shape it would take in the hands of billions of people. Social media provides the NWO with more surveillance data than we could ever need—and with it, more room for less-discriminating individuals to manipulate a wider audience. Who would ever have imagined the concept of a "post-truth" society, a society where people are suffering from diseases brought back from the brink of extinction because some quack said that vaccinations were a bad idea? We live now in a world where food supplies are prevented from getting to those in need by incompetent bureaucrats and corrupt individuals, where technology that could revolutionize the world and save lives is held at ransom. Puritanical religious fervor has taken hold again, and with that boom in irrationality, old superstitions and divisions arise again. Preventable ecological disasters we had foreseen decades ago are now on the brink of being irreversible. We live in turbulent times, where news

cycles that would once have shaken the world now fade into obscurity within a day.

Agent, it is *your* job, *my* job, the job of all of us here within our Union, to halt this degeneration of humanity before it's too late.

Does this sound like an impossible task? Well, get ready for the good news, because the people standing around you are some of the most outstanding individuals on the planet. We *do* the impossible, every day, because impossible things are literally our job.

NWO operatives are working tirelessly to prevent yet another world war breaking out—and they are succeeding. Syndicate suits just financed a city's complete conversion to renewable energy. Iteration X operatives just helped people in developing nations to print their own replacement body parts. Progenitor scientists, just this morning, developed a new form of maize that not only flourishes in arid conditions but also provides great nutritional benefit. Meanwhile, other Progenitors have just about convinced the Masses to accept technologies that allows us to print new and functioning organs. Yesterday, a group of Void Engineers saved Albuquerque, New Mexico, from a massive alien incursion. We aren't just *aware* of the problems in the world—we are ready for them, and we have a Time Table to prove it.

The Masses may dream of making a single real difference to the world. For us, that's a Tuesday.

Agent, make us proud. Our world is counting on us all.
Be seeing you!



ABOVE MY PAY GRADE: THE PEAK OF THE PYRAMID



As our ominously bubbly narrator says, the upper levels of Technocratic leadership remain shrouded in secrecy from lower-ranking operatives. Things discussed at the grown-ups table must, by necessity, remain at the grown-ups table. Thus, the following data is not common knowledge among Technocrats below the Manager Tier, and it's often the stuff of rumor and speculation even among the upper ranks.

Management Collectives

Just as agents and operatives report to individual supervisors, supervisors must refer to a collective known as Management. Their communal rank on the org chart is an elaborate amalgamation that remains impenetrable to the average agent. According to rumor, the relative positions of individuals within Management remains fluid, as these high-ranking Technocrats must continually conspire, maneuver, and jockey for position. Some Managers are ambitious, planning to elevate their status to a local Symposium; others value survival, resisting change and becoming entrenched in positions they consider to be relatively safe.

Typically, a Management collective remains isolated from day-to-day lives of individual agents, usually to ensure their objectivity as they levy dispassionate decisions removed from personal feelings or opinions. When an agent is brought before Management, that operative is usually asked to sit in a chair before a panel of at least four or five Managers, most of whom (or all of which) they probably never see again.

Agents would be wise to also keep their distance from Management collectives, since an ally who could be a boon to one's career today might become a liability tomorrow. Predicting what Management might do on any given issue is difficult, so agents are advised to report directly to their personal supervisors instead.

However, the Union does have mechanisms in place that allow agents to issue declarations of suspicious behavior, or to report unmutual agents, indirectly to Management; such reports are often anonymous, except for the unpredictable cases in which they are not. We should also state the obvious: going to Management as a way of circumventing a supervisor's decision or directive can be very effective, but it may also become extremely harmful to an operative's career.

The Schism

At the end of the last century, one of the Technocracy's greatest challenges involved the disparity between theory and practice. Supervisors who stayed away from the Front Lines (generally in Horizon Constructs that, during the Dimensional Anomaly metaplot, were destroyed at the end of the 20th century) often had idealized theories about how to win the war. Field-based amalgams found the reality of their decisions and imperatives very different. Agents began to refer to this phenomenon as *the Schism*. Some field operatives learned to adapt by being very selective about what they told their supervisors: just enough to justify success, but not enough to reveal the compromises they'd made to achieve it. Advances in telepresence and surveillance have made it harder than ever to conceal unmutual activity, but the conflict between ambitious goals and messy realities is still there. Successful amalgams learn that promotion is more than doing what you're told: It's knowing who to tell and what you really need to do to get ahead.

Symposiums

Every large geographic area (and many of the planet's larger cities) has a council of high-ranking Technocrats who oversee the earthly Consensus. Agents expect these Symposiums to represent their interests, and so each Symposium needs at least one representative from each of the five Conventions. Lofty

Future Fates: A Technocratic Reorg?

Over time, the increasing number of Methodologies in the Union has led to increasing tensions within Conventions. As mid-level managers maneuver for power and position, they face the temptation of becoming more independent from the rest of their Convention. This has led to recurring rumors of an impending "reorg," which should hardly seem surprising to anyone who's worked for a large corporation.

"Why," the skeptics whisper to each other, "should there be five Conventions when the Union has ten Spheres of influence? Why can't Panopticon operate separately from the Ivory Tower? Why can't the Progenitors form an organization dedicated to Life procedures and allow specialists in Matter to deal with more than pharmaceuticals?" Such sentiments are best whispered, because it's the kind of speculation that many would consider unmutual or disloyal. The easiest answer is often "Because that's the way we've always done it," followed by the end of the discussion — or, in extreme cases, someone being strapped down to a chair in Room 101.

In the real world, many Sleepers fear reorgs. Redundancies bring job losses. Some managers get flung into positions of greater power, often embodying the Peter Principle: they rise to the level of their own incompetence. Others are dashed down and demoralized by demotion. No doubt a reorg in the Union could have these same dire consequences, and many more, besides.

As one might suspect, the Union goes to great lengths to ensure conformity and obedience, using both subtle and brute-force applications of Mind to reinforce both. A few paranoiacs fear the dissolution of the Union from within, but their supervisors have found that the best way to distract these malcontents involves keeping their guns pointed at any and all enemies, real or imagined, outside their fronts and Constructs. The Tower, they insist, must stand. Rumors of a massive reorg have been around for years. Whether it will occur one day is another matter entirely.

goals aside, each of these representatives allocates teams, troops, resources, and fronts like pieces on a chessboard. Every society of supernatural creatures and magick-wielding Reality Deviants must be investigated and tracked. It's impossible to go to war against all of them, however, so *someone* must set priorities determining which groups represent the most dangerous threats. If you can't kill every mage who isn't a proper Technocrat, after all, then perhaps you should focus on the worst of the worst. Thus, the regional Symposium determines the priorities of localized tasks and threats.

The word "symposium," when presented with a lower-case *s*, also refers to the formal meetings these august bodies conduct, complete with debate, speeches, status reports, compromise, logical arguments, and emotional appeals. In times of great crisis, an amalgam might be called to appear before a symposium hearing. That's usually a sign that something dramatic is about to happen to the team. When the higher echelon intervenes, accolades are won, punishments are levied, and reassessments change careers. In the 21st century, each symposium is usually held in a highly secure and protected Earthbound location. If the symposium group needs to relocate to an extradimensional location, there's a damn good reason they're employing such complicated logistics, and so the potential rewards and punishments for the agents involved increase accordingly.

In most campaigns for Earthly reality, a supervisor is most likely the highest-ranking Technocrat an agent ever encounters. Far beyond any fighting in the streets, Symposia compile reports for the powerful elite at the top of the pyramid. Occasionally, agents hear rumors about figures in upper Management issuing policies, supplanting one another in power-plays, or issuing new revisions to the Technocratic Time Table. Even then, however, identifying who's at the top of the pyramid is nearly impossible.

Some operatives have begun to suspect that the Symposia are acting with greater independence than they used to; perhaps there's a distinct lack of coordination between regional collectives and Symposia. The Technocracy in London, for example, doesn't necessarily function the same way as the Technocracy does in Shanghai or Hong Kong. The aforementioned Regional Management Initiative offers greater autonomy and independence for Symposia, even though everyone's on the same team — in theory, anyway.

Incidentally, if anyone wants to suggest this disparity means that reality Consensus in London is *slightly* different than reality Consensus in Shanghai, they had best do so quietly, because that's a *very* unpopular opinion in the Union.

Suggesting the Technocracy isn't truly unified is a very unmutual statement for any agent to make. It's

Future Fates: Extradimensional Realms

Throughout the earlier **Mage** books, Awakened factions laid claim to spectacular Horizon Realms and other off-world locations. For the Technocracy in general, and the Void Engineers in particular, these Realms embodied the best and worst aspects of the groups in question. According to the **Mage Revised** series, the *Dimensional Anomaly* (aka, the *Avatar Storm*) cut those Realms off from Earth, destroyed most of them, and crippled the ability for mages to visit the Otherworlds at all. Considering that the Technocratic leadership was supposedly ensconced in Otherworldly headquarters, this incident makes huge differences in both the direction of a Technocratic chronicle and the composition of the Technocracy as a whole.

When addressing this situation, the Storyteller has three options:

- **It happened:** The Dimensional Anomaly wrecked the Technocracy's off-world facilities, demolished its leadership, killed countless operatives and associates, and cost the Union inestimable amounts of money, power, and resources. Grand technologies have been lost forever. Legendary Realms like Autochthonia and the Copernicus Research Center were obliterated — or worse still, captured and corrupted by Otherworldly forces. Although the Void Engineers have worked hard to regain their previous glory, the Technocracy itself suffered a staggering loss — a loss all the more poetic considering that Technocrats caused the Anomaly in the first place. In this case, the **Revised**-era Convention Books lay out a subdued Technocracy that's reconstructing itself in the wake of that titanic loss.
- **It happened a while back:** Going by **Revised** chronology, the Dimensional Anomaly occurred roughly 20 years ago. Since then, the Technocracy has regrouped, rebuilt, and reestablished itself as a formidable organization. If this is true, however, the Union's new configuration still reflects that tremendous losses of life, leadership, and other resources. In place of the Realm-spanning Technocracy of pre-**Revised Mage** books, this Technocracy is leaner, fresher, younger, and more bound to Earth's material reality. A handful of Otherworldly headquarters exist, but they're rare, expensive, and used only for the most pressing emergencies and the most extreme experiments. Depending on the people who replaced the previous leadership, this could have made the Technocracy more reasonable and efficient than it had been before — or, conversely, could have hastened extremity and corruption at the top. Either way, the Technocracy has been radically changed from its 1990s incarnation and those changes may have benefited humanity as a whole, or perhaps made the world an even darker, more oppressive place.
- **It never happened at all:** If the Dimensional Anomaly never occurred then the Grand Old Men still preside over the Union from their Otherworldly retreats. The Void Engineers continue to plumb the Deep Universe, skirmishing with alien creatures and the most bizarre Mad and Fallen mages. The Cop and Dark Side Moon Base exist, recruits get trained far from the Masses, and the Union never took the phenomenal casualties associated with the Dimensional Anomaly and its aftermath. As a result, this Technocracy remains incredibly powerful, with near-limitless resources and a hidden leadership that suffers from extreme disassociation between the abstract theories they embrace and the realities of our 21st-century Earth.

Each option has certain dramatic possibilities and limitations. Although a Storyteller can hold off on deciding certain details, it's wise to decide ahead of time which Future Fate to pursue when dealing with a Technocratic chronicle.

best not to question what vision the Eye in the Pyramid is pursuing, because sometimes, seeing a picture that's any bigger than the one from your local Horizon Construct is extremely difficult. Masters and upper management live in a larger universe than mere field agents do. Earth is but one realm among many, and the highest echelons of power offer a Technocratic Manager the chance to realize alternatives to conventional or communal reality in the deepest parts of the universe.

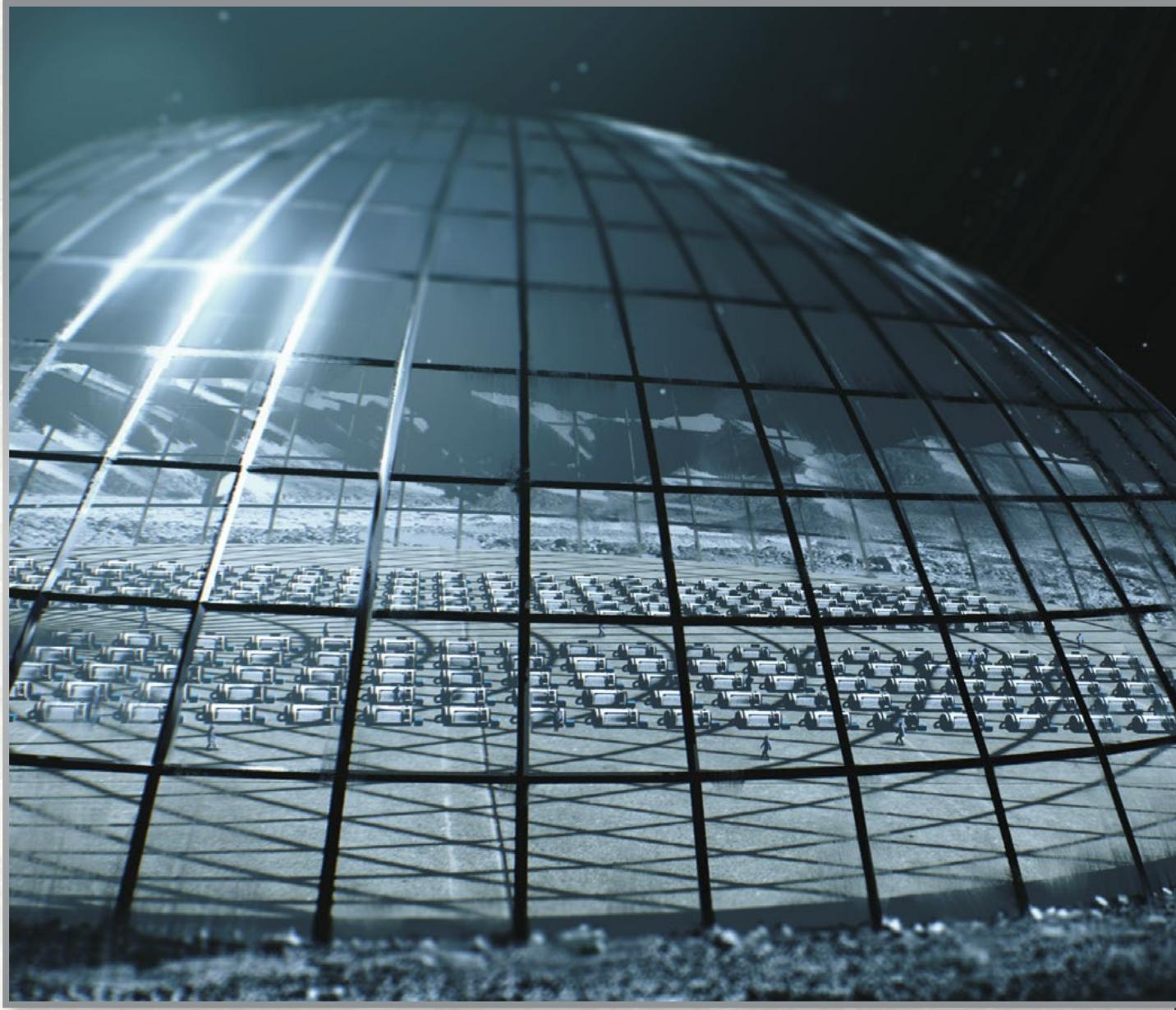
Fallen Commands?

It's worth noting that if, in fact, Nephantic infiltrators have corrupted the Technocratic Union, that infestation exists primarily at this level, dictating malignant policies to the lower Tiers and subverting, maneuvering,

or simply destroying operatives and Constructs that dare to question their commands.

Hidden Masters

Beyond the Horizon, outside the reality of the world we know, the Technocracy has absolute control over its more exotic realms. Humanity thinks of everything beyond Earth's atmosphere as outer space; mystics rant about the Deep Umbra; the Union explores and defines the Deep Universe. The Masters of the Technocracy completely reform their own extradimensional realms according to their own ideals. Just as the Horizon Constructs orbiting the Earth are experiments in what the near future can bring, the pocket dimensions dominated by Technocratic Masters show visions of futures that may eventually become reality.



on Earth. Near the world we know, Technocrats command technology a few decades ahead of what the common populace knows. Within the Deep Universe, Masters (of either gender or at any nonbinary coordinate in between them) wander down divergent possible timelines, using isolated populations as test subjects for experiments that may be — or, perhaps, should never be.

Deep Universe Experiments

Each Convention has its own vision of what the future may be, although one of them has a curious

alternative. For each organization, there's at least one legendary and persistent *Deep Universe Experiment*. Tales of such places are still whispered in the training crèches of initiates, but certain locations exist secretly, hidden even from the Earth-bound Symposia.

All Iteration X agents have heard the decades-old tales of the machine realm *Autochthonia*. In recent years, those cybernetic phantasies have been replaced by new iterations (so to speak) of that extradimensional locale: Realms where all human activity follows a relentless schedule. In all of them, tolerance for imperfection is low. Crèches of clones still pursue communal activities; all



human organisms are merely parts of a greater whole; cyborgs have attained a degree of integration with their technology beyond the dreams and nightmares of mere 21st-century beings.

Void Engineers are well-acquainted with colonies established in the deepest parts of the Deep Universe. *The Darkside Moonbase*, hidden on the far side of Earth's moon, has a sinister reputation — one that many would consider a dystopia. Little has changed since the molding of its plastic corridors and the instillation of its archaic, yet self-replicating tech. Visionary in the 1970s, it may stubbornly survive into the 2020s.

By contrast, the Void Engineers' *Copernicus Research Station* is a shining beacon in the darkest nights of hyperspace: a vigilant icosahedron-shaped megalopolis that monitors and observes extradimensional and extraterrestrial races. For the sanity of Symposia, only a small fraction of the data they harvest is passed down as dire warnings to Earth's Union. Learning the truth about alleged "grey" aliens, the reptilioids, or the unfathomable Zigg'raugglurr can drive even Technocratic agents mad.

The Progenitors scrutinize many possible theories about alien life and cultivate them in Deep Universal ecosystems. Since the days when Void Engineer ethercraft first harvested samples from sentient fungal groves on other worlds, the children of the Void have since created vast alien gardens that bloom, shiver, and sing. *Mycopolis* is one of the largest, although most agents don't know what happens there. Some travelers have heard tales of hybrid humans spanning the gap between fleshy and fungal sentients. Stranger tales exist of reshaped humans decanted to live in conditions of low-gravity, high-gravity, gaseous giants, and Earth orbit. Rare iterations of mycelial networks redefine the boundaries of individuality and identity. Of course, such creations would be quickly crippled by Paradox on Earth, but True Masters create myriad alternatives to the crude flesh that imprisons us.

George Orwell's *1984* was a rough draft for a possible dystopia of the New World Order. Would you like to see the final draft for their New World? Documentation for failed dystopias in the Deep Universe have been consigned to the "memory hole" of history, but Masters of the Psychodynamic Arts still attempt to manipulate human thought, paradigms, religion, and identity on entire populations of extradimensional expatriates. One mythical incarnation of such experimentation is called *Brit Noir*, a dimension where Orwell's dystopia has reformed in the guise of a futuristic never-ending, and eternally nocturnal, London cityscape. Cynics claim a few of these realms are merely mindscapes constructed for the interrogation, conversion, or punishment of the most powerful Reality Deviants. After all, as the saying goes, "*It takes a Village to contain a Prisoner.*" In truth, the Ivory Tower has many reasons for experimenting with would-be Utopias. Why jockey for position with contentious Symposia when a psionic visionary can ascend to a pocket dimension that's located far from the troubled conflicts of Earth? Someday, Earth will be ready to transform to accommodate the grandest visions of the Ivory Tower's Masters. In certain regards, the transformation has already begun.

The Syndicate has arguably the greatest population of Masters on Earth itself. Selfishly realizing ideological theories seems dull compared to the chance to enjoy the sumptuous comforts of extreme wealth on our own planet. Bending the laws of space as casually as one exploits the loopholes of a tax return, a Syndicate Master can cultivate a vast estate, a penthouse paradise, or a luxurious retreat worthy of a percentage of a percentage of the one percent. Some delude themselves into believing that living on Earth (instead of commuting from space) negates the troublesome complications of the Schism between Managers and employees. Agents would be wise to not correct them in this conceit. Rich Syndicate Masters like to believe they've retained their "common touch," and if you make them feel insecure about it, they tend to intervene in the day-to-day affairs of lowly and overworked operatives. One narcissistic billionaire has the potential to make billions of people miserable by claiming to know the solution to all their problems. Whenever an elite plutocrat gets vengeful, he can use his personal vendettas to obliterate those who lack his vast power and privilege. If you choose to buy into his vision, *caveat emptor*.

Upper Management

Some Masters of the Technocracy are remarkably hands-on in the application of their power, but it's easier for them to use such power far from Earth, where the threat of Paradox isn't as severe. More than a few Void Engineers command their own extradimensional starships, voidships, and ethercrafts, living the sort of lives of which science-fiction fans can only dream. Masters of Correspondence may frequent multiple dimensions, employing telepresence to appear before the representatives of Symposia, or even before a beleaguered relative on the Front Lines. Masterful troubleshooters can assemble teams of high-ranking former agents to travel to some of the aforementioned Deep Umbral experiments, or they may even discover a few that have been isolated from Earth's Union for far too long. And then there are the realms controlled by the Traditions, just ripe for the taking; storming someone else's Utopia is a dangerous game to play, but some people are never quite happy with their neighbors, no matter where they live.

As for Earth itself... well, anyone familiar with the crimes of Tradition mages knows what happens when a visionary with too much cosmic power decides to unleash it in a realm with a reality as limited as Earth. Perhaps we should be grateful that the Masters of the Technocracy forge new realities far from our

own. Agents learn their trade by being secret and secure in their operations. A Master using all of his Enlightened authority to bring down the full force of his revelations would be a beacon to Paradox beyond the criminal threats of mere Reality Deviants. Thus, the Technocracy's supervisors do their best to send glowing progress reports about Earth up the chain of command. As long as the numbers stay good, the Hidden Masters prefer the distractions of other dimensions. They withdrew from mundane concerns for a *reason*, after all, and so sudden intervention from beyond the Horizon is (fortunately!) so rare as to be nearly non-existent. Oh, and if any such events have occurred, we hereby disavow any knowledge of their occurrence.

Ascension leads to the stars. There's no need for a Master to wallow in Earthly mud. And on that note...

Grand Old Men

In the days of the Order of Reason, centuries before the founding of the Technocracy, one of the most idealistic goals was immortality. *True* immortality is, of course, impossible: even if it worked, the resulting sentient being would gradually become less-than-human, or at least "divergent." When such experiments occurred, the safest place to conduct them was outside the world we know, in the limitless space of the Deep Universe.

By the dawn of the new millennium, a handful of Old Men from the early days of the Technocracy (and the latter days of the Order of Reason) had allegedly found their way into one of the many pocket dimensions beyond the Horizon. They're so far removed from agents on the Front Lines that any stories about them were (at best) heresy or (at worst) considered highly unmutual. Some Technocrats believe these Grand Old Men observed or even interfered in higher-level operations within the Union. Some claim that their isolation slowly drove them divergent or insane. Some even claim that Nephantic forces corrupted them, working on the idea that no amount of power is ever enough, and the only way to manage cosmic power would be by attaining *even more* cosmic power. Storytellers have made wild speculations about these Grand Old Men, and it is not the purpose of this paragraph or confirm or disavow any such tales.

The Shadow Parliament

As the dimension of the Grand Old Men becomes more "distant" (in whatever way you choose to interpret that word), Management has formed a plateau on its

org chart to fill in certain gaps. The Shadow Parliament is an advisory council consisting of one representative from each Symposium on the planet. Outsiders would be puzzled by the Parliament's ability to reach a consensus without one individual to chair the council, if they were capable of analyzing the proceedings in detail, but such outside scrutiny is rare. When a Shadow Parliament convenes, the requisite number of parliamentarians telecommute to a remote location on the Horizon, conduct their business, and return after arriving at their collective conclusions.

Like the Grand Old Men, the Shadow Parliament can relay its collective communication through a single humanoid avatar; this entity is usually dressed in white, although its appearance (including its ethnicity and gender) differs each time it manifests. Technocratic supervisors have come to know it simply as *Management* (or *Mgmt.*). Anyone possessing Enlightenment (in game terms, the Arete/Enlightenment Trait) can verify that its communication originates from the Shadow Parliament. While the council is in session, the Shadow Parliament can address Technocrats in a specific location using this avatar as its spokesperson.

Rumor has it that some high-ranking Tradition Images have attempted to replicate or hack this effect — allegedly all such attempts have failed; further rumors have suggested that the Reality Deviants responsible have been assaulted by a Shockwave of Iteration X troops. However, rumors may or may not be true because they are, by their very nature, *rumors*. Management has neither confirmed nor denied their veracity.

Control

Before the turn of the millennium, however, some Technocratic agents claim to have encountered manifestations of an entity known as *Control*. When Control manifests on Earth, this entity bestows messages that allegedly come from the legendary Grand Old Men. Some operatives claim to have spoken to an actual

avatar or individual that calls themselves “Control”; other agents have received direct messages or visions that appear, to all available methods of verification, to originate from the Eye at the top of the Union’s pyramid.

With each passing year, however, contact with Control has diminished. Even suggesting that Control exists is considered, in many regions, an unmutual declaration. Cynics whisper (if they say anything at all on the matter) that if the Grand Old Men actually *do* still exist, they have far more compelling ideas to contemplate than the minor disputes of Symposium Managers or the indiscretions of everyday agents. Progressive-minded agents privately question why there’s any need for a cabal of ancient old men from a previous century to interfere in the Union’s operations at all, especially since such elders hardly represent or comprehend the concerns of 21st-century humanity.

Storytellers are empowered to define their own truth. *Is* there someone watching from the Eye in the Pyramid? If so, what might their agendas be, and what sort of actions might they take in the current era of instability? Are these parties in any sense “sane” by Earthly human standards, or might the disconnection of years, distance, and inhuman perspective have warped them into something awful, deranged, perhaps utterly, malignantly — or still worse, dispassionately — *alien*?

Suffice it to say that at the highest echelons of the Union there may not be any one entity or collective consciousness directing the Union. That possibility raises a lot of questions. Could earthly regions diverge in their respective Consensus realities? Could Horizon Constructs become increasingly independent from each other? Could the Union itself reorganize its system of Conventions and Methodologies to pursue greater autonomy and a less-centralized organization? The answer to each of those questions might be a resounding *no*, but if the answer to any of them is *yes* then the chronicles that result could unfold on a cosmic scale.

The world, as always, is yours.



Unit 2: Targets, Assets, Tactics, and Plans

Let your plans be dark and impenetrable as night, and when you move, fall like a thunderbolt.

— Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Anomaly 2018-42F - Mission communications transcript

COMMAND FREQUENCY

SGT Nunez: Perimeter established. Be advised, an unknown number of civilians in the target building are contaminated.

SAC Kim: No shit. That's why we're here.

Nunez: Sir, no. I mean, the detectors don't work. We have no idea who's contaminated and who's not. The only way to achieve containment is to order in better sensors and beanbag everyone who tries to escape in the meantime.

Kim: That's going to start a fucking riot. (unintelligible) Do it.

LEVEL 3.42 BIOLOGICAL

EXPLOSION DETECTED.

BRAVO SQUAD FREQUENCY

CPL Silva-Ogunwande: Was that a fucking tentacle?

COMMAND FREQUENCY

Silva-Ogunwande: Contamination just escaped our containment zone. Building 2 now infected.

Nunez: I'm out of squads. How are we going to secure this, Sir?

Kim: We can't.

Nunez: Wait. What are you...

Kim: Pull your squads back to Phase Line Karloff. Now. I'm Striking the whole AO.

Silva-Ogunwande: Oh, fuck.

Nunez: I thought we couldn't do that! I thought we don't dust civvies!

Kim: You don't. I do. This blood is on my hands. Get your people back. They have 45 seconds to get to Karloff. I'm not taking the risk of another pseudopod spreading the infection further.

CITY-WIDE FREQUENCY

Kim: Guidons! Strike on the OBJ in 30 seconds. Get covered.

PSYOPS FREQUENCY

Kim: Spread whichever story covers the entire development going up.

LT Cushing: Kilo Golf Five Three?

Kim: On my VDAS. Gas leak? That's the best we got? Fuck. Get it to the bloggers and social media after the strike hits.

CITY-WIDE FREQUENCY

Kim: If you can hear this, get to my position under a fire and rescue cover. Any survivors get taken to one of our facilities. Strike in 10.

Nunez: There's no way anyone could survive a Strike.

Kim: Not if they're human. Which is why we can't let civilian rescuers be first on the scene. 5 seconds. 3. 2. 1.

ORBITAL STRIKE DETECTED.
END TRANSCRIPT

Why We Fight: A Briefing for All Operatives



All right, sweet agents, you know the *Six Precepts of Damian*. You could recite them while knocking out pushups as I regulate your adrenal gland into overdrive. But what do they *mean*? Don't just spit the words back or paraphrase. We both know the words, but that wasn't the question. How do you take the *very mission statement of our organization* and stick it in your heart as well as your head? More importantly, fellow operatives of our mighty and magnificent Union, how do we turn principles into action and let both those precious principles and our precious hides survive repeated contact with the enemy?

And make no mistake, kiddies – the entire world is our enemy. Most of them just don't know that. We can't afford to forget it.

I know too much about this subject for this to be both brief and as informative as it needs to be. Really, I need to sit you down in front of a stack of field manuals, technical manuals, and other junk that's taller than you. But that's going to take too long, so let's do this the hard way. Ears on, fuckers. Buckle up.

Six Precepts: Theory and Practice



What, as the not-so-good Doctor put it, is the law? Well, we spill plenty of blood, and we *are* men, women, nonbinary, and other sundry beings, so the fictional Moreau – who, as you've probably heard, lent his name to one of our Union's less-admirable ventures – doesn't really apply in our case. For agents of the Technocratic Union, our law consists of six Precepts; and as any cop or politician can tell you, laws can be mighty flexible when push comes to shove and someone's getting their head kicked in.

Article One

**Bring stasis and order to the universe.
Predictability brings safety.
Once all is discovered and all is known,
Unity will be won.**

When the Masses look at the world and think they know what's going on, they don't panic. When they're not panicking, they can look at the world and see a tomorrow. They *build* to that tomorrow. They eat, drink, and dream that future. The

more stable reality is, the more we can teach them without their unEnlightened asses losing their shit.

Article Two

Convince the Masses of the benevolence of science, commerce and politics, and of the power of rationality. Conflict and suffering will be eliminated in our Utopia.

We're not the only game in town. We've *never* been the only game in town. The fucking Dark Ages are just waiting to make a comeback. Witches are on the rise, both Reality Deviants and run of the mill weirdos. Organized religion makes up the vast majority of powerbases out there. Beating them? Never going to happen. The only way to accomplish Scientific Belief is to make Belief palatable.

Contrary to popular belief, religion and science are completely compatible – once we've made some adjustments to the weirder elements of religious doctrine. Modern science began in Catholic monasteries, after all, so once you purge faith healers, jihadis, fundie televangelists and snake-handler nonsense there's no reason you can't mix religious creeds with scientific facts.

Article Three

Preserve the Gauntlet and the Horizon.

Chaotic individuals who open gateways with impunity threaten the stability of our world. Uncontrolled portals also allow outside forces, such as Nephandi, access to our world. This must never happen.

This goes back to Article One. We know stability's important, but what endangers the stability? Threats, inside and outside. The Gauntlet sits between our world and the rest of them. The only thing keeping fucking aliens from breaching through is us. Unauthorized portals cannot be allowed to exist; the only thing that can possibly come through them is chaos. Authorized portals and ones we can't shut down must be monitored at all times. What comes out must be known, controlled, contained, and — when necessary — destroyed.

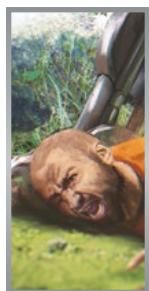
Article Four

Define the nature of the universe.

**Knowledge must be absolute, or chaos will envelop all.
The elemental forces of the universe must not be left to
the caprices of the unknown.**

You're a fucking scientist. I don't care if you think of yourself as a door kicker. If you're here, you're more than just boots on ground; you're a fucking expert in some damn field or another. You do not know it all, nor will you ever; and that fact had better give you a raging fucking hard-on. Metaphorically speaking. Or literally. Whatever. I don't know what genitalia you keep in your locker, and I don't fucking care.

Knowing that, from the time you brush your teeth to the time that your head hits your pillow, you are acquiring new knowledge needs to be better than sex for you. I don't care if you bang the world in your off-time or if you



So, what kinds of crazy shit are we dealing with? I mean, in general terms, not the mouthfuls of acronym gibberish that make your eyes glaze over when it scrawls across your VDAS feed. Yeah, it's useful at times to know a HE467-5 from a TE986-2, but it's a lot easier to talk about general strategies without losing your mind if you just say, "a vampire sorcerer" and "a homeless werewolf who stinks like garbage."

General categories, then, to keep things easy here:

never have a single intimate urge. When you're on duty, you'd better be a fucking slut for information. If you're not learning, you're fucking dying and you're taking the Technocracy with you.

When we know what's out there, we can control the dissemination of that data to the Masses. We can control what they know and when. If we're in the fucking dark, shit will go sideways in a horrific way. Unknown situations are inherently unpredictable. You want to go into a firefight with a bag over your head? Fuck, no. Be a floodlight of information. Learn.

Article Five

Destroy Reality Deviants. Their recklessness threatens our security and our progress toward Unity.

PAY! SPECIAL! ATTENTION! TO THE WORDING! It's not "kill" RDs; it's destroy RDs. Some threats can be ended by bopping them on the nose and telling them to fuck off. Other threats aren't over just because there's a body on the ground. You neutralize those fucks. You don't just cross them off; you erase the threat that they pose to security.

Article Six

**Shepherd the Masses;
protect them from themselves and others.**

Remember: the Masses are *people*, and people are stupid. When provided a solid direction, they'll bring about a Neon-Damned Utopia on Earth. When left to their own devices, they'll squabble over whether or not it's okay to eat pineapple on pizza while snorting human ashes. And that's just the *regular* threats. Don't get me started about the bigger ones.

The crazy shit is our business, too. And business has never been better.

Targets and Assets

OCs / BRQs / PRAs: Unenlightened Citizens

Our customers and our product. If you need to change their minds, do it. Just don't go overboard; we need them in working shape. All of them. For the most part, they know very little about the world around them, which makes it easy for us to shape how they view it. Never forget that every single one of us used to be like them. As easy as it is for us to think of them as mindless drones (and that Superstitionist phrase "sleeper" says pretty much everything you need to know about where they're coming from!), it's impossible for us to ignore

Disputed Data: Collateral Impact

The “hard rule” detailed nearby is, of course, more what you’d call “guidelines” than actual rules. Technocratic agents can and do kill innocent bystanders with nauseating regularity, especially if the Nephantic infiltration and/or purge of the Crafts metaplots are in play. Even so, it’s bad form, and the Union’s leadership officially forbids fatal carelessness among the Masses. Incidents with high levels of Collateral Impact (CI) are punished with escalating degrees of severity, depending upon the relative value of the offender to the Technocratic cause and the amount of CI involved. For details, see the **Book of Secrets** entries for “Technocratic Infractions” (pp. 224-226) and “Technocratic Punishments” (pp. 227-230).

the possibility that any one of them might have an aptitude for technology.

In high-muckity-muckspeak, the Masses are what we call *Baseline Reality Quants* or *Potential Reality Assets*. What does that shit mean? The first term reminds us that each unEnlightened human consciousness represents one measure of Consensus belief, and the second reminds us that we want that belief on *our* side, not on the side of our enemies. To keep it simple, think of things this way: each BRQ is a brick in the wall of Consensus, so you PRA that most of the bricks stay on your side of that wall. Don’t break BRQs if you can help it, or no amount of PRAing will save you from getting your ass chewed off by your CO.

Make sense? Good. I’m glad we had this little chat.

“But, Lee,” I hear from some of you, “what if they get in the way or draw on me?” What part of Rules 1-3 were confusing? If you get shot by a civilian, you fucking deserved it. This isn’t the CRASH unit of the LAPD. If you wanted to bust un-Enlightened heads, you shouldn’t have signed on the dotted fucking line. De-escalate. Adjust. KO. Those are your *only* options.

We clear? Okay. Here’s the flipside: Never forget that the worst shit you’ll ever face comes from human stupidity. Aliens are bad, but they’ve got nothing on the damage an anti-vaxxer cult can do. World Wars don’t start when some werewolf gets a wild hair up his ass, and it’s not vampires who are cutting funds to science programs. Creatures of the night are parasites, and their host-body is the stupidity of “just plain folks.” Our job is to protect the Masses, uplift them, and protect them from their own mistakes.

CLEs: Civilian Law Enforcement

Don’t assume that authority figures all get their marching orders from us. If you find yourself in a situation with a local cop, keep cool. The last thing we need is to degrade local law enforcement because one of us was impatient or sloppy.

Remember, beat cops are the backbone of the System. Every cop who “dies in a gangland shootout” is another one that we don’t get to depend on to keep the Masses in line. If you thought I was a hardass about recycling, what do you think I’ll do to you if you waste human assets?

Should you run into a cop who’s being difficult, Attune them. Keep your damn finger off the trigger. If they need more of an Attunement than you’re rated to provide, get the fuck out of there and request follow-up. We can delete police reports more easily than we can replace smart cops.

VHS: Amateur Monster Hunters

Yes, they exist. I don’t know why, but they do. And, they range the whole gamut of possible motivations for wanting to hunt ETs: vengeance, harvesting organs, long-standing feuds, money, and wanting to fuck a vampire or whatever. (I’m not kidding. People are really goddamn weird.) It’s usually vengeance or money, though. The official acronym means “Van HelsingS,” and if you get the rest of that joke you’ve got more sense of history than most jackoffs who come my way these days.

Fun fact: These annoying shit-for-brains are still humans and still civilians. You’re not allowed to just kill them because they’re in the way or actively interfering with the mission at hand. Now, the rules are a whole lot fuzzier when it comes to the matter of letting some dumbass VHS get eaten, and then dropping the monster while it’s picking its teeth. I’m not saying that you should create a trap for them, but if they happen to create a situation where they’re unlikely to live, and their death benefits the mission... well hey, they knew the risks.

HES: Hemophagic Entities

Yeah. These are vampires. I mean, call it whatever your boss wants you to, but they’re old, drink blood, and don’t like the light. Let’s not overthink the naming shit. That said, it’s not fucking possible to overthink the kinds of threats these things can pose. Some are really fucking fast. Some are really fucking strong. Some kinda turn into fucking werewolves. Some go invisible. Some write shitty poetry. Some can do all of the above. If your agent-sense ever kicks in, and it tells you “vampire,” start gathering data because there’s no telling what these leechy fucks will do, aside from go nuts over a phone app that lets them call victims to their location 24/7. Which is a thing that exists, by the way.

On the plus side, they seem to be mostly clannish, forming networks of street level gangs loosely organized around seniority. Their belief in a hierachal structure means that they’re more likely to get in each other’s way than into ours. Additionally, it gives them something to lose. As long as they want to cling to territory, we have leverage. Similarly, it behooves them to clean up their own messes, using their resources and abilities to convince the Masses that they’re not real. Under the right circumstances, that makes them useful assets to us. They mostly police their own kind while keeping an eye on the other weird shit too. As long as you never – and I repeat, *N-E-V-E-R* – make

the mistake of thinking some bloodbag regards you as anything other than an especially spicy Meals-on-Wheels, the right HE can do half your job for you.

However, if a vampire is actively interfering with the mission at hand, you're clear to incapacitate them. This does not mean setting them on fire or blowing their head off. Word to the wise: It's virtually impossible to beat a vampire to death with a baton. Do not, repeat, do not kill one of them without authorization... unless you have to, anyway. We will win the ensuing street war, but that's a shitload of resources that we could have put to better use.

TEs: Therianthropes Entities

Werewolves, werespiders, werecats, and other shit that's just as scary. Fuck. There's probably a werecockroach gang out there. Do you have enough backup? The answer will always be no. When facing TEs, cheat. Cheat your fucking ass off or you won't make it home. TEs are some sort of enhanced human mutation. Like vampires, they also end up forming small gangs, but the mean physical power of any random TE far exceeds the mean physical power of vampires. Like, they aren't "off the charts" level powerful, but they're definitely on the "Oh, shit" side.

You're absolutely cleared to engage on these fuckers on sight unless otherwise informed. You absolutely should not, though. The only time you should get into a fight with a therianthrope is in a carefully planned operation.

Now that I've scared the shit out of you, I'm going to let you in on an important detail. Therianthropes can be Attuned. That's right. You can pull your badge out, put the fear of Lee into them, and make them put their hackles down. To make this more official, your escalation of force goes like this: If they're hostile or otherwise an impediment to operations, Attune them. If that fails, repeat Attunement protocols while retreating. If force proves necessary, use the *maximum possible force*. Your best weapon is your brain when dealing with these things, and most operatives who try using brawn against them instead wind up getting licked off some RD's claws afterward.

TBEs: Faeries

I don't even want to try to figure out why faeries still exist. We did everything we could to turn the dangerous soul-sucking things from the Bad Old Days into cute little tales for nursery kids, but there's a stubborn streak in the human soul that wants to keep believing in Tinkerbell no matter how much of a bitch she really was in that goddamned story. I mean, c'mon – she kept trying to get Wendy killed, and yet people still clap their hands and shit to make sure that flying psychopath sticks around.

I blame those Victorian pedos and their redhead-fucking Pre-Raphaelite friends. Oh, and Uncle Walter, too. Fuck that frozen dead bastard, anyhow.

That's what TBEs are, too: reality-bending psychopaths. Never forget that. They eat human sanity; I mean really, that's what they do. People around them go crazy, and sometimes

never come back from those breakdowns. TinkerBell Entities (yeah, that's what the acronym means) might seem cute, but they're mean and parasitical and way too full of themselves. Fortunately, they're also rare as fuck, but if you ever do see some crazy-ass goat-dude dancing with naked nymphos on a hill or some such shit, just nuke him from orbit and sweep up the ashes when you leave.

I'm kidding. Sort of. Violence usually isn't necessary. As it turns out, these things curl up in a sobbing ball before we even touch them. Research indicates that the presence of Enlightened operatives is like Kryptonite for TBEs. And so, slapping a pair of cuffs on Goat Boy and hauling him off to the nearest psych facility is usually enough to shut him down for good. Some decent meds and 48-hour psych hold is usually enough to make him forget he ever existed. Clap your hands now, you furry fuck, and see how much good that gets you!

TAMURDs, NAMURDs, CMURDs, REMURDs, PTMURDs, and HSKINs: So-called "Mages"

Our rivals in this long, bloody, stupid fucking war over who will and will not determine humanity's Consensus have been designated with an alphabet soup of official acronyms. Most, but not all, of them include the designation MURD: Magic-Using Reality Deviant.

TAMURD stands for *Tradition Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant*. Obvious enough.

NAMURD stands for *Non-Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant* – what our Tradition buddies call "orphans."

CMURD stands for *Craft-Affiliated Magic-Using Reality Deviant* – that is, some fucking Gandalf who belongs to a large, organized group that isn't one of the Traditions but has a certain history and distinct culture around it. Theoretically, these idiots are pretty rare. I'm not sure I really believe that.

REMURD stands for *Random Element Magic-Using Reality Deviant* – someone who clearly knows how to use magic but doesn't match any of our intel for the larger organized groups. Also used to designate freshly Enlightened RDs with wild talent and no apparent understanding of how to use it... or how not to use it. In short, a fucking dangerous loose cannon.

PTMURD stands for *Potentially Talented Magic-Using Reality Deviant* – a potential mage who hasn't "awakened" yet but who shows every indication of doing so soon. Recruit it or shoot it, but don't let one get away!

HSKIN stands for *Holy Shit Kill It Now*. That's the official designation for Marauders, Nephandi, and other "mages" who seem just too dangerous to live. If you get a HSKIN in your sights, do not under any circumstances let it leave under its own power. Unless specifically ordered otherwise by a superior or Manager rank or higher, do not let it survive the fight at all.

Officially, every one of these RDs is an enemy combatant.



In real life, we can negotiate with some of them if they seem reasonable and serve a greater role in the Union's agenda. NAMURDs, REMURDs and PTMURDs are potential recruits, and can usually be won over to the Technocratic cause when given enough incentives and Social Processing. HSKINs are to be killed on sight. Really fucking seriously. With sugar on top. Kill the motherfucking thing.

JMARDs, PDEs, and Just Plain Aliens

Saying "There's some really weird shit out there" is the understatement of the century. When it comes to JMARDs (*Juxtapositional Manifestation Paraconsciousness Reality Deviants* — that is, "ghosts"), PDEs (*Pan-Dimensional Entities*), and other shit that defies any classification other than "alien," the weirdness factor is unmeasurable. The alphabet doesn't hold enough acronyms for the stuff that exists outside our material reality, and human Consensus is so screwed up that stuff that should always have been impossible can be spotted in temple carvings and on dorm-room walls all over the world; which, of course, means these things have a clawhold in Consensus that no amount of rationality or firepower can shake loose.

Whoever thought it was a good idea to make cute plushies of Cthulhu and shit should fucking die. He probably *did* die, come to think of it, but the damage is already done.

JMARDs are composed of the psychic residue of a living person. The acronym comes from their ability to manifest in several dimensions of reality at once, and their tendency to fuck shit up when they do. We're not really sure why one person becomes a ghost when most other people don't, and frankly the scientific experiments required to find out the answer to that are immoral as fuck, so let's just stop pondering it. Generally speaking, JMARDs aren't too harmful, but because they're as unique as living humans are, don't assume that you can predict what they're going to do. Research suggests they stick around because of unfinished business among the living, and that business usually involves a grudge of some kind. Most ghosts aren't dangerous, but if you cross paths with one that is, a few Ectoplasmic Disruption Rounds tend to disperse the problem for a while. Trouble is, EDRs are freaking expensive, so if you can puzzle out why the JMARD's hanging around Ghost Place Central, and then resolve that problem, you might be able to send Casper back to the Phantom Zone forever.

Word to the wise: Don't try nuking them. That tends to go poorly.

PDEs are so diverse that we gave up trying to categorize them all. The second someone thought they'd nailed down a concise taxonomy of these tricky fuckers, some entity no one'd ever heard

of before popped up and went “Fooled ya!” Let’s put it this way: Hermetic wizards and clergy-monk types have spent thousands of years filling big-ass books with lists of PDEs and those lists don’t even scratch the surface of what’s really out there. *Alien* sums them up just fine: That word, in Latin, means “other,” that’s what PDEs are: *Others*. Don’t try thinking about it too much. You’ll break your brain. I’ve seen it happen. Literally.

Certain operatives, especially Voids, use JMARDS and PDEs as potential assets. Sometimes that works, sometimes it doesn’t. Most of us just do the contain-and-deny dance when these things show up. There’s a reason popular mythology connects “Men in Black” to alien encounters. Either way, if you feel like ghostbusting, you’re cleared to do so. There’s no escalation of force protocol here; if you have a weapon that can hurt these things, go nuts and just make sure there’s a good cleanup crew waiting when the smoke clears.

PEE: Paradox-Effect Entities

The wiseass behind this acronym probably also coined the field op saying: “First you see one then you do the other.” Technically, Paradox-Effect Entities are just another kind of JMARD. Thing is, we know from lengthy analysis and centuries’ worth of documentation that PEEs are not your everyday garden-variety JMARDS – as if such a thing existed to begin with. No, they’re a whole other thing, and that thing is nasty.

Y’know that old drawing where a bunch of bats and shit come flying up behind a dude who’s trying to catch a nap? Those are Paradox Entities – bad dreams of the Masses. We’ve known for centuries that psychic energy has physical effects; that’s not woo-woo shit, that’s science, though I’ll admit it’s not something we share much yet with Joe Sleeper because... well, he’s trying to catch a nap and our job involves letting him rest peacefully. When Reality Deviants show up and start kicking up nightmares for him, Joe Sleeper’s dreams shape psychic energy into Paradox Entities. Yes, Joe PEEs in his sleep. Yes, that’s a joke and you’re authorized to laugh.

In the old days, PEEs manifested as demons and angels and the sort of shit. Sometimes they still do. More often, though, they show up like something out of Batman’s basement – weird-ass supervillains and crap like that. People watch too many fucking movies, and we end up dealing with the results: mirror-clowns and flying trout and old guys dressed in wrinkled white suits – it’s nuts. Stay away from that shit if you can avoid it. Let Gandalf get sucked into some extradimensional hell. Better him than you.

Which leads me to a little tactical secret: If you can goad Gandalf into setting off the Paradox Effect then Joe’s bad dreams can do your job for you. Just stay calm, remain subtle, use just enough force to piss off the wizard while keeping your own hands clean, and chances are good that Ol’ Spellbook gets careless enough to bring out the big guns. PEE shows up, you’re over there in the corner acting innocent, and Gandalf goes for a little ride down Paradox Lane. It’s quick, it’s easy, and it involves a lot less

paperwork. Those assholes think we created the Paradox Effect to begin with, so their own paranoia handles the heavy lifting. Just remember: That door swings both ways, and if you’re the one kicking up nightmares Joe’s PEE might come for you instead.

Special Assets

The Big T is huge. Massive. But that doesn’t mean our ability to put boots on ground is limitless. Take a look at any of the steps of mission planning. Any one of those could get outsourced if we need it to. Why? Tons of reasons, but let’s get practical here. We want to hit a group of werewolves to provoke a response and find out where the main body of their pack is. Do we want to use a team of badass RD stompers? No. We don’t want a complete success, so why bother risking *any* of our agents? Outsource the hit. What about sanitizing an area of blood and bodies during a hit with a highly mobile enemy force? Fuck cleanup; we need to be ready to chase those RDs. Outsource it.

For us, every potential outsource party could become an asset. Assets are to be nurtured, protected, shielded from the truth as much as possible, monitored carefully, and disposed of when necessary. Yes, I said *when*. Don’t get attached. An asset is only as valuable as its potential use to us. Don’t throw those resources away without a reason and a backup plan, but never, ever forget that an asset is just that: a resource to be employed toward the greater good.

Cleanup Crews

The smallest piece of evidence could cause a breach of Consensus or attract attention, but that doesn’t mean that we have to do it all. Cleaning contractors come in a variety of shapes and sizes, all of them weird. While the Technocracy might not enjoy doing business with vampires or ghouls, their ability to dispose of corpses is too valuable to ignore. And, if they’re eating the bodies we point out, they’re not eating civvies. That’s why sanctioned cleaning crews are automatically granted Amendable Coexistence status. Unless a particular group takes direct action against the Technocratic Union, they are to be regarded as off-limits, even if they injure civilians during feeding. Unnecessary violence should be documented. Unnecessary murder is to be immediately reported for potential status revocation.

Expendable Assets

Amateur monster hunters, white supremacists, street gangs, whatever. They all fall in here; they like dealing out violence, and we don’t actually care if they die in the process so long as it can’t be traced back to us. This means information about missions and payments needs to be clean. Cash. Burner phones.

RD Assets

Yeah, I know what the *Precepts* say about palling around with Deviants. I also know that Damien was talking out of both sides of his mouth. We’ve been making alliances-of-convenience with Reality Deviants since the Craftmasons kicked that bird-bitch

HOAR: The Hierarchy of Assets & Resources

This acronym is Technocracy-speak for "How valuable certain people are and are not in terms of Technocratic protocol." Jokes about HOARING are unmutual, but people make them anyway. An even more clandestine nickname for this Hierarchy is the SAMETO Protocol (Some Animals More Equal Than Others). This is not a phrase used anywhere where a Manager might be listening — unless, of course, a Manager's using it.

Basically, HOAR appraises the relative expendability of Technocratic personnel, from most-expendable to least-expendable. They don't phrase it that way, of course. Iteration X has done a lot of work to assure that HOAR ratings are based on the finest mathematical calculations and asset-management data. Unlike the basic ranks (described in **Mage 20**, p. 172), the HOAR bases the value of personnel on their proved value to the Union. Thus, a blind, unEnlightened receptionist in a wheelchair might have a higher HOAR ranking than a freshly-crafted cyborg field agent because that receptionist has done a lot of things that have benefitted the Union's goals, and thus has a higher appraisal-rank when compared to the uncertain prospects of that field agent.

HOAR provides a potential guide for disciplinary issues regarding Technocracy operatives (an operative's HOAR rating slips down with repeated and/or serious infractions), and it helps the Union (and, in game terms, the Storytellers and players) determine target selection and asset-protection. Protect and provide for high-value assets, while low-value assets are considered increasingly expendable.

HOAR also explains why Secret Agent John Courage still exists. Despite his antics, he's simply too valuable to terminate. Every time some Manager tries to have Courage demoted or destroyed, someone else raises his HOAR rating in the data archives, thus offsetting the punishment he would otherwise have received.

out of the White Tower and set up shop where she left off. Note the part where I said, "of convenience." These things are not your friends. Never were, never will be, never fucking are. Sure, that fat leech has useful contacts and significant pull in places where a Black Suit never goes. He's still using you, you're still using him, and you'd best fucking remember that fact because I guarantee you that he's never forgetting it. Secure those assets when you can, use them for whatever they're worth, and set their fucking coffins on fire when they've outlived their usefulness to us.

Employable Assets

Here's your baseline for paycheck-based assets: everyday citizens whose work advances our cause. The accountant, the receptionist, the programmer, the motor-pool mechanic — you name it; the Union has a job for it. These assets have no idea who they're working for, of course, and it's not in their best interests to find out. It's not in *your* best interests, either, if they do. Things get ugly when the wrong person opens the wrong door at the wrong moment, so if you want to avoid an unscheduled cleanup (and a chewing-out from your immediate supervisor) then it's best to avoid flashy operations and weird behavior around employable assets. They're not quite as expendable as the people we send into the meat grinder, so it behooves the fuck out of you to play nice and be careful when you're around them. Unlike expendable assets, these people tend to be missed if they don't come home at night.

Deployable Assets

These assets have a high attrition rate, and we take that into account when managing them. SWAT teams, military personnel, truckers, minor bodyguards, First Responders, HAZMAT disposal

crews — the sorts of people who get paid to risk their lives are the ones you call in when you need backup for a low-level containment situation. It's still not a good idea to let these assets see too much of the Big Picture, if you know what I'm saying here, and dropping your pants around some poor kid who needs to be scrubbed after seeing too much is still a bad idea if you want to get ahead in the Technocracy. Sure, these assets go to work expecting a Very Bad Night someday, but that doesn't mean we can afford to take their lives too lightly. The paperwork alone is a fucking nightmare, and those death-benefits packages are not cheap.

Extraordinary Assets

These assets know the score. They've been trained and Processed, passed a lot of tests to get ahead of the pack, and have earned a certain low-level security clearance before we consider them "extraordinary." It's not entirely accurate to call these agents "assets" because they're really part of our Big Happy Technocratic Family. Lots of them go on to become Enlightened operatives in their own right, but don't shit on the ones who never do. All the usual operative protocols are in force when you deal with extraordinary citizens, so treating these "little siblings" like you would treat any other asset is a fast track to a shit post in the worst Construct your Manager can find.

Hardcore Assets / True Believers

Certain assets have been part of the Technocracy's foundations since Day Fucking One. Scientists, professors, archivists and librarians, military lifers and true-blue law-enforcement types — the builders, the shapers, the guardians of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Some are extraordinary citizens who've been trained to hang with us when the shit gets thick. Most are

HOAR: The Hierarchy of Assets & Resources

HOAR Ratings

0	Active Detriment — A party whose continued activity is dangerous or highly obstructive (Degree 6 Technocracy agent, dangerous enemy, destructive un-Awakened criminal, hostile alien, turncoat Technocrat with damaging power, etc.).
1	Passive Deterrent — A party whose costs outweigh their benefits (Degree 5 or 6 Technocrat, a useful enemy who's outliving their usefulness, the average criminal among the Masses, an alien invader with potential usefulness, a Technocratic turncoat who's still of use to the Union).
2	Potential Asset — A neutral party, as far as their usefulness to the Technocracy is concerned (most people among the Masses, a Reality Deviant or alien whose continued existence and placement benefits the Union).
3	Problematic Asset / Operative — A party who provides services, data or resources, but at a noteworthy cost to the Union (Degree 4 Technocrat, an extraordinary citizen who's become costly to maintain, a Reality Deviant whose existence and placement has proved to be useful to the Technocracy).
4	Tertiary Asset / Operative — A party whose existence and placement benefits the Technocracy at minimal cost (average extraordinary citizen, a useful Sleeper, a well-placed allied alien or RD that continues to provide benefits to the Union's plans and personnel).
5	Established Asset / Operative — A party who provides reliable, if minor, support for Technocratic operatives and plans (typical Degree 3 Technocratic operative, an experienced and loyal extraordinary citizen, a repeatedly helpful Sleeper, a reliable RD that provides extremely useful resources to the Technocratic cause without interfering with its agenda).
6	Secondary Asset / Operative — A party whose value to the Union is trustworthy and verified (skilled and seasoned Degree 2 or 3 Technocratic operative, exceptionally skillful and loyal extraordinary citizen, valuable Sleeper who provides reliable resources to the Union, allied RD who maintains a low profile and aids the Technocratic cause).
7	Notable Asset / Operative — A party whose loyalty and skill have been repeatedly tested under adverse conditions (an exceptional Degree 2 Technocratic operative, a typical upper-level Enlightened Manager or other high-ranking personnel, an extraordinary citizen with tenacious loyalty and invaluable skills, a high-placed Sleeper whose influence and activities greatly benefit the Technocracy; no Reality Deviants qualify for this level or above).
8	Precious Asset / Operative — A party whose activities and influence greatly benefit the Technocracy, and whose loss would damage the Union's goals (a Degree 1 Technocrat of exceptional benefit to the Union, a high-ranking Manager or extraordinary field operative, an invaluable extraordinary citizen; no Sleepers or RDs qualify for this rank).
9	Primary Asset / Operative — One of the most valuable Enlightened operatives within the Technocracy's ranks; only Enlightened personnel qualify for this rating.
10	Irreplaceable Asset / Operative — a theoretical rating, as nobody's really "irreplaceable" as far as the Technocracy is concerned. Rank 10 personnel and allies are expected to consider themselves to be expendable in pursuit of the greater good.

just doing their jobs because they believe in the good they can do. And that, my friends, is the most valuable kind of asset: the one who believes in us because we're working toward the same goals they are. A rent-a-cop will bolt and run, and your werewolf so-called pal will turn you into dog food if he thinks you're a worm or something stupid like that. A dedicated cop, though, will follow you into an actual hell if she believes you're both fighting for a better tomorrow. Those are the assets we protect at any cost: the hardcore true believers. Not only will

those people turn their useful skills in our direction, they help enforce the reality we strive to build, protect, and eventually advance for the collective benefit of all.

Molding Consensus

The Masses out there want things to be simple, neat, to all fit together into an easy-to-parse package. We do, too. So why the fuck do we get so much pushback? Because we don't want the Masses to just roll over for us. If they're a bunch of

well-folded origami shapes, we haven't saved humanity; we've ended it. The Masses *have* to believe. They *have* to know. And that means fighting for the truth. They need to fight their way to the answers, so that once each person reaches the end of their path, they'll cling to it like a life raft.

So, provoke the fight. Be ready for it. We need thinkers, even if they're asleep. Just remember where you are. People fight in different ways. Being overt and aggressive to a salaryman in Japan might get you a lot of nods and murmured agreements, but he's not going to be a believer. Likewise, playing it cool and subtle with a Swiss blogger is going to be about as effective as a screen door on a submarine.

Where conflict already exists, exploit it. Seed the Masses with information while wearing a friendly mask then put on a different mask and refute it. Make them double down on the beliefs you've delivered. True believers are never born; they're reborn. There is no stronger believer than a born-again. There is no strength in maintaining a belief from childhood. The strongest opinions are forged by rejecting a family's teachings. Converts are the key to the future but proselytizing only gets us so far.

It's all the scientific method. It's progress. Only by identifying errors in belief can we move humanity forward. So, pick the errors. Start the fights. We're in a war for these people's minds, for the very heart of humanity. Let's get fucking going.

What the Masses Know



We can't just throw the Masses into the deep end. It's messy, chaotic, and not fit for human consumption. No, we have to make Adjustments. Without these Adjustments, everyone still living their oldlife would have their world messed with in very bad ways. Article Six. Shepherd them. Let's get into it.

The Masses know what we allow them to discover. We don't simply tell them what's

happening; not only is that not scientific, it's just plain insulting to the Masses. Sure, they're not awake in the sense that we are, but that's not because they're stupid; it's simply because they're not ready to know the full truth yet. Yet is the key word there.

If you spoon-feed a populace, they'll sense the bullshit and rebel. It's a basic rule of hyper-sociology. That's not exactly the way someone with a degree in h-sociology would phrase it, but it's close enough that they wouldn't argue too much. So, we don't spoon feed; we regulate. We Adjust. Conventional scientists find



Disputed Data: Running the Show

Technocratic PSYOPS have been dropping the ball lately. It's not politic to admit as much (although, as this book's Introduction shows, some higher-ups admit it anyway), but the Technocracy's much-vaunted control of the reality narrative has slipped significantly in recent years. *Irrationality* is the watchword of the new millennium, and behind their ice-cold mirrorshades any Technocrat not in a state of terminal denial realizes that they lost control of the human narrative at least 20 years ago.

How? Well, that's a matter of dispute. For **Mage 20** Storytellers, one (or more) of the following factors might be to blame:

- **The Nephandi:** As revealed in **The Book of the Fallen**, the Fallen pulled a fast one on both the Traditions and the Technocracy. While their rivals searched for bloody-handed Black Metal rejects, Nephantic pawns and mages slid into the cracks of the modern era and began tearing it apart. It's a big stretch to say that *everything* wrong today can be traced to the Nephandi, but with groups like A Better Sandal and the Heralds of Basilisk eyeballs-deep in the Information Age, the Technocratic narrative got hijacked in the early days of the World Wide Web.
- **The Dimensional Anomaly:** Turns out that losing a huge portion of your personnel and resources to an Otherworldly screw-up tends to put a cramp in your ability to command global reality. When the Anomaly decked the Union's capabilities, Technocratic control slipped more than anyone was willing to admit.
- **Religious Fundamentalism:** The Technocracy believed it could win the Masses over with the promise of technological Utopia, but the rush of cultural transformation, geopolitical upheavals, and the acceleration of uncanny events toward the end of the 20th century drove hundreds of millions of people to embrace religious millennialism and End Times fascination. As the third decade of the 21st century dawns, most humans (Enlightened and otherwise) manage the conceptual balancing act of using high tech in everyday situations while embracing ancient scriptures and all the irrationality contained therein. This was not what the Technocracy expected, and so their calculated future projections failed.
- **People are Irrational:** Whether it's boy wizards, flat-earthers, or Rapturous Savior narratives, the Masses resist the sterile visions that guided the Technocracy. Even within the Union, logic-industrial futurist ideals have surrendered to unpredictability, mythology, and the growing realization that human existence is too messy and irrational to conform to clockwork precision. The cognitive dissonance that allows people to argue the literal truth of Iron Age scriptures over the internet (in *English*, no less!) has displaced the massthink ideology that formed the Technocracy's version of reality. People do believe in magic after all, and so the Technocratic narrative fell before the collective weight of human absurdities.
- **The Traditions:** Because people want to believe in magic, the Nine Traditions and their various allies have finally managed to tilt the balance of faith in their direction. By balancing futuristic pleasures with appeals to... um, tradition... the Council has secretly but decisively captured the popular imagination, expanding their influence by employing their old Arts in new and exciting ways.

everything eventually; all we need to do is give progress a push here, a pull there, and a “not-quite-yet” over there.

The Masses have over ten million scientists at the PhD level. Over fifty million at the master level. Who-the-fuck-knows? how many without a terminal degree. Someone will make the discoveries we need them to make. It's just a matter of predicting who's most likely to find what we need them to find, and then to fund them (or not to fund them, as the case might be). Are the Masses ready to know that life on other planets is possible? Great, call up Media Control and get them to give a little more airtime to the Mars missions. Is there too much progress on the microbiological front? Sounds like time for another E coli outbreak. Once that hits the news, any virologist looking at something else gets treated like a war criminal.

Control of the narrative is key. Some folks are going to fall outside of our desired parameters; that's just how parameters

and sample sizes work. Ask any statistician. Some folks believe in spooky shit that's real, and some fall on the other side of that distribution and believe in shit that's not. The goal is to always keep the extreme cases marginalized. There's an effect known as the *Overton Window*, where the consensus held by the center of a population becomes what's considered “normal.” There are always things to the left and right of the center, as well as things that exist outside of the window. The center pretty much takes care of itself; it takes a monumental effort of decades to shape that. The edges of the window are where PSYOPs live. Giving attention and respect to sources we control and heaping FUD on those that we don't. In fact, we can even cast sources that we do control in a negative light from time to time, in order to give the edges of the Overton Window a little more definition. By defining that center, we project our Consensus into the Masses and solidify what we need them to accept as “real.”

Terranorming

An essential part of shaping the Overton Window is understanding that Reality isn't about the world. It isn't even about countries. Regions have their own understandings of the world. What's true in the CBD of Beijing isn't what's true in Shunyi District. Or to Americanize that for you, Atlanta ain't the South; Atlanta's its own thing. And that's fine. We don't have to, don't want to, and straight up *can't* homogenize the world.

Instead, make those regions obey internally consistent rules. Shape them to be predictable. We don't need to make every region friendly, or even non-hostile, to us; we just need to know what they're going to do so that we can be one step ahead when shit goes down. You think Black Suits got their rep by sheer force of will? Fuck no. It's about shaping the battlefield; normalizing the terrain. Black Suits kicked the shit out of easy targets in order to establish themselves as badasses. The regions where they would have had a rough time of it? In and out before anyone knew they were there. Now people think they're unstoppable ghosts. Narrative established. But, that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to *Terranorming*.

So, how do you Terranorm? First up, you have to establish the desired parameters. What do you want the region to do and believe? What's outside that but okay? What's *not* okay? The resultant Overton Window is your goal. Next, identity where the current beliefs and practices are. What needs to change in order to realize the target condition? Now, do it. Remember, you don't need to be 100% successful — you just need the unacceptable to be marginalized. This is a lot like those so-called "Reality Challenges," except that you don't necessarily have to care about beneficence or being in charge; your goal involves establishing predictable behavior within the target region.

An additional benefit of terranorming? By creating a stable society, you create space for stable leadership. Feed the residents info and tech, and, little by little, the society as a whole gets on board with the big T's plan.

Attunement

You've heard a lot about "Attunement" here and there. Here's the skinny: *Attunement* means "to bring into harmony." That's what we do — bring someone else's perceptions into harmony with our desired goals. A big-A Attunement refers to the direct application of psychological conditioning and sensory alterations to a single subject. This could involve editing the subject's memories, convincing them everything's fine, or warping their sensory perceptions to the point of capitulation. Any tool on the table is still called "Attunement." Audio Protocols, hyper-psychological Procedures, good ole fashioned ass-kickings, whatever it takes to get the subject to believe what we want them to believe.

Here are a few examples:

- A pack of werewolves are out of control, wrecking a night club. Black Suits on the scene can't fight that battle,

but they can Attune the therianthropes. That fabled lupine superhearing? Deaf in one ear. Rick Astley on repeat in the other. Scent? Everything smells like Mom. Sight? They can't see each other. Colors are muddy. Everything's blurry, except the Black Suits. They're in high contrast, super-HD. Sit. Stay. Attunement.

- Got a "hedge wizard" trying to clue his neighbors in about the weird shit of this world? Talk to the neighbor and ask her if she knows anything about some weird dude in the area who's selling hallucinogens. "*Anyone behaving strangely around the neighborhood? Seeing things that aren't there? Here's my card.*" Given the right psychological nudge or two, that hedgehog's rep drops from "the interesting guy with strange ideas" to "get that fucking lunatic away from my kids." Bonus points if you also rearrange the hedgehog's furniture to make him lose his shit in front of the neighbor.
- A veteran cop just saw some Void Engineers throw down with some aliens. She's even got body-cam footage. Knock-knock: "*FBI. We know what you saw. We want to break this wide open but there's a conspiracy to keep the whole thing under wraps. People are going to come asking to see your video. They're going to discredit you and make it look like a movie publicity stunt. We're the only ones you can trust.*" Be sure to refuse obvious control of the situation. You don't need a copy of the video; you just need to prevent it from getting out. A badge, some fast talk, maybe some alien slime, and that cop isn't talking to anyone.

Attunement, done properly, is subtle. A good Attunement uses only as much force as is absolutely necessary, and the effects remain inside the target's head. Black Suits live for this sort of strategy, but any smart and skillful operative can use it. Attunement is all about messing with someone's mind; and getting the job done with a minimum of fuss is the mark of a damn fine operative.

Speaking of Black Suits and Attunement, here's a little secret, just between us: The black suit is a weapon. I'm not talking about the skills and technologies Black Suit agents possess, although it's pretty fucking true that those agents *are* living weapons in their own right. I mean, the suits themselves, even without the built-in Q Division mojo, are weapons. How? Well, they can be pretty fucking intimidating, for starters. The average person recognizes that suit as a symbol of authority and starts sweating bullets before they even say a word. That's especially true because Men in Black have become such legends in popular mythology. The mystique adds to the effect.

The *real* killer, though, is the calm sense of confidence a Black Suit agent exudes just by wearing that damn suit. Someone all decked out like Rambo and hauling a big-ass gun? Folks expect trouble from a guy like that, but in a sense he's kinda trying too hard, if you get my drift. A Black Suit, though, just

standing there deadpan, mirrorshades reflecting your face back at you? That's fucking *creepy*.

Add to that what I call, "the Master's Edge": That sense that the Master can kick your ass without breaking a sweat. He doesn't come at you hard because he *doesn't fucking have to*. You lunge, he moves, and the next thing you know, you're 12 feet away, picking teeth up off the ground. He's still standing there, calm, in that fucking black suit. Sure, a Black Suit field op *can* do that, easily. He doesn't usually have to, though. The suit does it for him. Lots of targets see the suit and fold without

taking a shot. The psychological impact is that strong. Now, *that*, kids, is a fucking *Attunement* – the kind you can do just by walking in the door in the right suit with the proper attitude.

Syndicate ops can do that too, although they tend to go for something a bit flashier. The mind-game uses the same principles to the same effect: To make your target cave with minimal effort on your part.

Sometimes, though, you can't skate by with an Attunement or three. For those situations... well, we've got...

The Doctrine of Necessary Force



Article Five, kiddos. We destroy threats to Consensus. Sometimes that means parking a non-descript van across the street from a target until they get the message. Sometimes that means giving their brains lead poisoning. For those of you who only recently got introduced to the art of violence, yes – lethal force is often necessary.

To paraphrase Miyamoto Musashi, don't do useless shit. Why waste the time it takes to put together an operation when you could get the same result with a mean look? Requisitioning gear, scouting out infil and exfil routes, conducting rehearsals, and getting the op approved takes time, and that's not even counting the post-op cleanup, debriefings, and paperwork. I wouldn't tell you to drop someone if there were an easier way to do it. Violence is but one tool in our kit, but it's a damn important one.

Here, lemme give you a not-entirely hypothetical situation that may or may not have happened in the past 48 hours: Parahuman situation. Two HEs in the process of forcibly "recruiting" three young people to be their Capri Sun pouches at night and their hands in the daylight. What's talking to them going to get me? They need blood. They can't operate in the day. Having human slaves is incredibly beneficial for them. Could I get them to back down? Sure. That day. But, if they've already accepted that owning slaves is morally acceptable, they're going to try again. And again. Am I going to be there every time? Fuck no. I've got more important shit to do. Fucking socks to crochet and shit. So, I didn't talk to them. I disappeared their asses. Then, I made these socks. Check out this ribbed stitching. You think I'd have time for that if I had to keep visiting those fuckers to make sure that they hadn't taken any slaves today?

Here's the bare-bones truth: There's more out there than we have time to deal with. We pick our fights. We intervene once. If we have to intervene twice then we fucked up the first time. Most vampires know better than to fuck around and make noise. If they grab some type O from a blood bank, who gives a fuck? If they get a human partner and let Stockholm

Syndrome kick in to get their fix, well, they're no worse than millions of humans. Fuck it. But the ones that make waves? Nah. Fuck them. They become examples. They become the bloody line that the rest of them know not to cross. You know Japanese idioms? "Nails that stick out get hammered down." We're the fucking hammer.

Six Thresholds of Targets and Force

Just like we have Six Degrees of tolerable loyalty, we have six *Designated Target Force Thresholds* (DTFTs) and six *Acceptable Force Escalation Thresholds* (AFET). They're similar, but don't get them mixed up and don't get put on the wrong scale.

DTFT reflects the degree to which you anticipate using force with the target you expect to face. If you expect to maybe run across one of those HEs in the wild then Drac Junior is probably DTFT 4; if you've set up a meet with Count Doodoo in his personal chalet, and our intel marks him as a HOAR 6 asset... well, then, agent, your target is DTFT 2 unless the Count decides to get stupid.

If he does decide to get stupid, the next threshold kicks in.

AFET reflects the degree to which you can beat the shit out of someone without too much trouble from the folks upstairs. Yeah, it's useful to have our enemies thinking we'll send in HIT Marks every time some kid picks up a Ouija Board, but even in an organization like ours, resources are limited, collateral damage is a headache, and people get steamed if their neighborhood goes *boom*. The more force you use, the bigger mess you make and the more we wind up having to clean up after it. If you don't wanna get on your Manager's shit list and wind up wiping space goo off some alien's orifices, stick within your AFET unless absolutely necessary.

Yes, terms like "substantial," "considerable," "reasonable" and "necessary" are open to interpretation, depending on the operatives, their supervisors, the targets involved, and the ultimate success or failure of the conflict. If a rookie op smokes a family dog during an otherwise unproductive

Designated Target Force Thresholds (DTFTs)

- 1 **Amendable Coexistence:** The entity in question is at least somewhat beneficial to the Union and exhibits behavior that can be predicted by probabilistic models. We don't trust them but it's better for everyone if we leave them alone.
- 2 **Assumed Benign:** They're beneficial but unpredictable yet present no appreciable threat to the Union or the Masses. Either way, we don't need to worry about them. Examples: an RD who avoids violating Consensus, an RD operating a charity.
- 3 **Acceptable Risk:** They may present a threat, but the scale of damage they're capable of is minor enough that virtually everything else has priority over dealing with them. Examples: A small vampire gang that sticks to libraries or art galleries, a werewolf pack deep in the woods, a group of amateur hunters yet to make a mistake.
- 4 **Target of Opportunity:** The entity is proven to be dangerous but is not considered a high enough priority to dedicate a mission to deal with them. If encountered in the field, the entity's fate is left to the commanding agent's discretion. Elimination is authorized if it is convenient. Examples: Lone vampires who harm humans, Deviants engaged in subversive activities, Deviants conducting nonviolent operations against the Union, hunters who have spilled human blood.
- 5 **Designated Target:** These are targets that represent a threat to the Masses. Elimination operations are authorized. Examples: Vampire gangs abducting large groups of humans, Deviants involved in open warfare with other supernatural elements, werewolves actively hunting humans, Deviants openly attacking agents.
- 6 **Priority Target:** Existential threats to the Technocracy, humanity, or both. One or more operations to eliminate the target are in progress, removing them from history, if possible. Examples: Deviants conducting violent operations against the Union, extra-dimensional manifestations in populated areas.

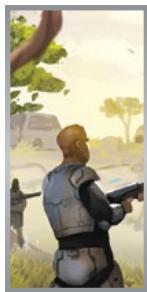
Acceptable Force Escalation Thresholds (AFETs)

- 1 **No Force:** Social pressure, emotional seduction or intimidation, psychic influence, and/or touchless Attunements authorized. No physical applications of force unless the target escalates to the next Threshold. Seldom used except in the case of the most sensitive targets, this is the default acceptable level for operatives in conflict with one another.
- 2 **Minimal Force:** Minor physical force is authorized: unarmed contact, nonlethal subdual techniques, minor collateral damage to non-human things (doors, walls, pets, etc.). Weapons may be employed for intimidation purposes only unless the target escalates to the next Threshold. This is the default authorized conflict mode for non-hostile unEnlightened citizens and conflicts with extraordinary citizens within the Technocratic ranks, and the preferred mode when dealing with Reality Deviants of DTFT 1 or 2.
- 3 **Significant Force:** All methods of non-lethal force are authorized, with potentially lethal weapons and tactics employed if need be. Substantial degrees of non-human collateral damage are acceptable so long as cleanup and compensation resources are available afterward. This is the default mode for dealing with RDs of DTFT 3 or higher.
- 4 **Lethal Force:** Killing force and methods, and/or considerable non-human collateral damage, are authorized, so long as the situation and after-effects of the conflict can be CCC'd with reasonable ease. This is the default mode authorized for RDs of DTFT 4 or higher.
- 5 **Extraordinary Force:** Substantial living and non-living collateral damage are authorized, with the expectation that the operatives will succeed. Advanced and obvious hypertech may be employed among the Masses if need be. This threshold is reserved for high-threat situations, as the resulting CCC is an expensive pain in the ass.
- 6 **Maximum Force:** Whatever you need to do, you do. The Union will figure the rest out afterward. Reserved only for immediate and godlike threats, this is the Threshold of last resort, and it leaves a gigantic mess behind. Our enemies think we always operate at this level. Let them think that. We don't.

mission, that agent is in more trouble than a valued field op team would be in for blowing up three houses full of people while wiping out a werewolf pack. As the saying goes, less is more. The Union gives you all these goodies and training for a reason. Unless you're dealing with serious threats, overkill is Amateur Hour.

That said, only a moron expects FOs to walk into a vampire's den with one hand tied behind their backs. As a general parameter, your supervisor will authorize an AFET one Threshold higher than you expect to receive when confronting a mission's target. There's no point drawing your artillery when Billy Joe Methhead gets bent out of shape — but if he decides to play Sovereign Citizen, you have permission to waste his ass.

Rules of Engagement



If you're new to RoE, here's your primer; if you have a few combat deployments under your belt, stick around — you haven't seen shit yet.

Rules of Engagement, or *RoE*, are what separate you from those racist shitbags out there who can't tell the difference between a werewolf and a hairy kid with brown skin. Anyone with some cash can strap on a weapon, some tacti-cool gear, and call themselves an "operator" or a "hunter." We professionals have rules.

RoE spell out what lines you can and cannot cross. Back in the civilian military world, you can't drop someone just for having an AK slung across their back. Same idea here, except we're talking about things far deadlier than Kalashnikov's pride and joy.

We're talking about worlds on top of our world; and there are things in those worlds that can cross over and eat your face. In fact, some of those things actually evolved to eat nothing but faces. That's now a thing you know. Congratulations. You're at the Cool Kids table now. You actually get to know the names of things that are going to try to kill you from the shadows. Vampires, werewolves, demons, wizards, et cetera. Don't let the higher-ups hear you call them that stuff, though; generations of higher-ups have wasted considerable effort in defining exactly what these creatures are, in precise terms, so that you can shout "*There's a Class V Hemophagic Entity behind you!*" or some other officer bullshit.

The Hard Rules

There are forces at work that want to send the world to hell. Sometimes literally. It's our job to stop it. We're here to keep shit in order. And guess what that means? No smoking civvies! Yes, they're annoying and in the fucking way all the time, but civilians are our customers. Without them, we have no society to safeguard.

Rule 1: No Smoking Civvies

Yeah. I know. I shouldn't have to say it, but if I don't say it then one of you fucking *heroes* are going to come back to HQ with a body bag, whining about how some nun in a wheelchair or some homeless kid with scoliosis was "just there" and "it was an accident." Collateral Impact is a real thing, and that real thing is to be avoided at all costs to you. Keep your CI record clean, Rambo. No excuses. No accidents. Or the next one to have a fucking accident is gonna be you.

Rule 2: When in Doubt, Knock it Out

If you liked Rule 1, you're gonna love this one. Sometimes, it's hard to tell the difference between an unmedicated schizophrenic and something serious. So, put them under. We issued you the tech to do it. We expect you to fucking do it. That's why

you get paid the big bucks. If you wanted to stay in the minor league, you should have stayed on whatever SWAT team or infantry unit we got you out of. We're saving the world here.

Rule 3: Civvies Don't See Shit

This one is a little more flexible, but we damn well expect you to try — *and to report it if you fuck up and can't fix it!* Civvies aren't ready to see our tech or the crazy critters out there. They're not. Seeing this shit can literally break their brains. I'm going to say that again because some of you think the word "literally" is just a comma. Witnessing hypertech or "monsters" can literally destroy civilians. As you might recall, civilians make up *the world that we're saving!* So, a) keep shit quiet, and b) cover your tracks. If someone saw something, it's your damn job to convince them that they didn't. You wanna use a flashy thing to do it, I don't care. Just come up with something better than "swamp gas" and "weather balloons." That shit doesn't work anymore. We have cleanup crews for a reason, and they're equipped and trained for all sorts of operations. Still, we'd rather save those mop-ups for no-good-option situations. Whenever possible, remember the Secure Scene Protocols: *Secure/Stabilize/Contain/Deny*.

RDI: Reality Deviant Incidents

Whether we're sitting behind a desk, working in a lab, or putting our asses on the line on the field, our job comes with a ton of responsibilities. And all of those responsibilities come to a head during an *RDI*: A *Reality Deviant Incident*. Also called *Reality Deviant Incursions*, *Invasions*, *Insurgencies*, or occasionally (with the designation *RDE*) *Episodes*, an RDI involves some asshole getting his freak on at the Masses' expense. Rampaging were-thing? RDI. Blood-eating corpse chowing down in an alley? RDI. Dimensional breach with fucked-up aliens coming through? RDI. Whether it's Gandalf the Grey getting his rocks off with a thunderstorm, or a slinking imp eating the neighborhood kitty-cats, RDIs are all-hands alerts for the local Construct. Field ops swing into action to contain the damn thing, while desk ops make with the mojo to keep the situation as under wraps as possible. At all costs, the locals have to be kept safe, sane, and, if possible, stupid with regards to the monsters in their midst. It's not good business to have them knowing too much about just *how* nasty our big ol' world really is.

Here's a weird fact that makes our job a lot easier than it could be otherwise: Most RDs know it's not in *their* best interests, either, to put themselves in the spotlight. When one pack of fuzzies hits the streets in full fangs-and-fur regalia, the other local fuzzies usually slap 'em back into line. Vamps like to keep low profiles, so if one starts going all *Queen of the Damned* on us, the others tend to stake her out in the sun

Supplementary Data: RDI Teams and Technocratic Cleanup

Because the Technocracy is organized to a fault, team sizes and configurations are standardized throughout the Union, depending on the size and location of a given Construct, its local RD population, the state of hostilities with the locals, the specifics of the metaplot, and so forth. Because of all the variables — as well as the variables involved in your particular **Mage** chronicle — we leave the specific numbers to each Storyteller to determine, based on the needs of that Storyteller's chronicle and the stories you wish to tell.

As a rough guideline, assume that a Technocratic Construct deploys the following number of agents in each RDI response team. Smaller Constructs use the smaller number, while larger and/or more embattled ones deploy the larger numbers:

RDI Team Personnel

Combat Operative Team	5-15 extraordinary field agents, 3-9 Black Suits and/or other Enlightened field operatives, 1-3 cyborgs, 0-3 Alanson-equipped agents, 0-3 Victors or HIT Marks
Containment Team	10-20 extraordinary field agents, 3-9 Black Suits
Cleanup Team	1-10 unEnlightened cleaners, 2-6 extraordinary field agents, 1-3 Enlightened field agents

For details surrounding extraordinary operatives, see that entry in **Mage 20** (pp. 623-626); the Alanson R-25 Hardsuit entry in **Mage 20** (pp. 656-657); and the PDC Aberration Hunter entry in **Gods & Monsters** (pp. 56-57).

For data regarding cleanup crews and Procedures, see the **Mage 20** Technocratic Procedures **Sanitize Evidence** and **Secure the Scene** (pp. 603-605), the **Gods & Monsters** entry "Cleaners" (pp. 37-39), and the **Book of Secrets** entry for "Collateral Impact" (p. 225).

not long afterward. My guess is that too many of their elders remember the days of torches and pitchforks then multiply that by AR-15s and Molotov cocktails and decide, "Oh, fuck no!" Whatever the reason, the greatest area of common ground we find with HEs, TEs, and every other E that's out there is that the Masses *really* need to not be putting werewolf attacks on YouTube and shit. I mean, y'know, more than they already do anyway. So, when an RDI goes down, one of the first steps we take after outright containment involves touching base with the local RD elders and coming to an agreement about what is to be done about it. It's rare we don't come to some sort of consensus, so to speak, about how to handle the offenders in the aftermath of their little shit fit.

S&C: Secure & Contain

When we receive notice about an RDI, field-ops teams scramble to S&C (*Secure and Contain*) the incident and all parties involved. Generally, this involves:

- Securing the area, if possible, and preventing offenders and witnesses from leaving before we're finished mopping up.
- Stabilizing the situation by neutralizing the threat (typically by kicking its ass).

- Containing the damage in whatever *physical* (putting out fires, repairing damage, etc.), *social* (limiting social-media leaks, fleeing witnesses, etc.), *paraphysical* (closing dimensional gateways, shutting down magic, that sort of thing), and *psychological* (calming witnesses, gathering intel, "revising" people's memories, and so forth) arenas need containment.

- Denying that anything weird has gone wrong at all. This last step doesn't always work, especially not in large-scale situations, but that doesn't mean we won't try to do it anyway.

The Masses *really* do not benefit from knowing too much about what we do. Even in the Information Age, some information is not worth learning about unless you're prepared to handle it — and the Masses are not that kind of "prepared."

Ideally, S&C protocol dispatches one-to-three combat operative teams to deal with the threat, two containment teams to deal with the perimeter, and two cleanup teams to deal with the damage — one to handle the physical damage, the other to handle the social and psychological fallout in the area.

That's the ideal. Things don't always work out that way. When the shit hits the fan (or the *were* hits the *wolf*, as the case might be), you work with what you have. Most Constructs have

enough agents, backup and firepower to handle the average RDI, but once you've had a few go-rounds with these assholes, you'll realize there's no such thing as "average" when RDs are involved.

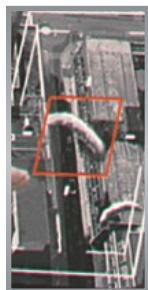
CCC: Cleanup, Containment, and Compensation

When you pop off in citizen territory, you soon get acquainted with CCC: *Cleanup, Containment, and Compensation*. That's what kicks in when houses get blown up, bystanders get hurt or killed, obvious hypertech shows up on YouTube, and so forth. *Cleanup* means a specialized team goes in behind you to deal with the physical and social aftermath of your little party; *containment* means keeping the Masses in the dark about stuff like killer cyborgs and worldwide conspiracies of reality-bending supermen; and *compensation* means paying for the stuff (and people) you broke in the course of your mission. After all, it's not helpful to our ultimate mission if the Masses

wind up homeless, broke and traumatized every time some Witchie-Poo needs to get smacked back into the shadows—but it is helpful if we pay for the damage and our rivals cannot. Joe Sleeper is less likely to demand justice if the old Ford we blew up while chasing down a death-cultist gets replaced by a nice new Lexus, courtesy of the insurance-policy rider he didn't know he had before then.

CCC is the price of doing business. Shit happens in this line of work, and the Big T plans ahead for that. You'd best believe, though, that it is *fucking expensive as shit* to maintain, and some things—like, say, Joe Sleeper's now-dead kid—can't be CCC'd away. An operative or team whose CCC tag goes into the red too often is gonna meet the sharp end of their Manager's tongue, slide down the Six Degrees, and maybe find themselves cut off in the field or removed from it entirely if they prove to be a bigger liability than their track record for success is worth. So, play nice when you can, kiddies. There are only so many toys you can break before the next thing broken is you.

Mission Planning



Time is our enemy. There are millions of Reality Deviants, Pandimensional Entities, and other weirdoes out there, and billions of people who want to believe in them, no matter what it costs. We are always fighting an uphill battle. Getting missions done quickly is the only way we can protect humankind. The pressure is on to get our *operational tempo* (OPTEMPO) up high and keep it there. The White Suits and everyone between you and them will be turning the screws on you to make sure you get that OPTEMPO up.

Fuck them.

Fun fact: Your OPTEMPO drops to zero if you're dead. Paper-pushers always think of OPTEMPO as the number of missions that get accomplished per fiscal quarter, but it's more than just that; it's the support that goes into each mission. It's making sure your teams have enough time to avoid burnout. It's cycling between clones to keep operatives fresh. It's ordering enough beans and bullets to get shit done.

Don't skimp on the "easy" shit. Plan your op right. If your director is on your ass, just suck it up and deal with it. It's better to have a pissy boss than to have a fucked-up plan. Once you're in the field, it's just you and the monsters. All the *hoorah-moto* shit in the world can't save your ass from a mission with fucked up intel. This doesn't mean run around with your middle fingers out, though; there's a big difference between being an asshole and not letting red tape get you killed.

With that in mind, we deliberately split all missions into two broad categories: *Intelligence Gathering* (IG) and *Field*

Operations (FO). There's some crossover between IGs and FOs, but it'll take a few hundred pages to iron that out, so don't sweat it for now.

IGs: Intelligence-Gathering Operations

Every mission starts off with intel of some kind. Generally, something suspicious trips algorithmic analysis of data, or a tip comes in and your superiors filter that tip-off to you. Now, it's up to your team to do the serious IG. There's no way around it; you *have* to know more about your target, surroundings, circumstances, goals for success, and exit strategies before you go charging off into the field and getting yourself smeared across some werecritter's wallpaper. IG is a prerequisite of FOs—that is, of *Field Operations*. Sorry, kids, no dessert until you finish your supper.

Thankfully, there are ton of ways to do IG. They basically boil down to four steps:

Step I – TI: Target Identification

First, you lock the target. Figure out what you need to know about whom, and why you need to know it. Until you know who or what you need more data about, you simply can't do the mission.

TI is simple on the surface but gets involved if you want to be thorough about it. There's always something more you need to know. As long as the likely intel gathered by investigating that target advances your operational goals, though, you're golden. Here's the trick: Go for the fast, easy targets first. That way, if it turns out that you have to head out into the field and shake



someone down, you're not going in totally blind. You can always acquire more intel after that if and when you need it.

Here's an example: You get word that a shipment of blood destined for a Progenitor-front hospital didn't arrive at its destination. Not usually a big deal, but some of that blood involved experimental protocols. So, what's your target? The hospital? The courier? The courier's route? The agency that sent it? No wrong answers here — they're all good starting points. Hell, you might need to target all of them. Once you know where you're starting the search, TI usually presents further targets that you hadn't even known about at first.

Step 2 - AW: Asset Weaponization

Now that you know what you're looking at, choose how you're going to approach it and which assets might be involved. This step should be a product of the type of information that you need, as well as the environment you're IG'ing and the potential assets you have in place around that situation.

In our theoretical blood heist, electronic investigation of the courier sounds like a good place to start. It's cheap, lets us know if they're a bent asset, and it's better than blasting the hospital's block with sonar waves looking subterranean anomalies. If you don't have an electronic

warfare expert on your team, requisition one. That's an asset you can use.

Step 3 - TE: Target Exploitation

We know what we're looking at and we know how. Hit 'em.

We take a look at the courier's finances and emails. No unusual financial flow, but they have a ton of deleted and 'purged' emails regarding their exact delivery route and vague threats. Sounds like courier was compromised and got robbed en route.

Step 4 - RAN: Repeat as Needed

It's rare that a single IG pass is going to crack the case; so much so that you should be suspicious if it does. Generally speaking, go electronic first as that's the fastest IG method. Searching a non-secure location or canvassing witnesses ends up being a solid number two. Surveillance, searching secure locations, and target interrogation are all threes on this list. Why? Surveillance takes too long, and the other two are technically Field Ops. I told you there was bleedover. Still, you gotta do what you gotta do.

IG Pass #2: We tail the courier for a bit. Analysis confirms that he's a baseline human. Our prior IG got us his work schedule, so...

IG Pass #3: We show up right after a long shift, and we flash badges. The driver cracks instantly and spills the beans. A memory-jogging Procedure gets us a visual of the blood bandits: vampire bikers. A quick Attunement means he doesn't remember the Procedure or the vampires.

IG Pass #4: Requisitioning a trip to the *eXtraordinary Material Distribution Database*, we cross-reference our bikers with local weirdoes. The XMDD has their address and lists them as unaffiliated HEs.

IG Pass #5: We stakeout the address. They're heavily armed, twitchy, right-handed, and litterbugs. Now we have enough data for a Field Op. Time to shut down their little den.

FOS: Field Operations

"Fos go on FOs." There's another snappy little saying for you from the grunt-level ranks of the glorious Union, and if there's anyone who deserves to take a rhetorical tinkle on formality now and then, it's the people who leave a cushy spot behind their computers and go face three-meter-tall killing machines with bulletproof fur and attitude problems. If you don't wanna come back in a bag to be reused for spare parts, and FOs are your beat, then you plan your shit out and you stick to that plan while also realizing in your little heart of hearts that no plan survives contact with the enemy, especially not when that enemy can throw lightning or live centuries off other people's blood supplies.

If you *are* a field operative then the following little pep-talk might keep you alive long enough to build up some status and skill. If you *are not* a field operative, knowing this shit will at least help you understand a little bit more about what those numbers and names on your mission plans and intel data have to go through to get you that intel, and to keep your ass alive in that lab while you plumb the secrets of the universe, enjoying the view from the safe side of your monitor screen.

FO Intel

We've already covered the nuts and bolts of IG, so now we're talking about the minimum data threshold for planning an op. There are two big checkboxes to take care of here: *Target Intel*, and *Area of Operations Intel*.

TI: Target Intel

What are you after? If it's an entity, what are their capabilities? Limitations? Resources? If your goal is to snatch a civilian, the middle of a mission is the wrong time to learn about their heart condition. Enemies? Allies? Who could they call for backup? Who will come looking for them if they go missing? What bystanders might be in the way when you go in? If it's an object you're after, what hazards might it pose? Does it have a unique signature that might act as a built-in tracker? Are there other interested parties, and what might they do to secure that object from you if there are?

This is all stuff you've gotta know before you go in. Soft or hard, a smooth mission demands good intel.

It's not enough to just say "We're hunting vampires" and then call it a day. How many HEs? Two. Three? A dozen? What abilities do they have? Let's say we haven't seen them in action yet, and they're unaffiliated, so that's a big Unknown. When you go in, then, be prepared for speed, strength, and other shenanigans. Our vampires don't seem to have any friends nearby, but sonar scans picked up a shit-ton of guns in their lair. The blood-eaters didn't react to the sonar, either, so cross "super-hearing" off the list of their possible abilities.

AoI: Area of Operations Intel

Where's the AO (*Area of Operations*)? Who are the neighbors? Who's on site? Who might respond to a disturbance? What kind of physical, electronic, metaphysical, and social security does the site have? We're talking about walls, gates, locks, keypads, wireless networks, wired devices, occultist crap, civilians, guards, patrols, etc.

Our vampires are the only ones in their house, which is *huge* for two people and not registered in either of their names, which all suggests that they stole it or are squatting in it. The scared and dirty looks their neighbors give them make it look like no one's coming to their aid, but surveillance also picked up monster-hunter wannabes roaming the area. If we go in loud, those assholes might assume that it's their time to shine and come in hard, with civilians in the crossfire and probably us, as well.

Mission Paradigms

Within a world of infinite potential missions, there's no way to possibly categorize all of them ahead of time. Not that Managers haven't tried, of course, but the resulting code-blizzards got in the way a hell of a lot more than they helped anyone out in the field. These days, we keep those categories simple:

Ambush / Raid

Ambushes and raids are the same basic idea, but with opposite origins and related ends. With ambushes, the target determines what time they get engaged and the Technocracy picks the location. In raids, Big T picks the time and the target picks the place. Ambushes involve learning your target's likely travel plans, positioning yourself along their route, and giving the target a little surprise. Once they show up, engage them. This engagement need not be violent. An ambush could be as simple as waiting for a college professor outside of their office. With raids, you go to them. Again, this could mean blowing out a wall and charging in, or it could mean knocking on their front door and having a chat.

Both ambushes and raids have a "soft" designation and a "hard" designation. In a soft operation, you avoid violence unless circumstances demand escalation of force. Soft-force weapons include intimidation, Attunements, and all manner of non-physical mind-fuckery. That requires more finesse than,

say, shooting someone with a big-ass gun, but that's kind of the point. An op who needs to swing dick in order to make his point is a fucking sad excuse for a Technocrat.

In a hard operation, you plan for violence, and go in at least one level higher on the AFET than you expect from your target – up to AFET 5, anyway. You need specific authorization to go in at AFET 6, because that level of force leaves one hell of a collateral imprint and demands hardcore CCC afterward. Even then, minimal force is better than ultimate force unless you're trying to take out a major threat before it brings the neighborhood down. Shock-and-awe is a useful strategy under certain circumstances, but most times out you'll be better off leaving yourself someplace to go than to wade in firing all your guns at once and then get stuck at the ceiling of your AFET and firepower once the trap has been sprung.

It should go without saying that you head into a raid or ambush having already made plans for an exit strategy and subsequent CCC, but I'll say it anyway. Going into those operations *without* clearly defined goals, exit plans, and mop-up capability is a good way to earn hard consequences and possibly – if you're unlucky – a one-way trip to the spare-parts vat.

Elimination

Destroy a specific target. Don't get hung up on the name; purging data from a server is also an elimination – just ask any Iterator. Elimination missions are an “extreme prejudice” sort of thing, and the amount of firepower and prejudice involved depends on who and what you're there to eliminate and how much resistance to said elimination you expect to receive. Homework is your friend on elimination missions; the more you know about the territory and obstacles involved, the easier it is to get in, get done, and get the fuck out.

Extraction

Seize *Precious Cargo* (PC) then get out of the mission site with it. PC could be anything from data to a person to a nuclear reactor. Make sure you go in with whatever gear you need to contain the PC for transport. If it's an unfriendly person, bring cuffs. If it's data, bring a drive. And for fuck's sake, plan several exit routes. Getting into a place and then improvising your escape afterward might work fine in movies but it's a great way to get killed in real life.

Installation

Essentially the opposite of extraction. Find a specific site within the AO and leave something behind. This requires a more careful touch, as installations are almost always secretive, requiring a thorough clean-up phase. If clean-up is not conducted by the primary team, the secondary team must have full information as to every possible problem.

Misdirection

Most missions depend on not being noticed until you're ready to act. In a misdirection mission, getting noticed is the

whole point. While the mission team distracts the target, a different team performs a different but related mission. If all the pieces run smoothly, the targets never realize they've been had – and they blame someone else entirely if and when they find out about it.

Misdirection missions usually involve disguise as well as deception. You want the target looking for someone who is not you. Holograms, clones, and good old-fashioned make-up-costumes-and-acting usually do the trick. After all, people don't usually expect agents of a hypertechnology global conspiracy network unless they're part of such a group themselves. In that case, it's fun to set up vampires, werethings, or some bunch of Witchie-Poos to take the fall for your mission. Hell, those fucksticks are so fucking paranoid that they'll turn on each other if you even halfway suggest that their supposed allies are screwing them over for shits and giggles. Take it from one who knows, few missions are more satisfying than ones where you can get RDs cutting each other's throats over something you did to them. Now, that's entertainment!

Patrol

Patrol missions involve going from Point A to Point X, probably with a bunch of other Points along the way. The parameters depend upon whether the patrol is a standard security protocol, a reconnaissance mission for intel and planning, a covert or combat run through hostile territory, an investigation for security breaches... you get the picture. In a patrol mission, the designated operatives follow a predetermined route and address the features and encounters along the way with whatever responses seem most appropriate. A quick, routine sweep of apparently secured territory is pretty straightforward unless someone's decided to pay an unauthorized visit to the premises; a covert patrol through TE-controlled woodlands is an entirely different story.

Psychological Operations

In boss-speak, PSYOPS “induce or reinforce behavior favorable to Technocracy objectives.” Why is PSYOP in all caps? Who the fuck knows! There are tons of different types of PSYOPS, ranging from subtle nudges of influence, false intelligence, media propaganda, and diversionary tactics to brutal displays of force designed to intimidate the fuck out of people. All PSYOPS really boil down to one thing: *Make someone not want to fuck with you*. This sort of mission could be something friendly, like buying a target a beer so that they like you, or hostile, like taking that same beer bottle, smashing it, and taking the shards to their throat. Either way, you get the mission accomplished.

Although PSYOPS are obvious NWO territory, any Convention can conduct a PSYOP mission. Progenitors can dose water supplies with chemicals that render the locals compliant. Voids can get folks fired up about “Space Force” or some such nonsense designed to aim popular Consensus upward and outward. Everything the Syndicate does is one

big PSYOP mission called *Money is your fucking god*, and if you don't see Iteration X's hand behind smart phones and social media and other everyday cybernetics then I'd say they fucking succeeded, wouldn't you?

Secure and Contain

We covered this already, but it's worth repeating here. An S&C mission involves securing the area around an RDI so that citizens can't get in and RDs can't get out. After the immediate threat is dealt with, the containment phase gathers evidence, sidetracks cops and cock-blocks them in the name of "national security," and deals with whatever collateral damage the incident caused. We do have special crews for this sort of thing, but since you might end up on one of them someday, or get stuck on cleanup duty if the job is too big for a normal crew to handle, I figured I would mention S&C missions here while we're handling the topic as a whole.

Surveillance

The most boring mission type of all: Get eyes and ears in the field, sit on your ass, and gather intel by paying attention to what's going on with and around your mission's target. Those eyes and ears don't have to be human; cameras and microphones are great, uplifted animals are awesome, and the success of drones, data tracking, face-recognition software and other tools of supervision among the Consensus is a fucking wet dream come true. Decades ago, most people were paranoid about being watched; now, they'll dump all their personal data online for a fucking laugh and not think twice about how vulnerable that makes them if someone (like, say, us) decides to keep a hairy eyeball on their lives. Hell, people expect to be monitored now. Lots of 'em even want to be seen and accessible 24/7. If you'd have told that to a Black Suit back in 1993, he'd have thought you were insane.

So sure, we have all the data we could possibly want, but unless you have a badass algorithm to dig through all that data, though, you're gonna need someone to review it. Hell, even when you do have a badass algorithm, there's no substitute for a living set of eyes to notice what a data crunch can't spot. So, when you're on a surveillance mission, sleep in shifts; drink coffee; don't fuck with your phone, because nine times out of ten, you'll miss something because you were on social media or taking a leak. You can't really fix the latter, but the former is 100% preventable.

Surveillance missions suck. They do. Sorry 'bout that, kids. It can't all be no-knock raids, now can it? You ever see a police stakeout in a movie? Did that ever look like they were having fun? There's a reason for that: It's not fun. It's necessary, though. Intel missions make all other missions possible.

Stealth

When you need to get something accomplished right under your enemy's nose, a stealth mission is probably in order.

Where most missions require a straightforward approach, stealth missions require moving in (and probably out again) under some sort of concealment. Like misdirection missions, stealth ops depend on fooling anyone who happens to see you. However, where a misdirect fools observers into seeing someone you want them to see, a stealth mission usually fools them into not seeing you at all.

"Seeing," of course, is relative. Some ops depend on full-spectrum invisibility, while others cloak the operatives in local color so they can move right out in the open without being noticed. Lots of people, for example, don't want to notice the homeless, so a surveillance mission disguised as a homeless encampment provides a great way to stealth out in plain sight. Our enemies are always looking for mutants, back sedans, and cybernetic killing machines; show 'em a bearded hipster in an Amazon delivery van, though, and they won't look twice until they're staring down the barrel of whatever gun you need to use to get that job done.

Mission Steps

Okay, hotshots – let's go! You've secured your IG, you've nailed down the FO. Now what? Well, unless you're a fucking idiot, you follow these quick and not-so-easy steps to get squared away, get in, get done, get out, and get lost.

Planning

First off, you figure out exactly what you're trying to do then you plan for how you want things to go. At each step of your plan, acknowledge what might go wrong. Figure out a way to mitigate that risk and/or deal with it if it happens. Your plan should look like a flowchart from hell. By forecasting problems, you reduce surprises. Your goal here is to give hostiles a split second to make choices, while you're already three steps ahead of them when they do.

Only a few mission types involve breaking things down unless there's no other choice. Those missions call for different tactics, gear, and prep, and it's not always clear which options present the best method for accomplishing a particular objective. Both ambushes and raids, for example, involve putting holes in people (or whatever); if the objective is to put bodies in holes then both ambushes and raids are viable solutions. It's up to you to figure out what needs to happen, and those decisions involve intel, planning, and a reasonable sense of discretion and fallout. Reality Deviants out in the sticks? You can do pretty much anything, from PSYOPS to big-scale CI. A pack of hostage-taking werewolves in a city center? That's pretty much guaranteed to be a raid, and although you're gonna be hard-pressed to contain the Collateral Impact involved in that one, it's your ass if a lot of civvies get smoked.

Let's say we're going in to deal with a pair of asshole unaffiliated vampires. To the best of our knowledge, they haven't been killing anyone, but they stole from us. Let's go in soft, Attune them, and see where we're at then. If the Attunement

takes, great! We might just have a new cleaner asset we can outsource jobs to. As a bonus, keeping things quiet should keep the civilian hunters from getting in on the action. And hey, if the Attunement doesn't take, the HEs are unaffiliated anyway, which limits the possible blowback if we have to X them out.

Outfitting

What are your objectives? What are your limitations? It's probably not going to do a whole lot of good to bring antitank rockets to a surveillance mission; Q Division's getting better and better about making everything fit in a rucksack, but don't carry anything you don't need, and don't leave behind anything you need. This is some Miyamoto Musashi *Book of Five Rings* shit: Don't do anything useless. Observe, prepare, execute, done.

Let's say our theoretical vamps have guns all over the house; if Attunement fails, we're in a fire fight. Plan to drown out gunshots with noise, or just drop a quiet cone over the site and silence everything. Time permitting, you could wait for them to leave then steal all the guns, hide all the ammo, trap them, or do something equally hilarious. When it comes to the actual meetup, we'll want to keep any potential retaliation from other HEs off of us, so we req some octopus suits. They're mainly designed for stealth, but they can look like anything we want — like maybe, say, a few amateur monster hunters.

Infiltration

Infiltration (*infil*, for short) describes how you get to the AO. How are you going to get there? How much time do you have? How much do you care about getting spotted? If you have no time, and you don't care if anyone sees you, getting dropped on top of the objective by helicopter might be an option. In practice, it almost never is, but a girl can dream, right? If the AO is surrounded by prying eyes, how are you going to get past them? Go invisible? Distract them? Disguise yourself? Go around them? Come up under them? Consider any possible approach as a viable infil and/or exfil point.

Whatever infil and exfil routes you choose, avoid direct in-and-out trajectories. Instead, dogleg your entry and exit paths, in order to confuse observers and hide your point of origin. Whenever possible, use cloaking and cover. Surprise, as any Black Suit can tell you, is one of the most effective weapons ever.

AOO: Actions on the Objective

Actions on the Objective are the steps you take once you're in position and the real fun begins. Those steps vary wildly, depending on what the mission is. The basic steps, though, go like this: *establish Rally Point, make contact, maneuver, break contact, and consolidate forces*.

- **Rally Points** (RPs) are where you transition between infil and AOO, as well as how you get from AOO to exfil; most of the time, vehicles serve as Rally Points because they can maneuver independently, and if need be, they can go to you. All the shit that you thought you might need but

didn't want to carry gets left at the RP. If it turns out you need that gear, it's close by and relatively secure. If not, the gear's not slowing you down. Vehicular Rally Points can also serve as MEDEVAC vehicles, which makes them pretty great if someone gets hurt.

It should go without saying that Rally Points should be guarded somehow if there's anything present that you'd regret losing. It should go without saying, but it won't. Protect your shit.

- **Making contact** is the first time your target is aware of your presence. Now, it's time to get in someone's face. Maybe you're just going to ask them some questions. Maybe you're going to stuff them in a suitcase. Whatever the mission might be, your approach, attitude, and initial defense posture need to be established before you make contact.
- **Maneuvering** probably only matters if you're in a fight, but complex social situations might call for you to shift positions or postures, too. If your current conversational tact has gotten you everything it's going to get you, change it up. Move around. Shift positions. Did your initial volley get all the bad guys running for cover? Maneuver to a new position while they're looking at the dirt, before they can get a bead on you again.

Pro tip: The *contact* and *maneuver* steps work best when two different teams are doing them. Get support from a fire team to lay down suppressive fire, sniper shots, mortars, whatever, and then no one will even notice your maneuver team doing their thing.

- At this point, you should be able to do whatever you want with the target, which means it's time to do it and then *break contact*. If you're in conversation, make your polite exit. If lead's flying, this is the point when your volume of fire picks up again. Everyone else puts their heads down — then everything goes quiet. When they look up again, you're gone.
- **Consolidate forces** at the Rally Point. Anyone hurt? Start First Aid. Anyone missing? Anything important missing? You might have to start AOOs all over again to fix that situation. This step should be just a box check, but it's here for a reason. Check your people and gear before you take the next step.

Cleanup

We covered this already under CCC, but I'm gonna cover it again because you do not skip this step, ever. It's not fine if the AO looks like a fucking crime scene when you're done, but it could be acceptable *if and only if* there is nothing left that could lead the CLEs back to us or send some VHS off on a monster hunt. Check bodies for weird wounds. Dispose of weird bodies. No, arson isn't effective; civilian CSI teams are

getting too good for that shit, plus fires spread far too easily and present too much risk. Pressed for time? You might be able to outsource it to a contractor. Whenever possible, though, bring your cleanup crew with you and stash 'em nearby until the fireworks end.

Exfiltration

You have to get out somehow, so you'd better have a plan. Actually, you'd better have a stack of plans. Plenty of issues can complicate or compromise an exfil route: hostiles, panicked civilians, an unexpected wall, fire, aliens. Have other exfil routes out of the hot zone.

Plan for casualties. There'll probably be some. What happens to operatives who get wounded or get dead? Is there a MEDEVAC team standing by? Can you get exfiltrated by vehicles? If so, which ones? Driven by whom? Traveling in by what route, and out by what route? Since you presumably maneuvered before the shit went down, the start of your exfil route will probably be different than the end of your infil route. Whether it is or not, take a different route out anyways. Be circuitous. Avoid tails. Spot 'em and shake 'em if you end up with one anyways. Do not bring trouble back to the Construct with you unless you want a fast track to the worst post your Manager can imagine.

Hot Wash

As soon as everyone is out and headed back to safety, talk amongst your team. What went wrong? What went right? This is not a bitch session, nor is it a finger-pointing buddy-fucking. This

is so you and your team can improve. Doing this immediately is important so that you can identify strengths and weaknesses while the op is still fresh in your minds.

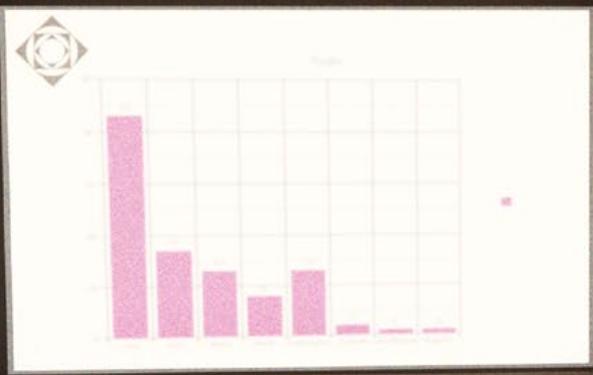
AARs: After-Actions Review

If your team was the only team in the AO, skip this step. AARs are like hot washes, but bigger. As soon as everyone who participated in the op is back at base, start the AAR. Unless someone was MEDEVACed out, they should be present at the AAR. This is where we find out how things went on a holistic level, as all teams involved explain how things looked from their vantage. Did we get all the targets? Did something get away? Do the door kickers need to be faster? Slower? VDAS data and sensory feeds help, but as much as Iteration X hates to admit it, nothing beats organic brains processing the incident, collating the data, discussing the results, and consolidating their impressions of the events from each point of view involved. Sure, Black Suits share a hive-mind, but every op experiences things a little bit differently and processes those sensations through a matrix of their own experiences before that.

Report

This final step is left to the mission's operations leader. If that's you then you type it up, send it in, attach all the data you have from video feeds to consciousness replays, and log all assets acquired or lost. The op isn't over until Control has their copy.





Unit 3: Theatres of Operation

"People are sheep. They'll do what they're told, once they see that the world is not as they always assumed it was."

— James Reed, from Seanan McGuire's *Middlegame*

The group gathered around the table in the conference room wasn't large; a dozen at most – operatives, mostly, with a few managers and a couple higher-level support staff who had, surprisingly, been one of the driving forces behind this meeting. They sat stiffly in chairs ergonomically designed to be blissfully comfortable; Stephen fidgeted with the tablet he'd brought with him, drinking from the water glass in front of him to relieve his suddenly dry throat. When the door opened to reveal not only the senior manager, whose time they had requested, but also the Senior Vice President three levels above her, Stephen swallowed and turned a little pale. The big wigs, on the other hand, seemed entirely comfortable as they sat down at the head of the table.

"Gentlemen, ladies, I want you to know that I appreciate your initiative identifying a problem and working to find a potential solution. As you know, we have been working to eliminate waste across our organization. I and my colleagues have reviewed the data you collected

and the reports you have written. While there is not consensus among us regarding what this data indicates, we have agreed that it makes sense to make some attempt to eliminate this particular source of waste. As a result, we are authorizing your Community Relationship and Recruitment Quality Improvement Initiative as an official trial, to last twenty years, starting now. There will be some strict limitations in what you are allowed to do, of course, and you will be making regular reports to us." He paused just long enough to let the full implication of his next words sink in, unsaid but understood: "If there are significant problems, the trial will be terminated immediately."

The Senior VP looked at each of them, then nodded as if satisfied. "This is going to be complicated and difficult, but I trust each of you to do your best to make it work." He nodded again, this time to the senior manager next to him. "Sybil will go over the details with you, and you will make your reports to her. I'd love to stay and work them out with you

myself, but I have another meeting I need to get to. I'm looking forward to seeing your results." He stood up, nodded to them once more, and was gone.

As he left the room, Sybil stood and activated the screen behind her. Stephen allowed himself a quiet sigh of relief. It was a small start – only a few new

recruits would be allowed to keep their family and community connections at first, and they would be watched very carefully – but if the data projections were correct, their Initiative should be successful enough to be adopted throughout the Organization.

Hope gave his heart a sudden, painful squeeze.

A Mad World Under Fair Control



It's a mad, mad world, and the Technocratic Union is not the only party of significance within it. They do, however, have a fairly generous reach and so keep their hands on as many centers of potentiality as they can while keeping their eyes on most of the rest. Whether your adventures take you to your nearest metropolitan crossroads or to a dusty little, backwater, forgotten nugget of curiosity, you should have a bit of an idea of what you're getting yourself into, and that sort of question is what we should review.

The following chapter provides something of a primer to help you get the look and feel of the rest of the globe (note: *globe*, not some flat planet!) so that you know what to expect. Each entry contains an exceedingly brief overview of the general area, and a snapshot of the operations the Technocracy is concerned with in the area.

The Global Outlook: Dim

It's an odd time to be a Technocratic operative.

The third decade of the 21st century should be a paradise. Our ancestors could not have possibly envisioned the world three centuries of rapid, unprecedented technological advances has given us. Within slightly over a hundred years, humanity has gone from gaslights and telegraphs to mobile computers

that fit in a pocket, interlinked worldwide and capable of watching movies, taking photos, and accessing infinite reams of data in real time *all at once*. Scientists shoot cameras into the depths of space, revealing wonders that make old-time visions of infinity seem tame. Sublime graces of technology allow people to connect more deeply, more quickly, and across greater distances than ever before.

And yet, the world burns.

What should be a golden age might be the end of humanity. Radical shifts of climate and politics bring daily disasters and the threat of worse to come. Grand experiments of democratic freedoms collapse under shouting hatred and depthless ignorance. The Technocratic dream of a world united by technology is being torn apart by the realities of human behavior. No mathematical model could predict the deranged upheavals of the current age, and so the Technocracy finds itself throwing away outmoded Time Tables and accepting new protocols that address the current situation.

Perhaps the most disconcerting element of this era – for Technocrats, at least – involves the Masses' gleeful embrace of irrationality. It's not failures of democratic ideals that bother the Union's membership; the Technocracy is anti-democratic to begin with, so a global movement toward authoritarianism fits perfectly within the Technocratic plan. It's the *chaos* of it that bothers many Technocrats – the willful *stupidity* of it all. The junking of reason, the spread of disease, the slashing of science programs even as science facilitates every other aspect of this age. Instead of compliance and control, the Technocracy sees selfishness, whim, and ruin. Although a Fallen Technocracy might celebrate such things (and *does*, if that metaplot's in play), Technocracy idealists look at this world with despair. Is this the world they've worked so hard to achieve? And how can the Union save humanity from itself when humanity seems to crave self-annihilation?

Across the world, even in its strongholds, that's the challenge faced by this era's Technocrats: Not the whims of wizards (although superstitionism's certainly on the rise), the depredations of werebeasts, or the endless thirst of undead monsters, but irrational Masses and a crumbling world order.

Supplemental Data: Influence Among the Masses

The following chapter is, by necessity, concise. For more information about the social dimensions of Technocratic influence, see that entry in **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 230-233).

Colonization and the Technocratic Union

The information in this chapter is presented from the in-character point of view of a loyal member of the Technocratic Union who believes the best about their org. The reality of the situation is that the Technocratic Union (and the Order of Reason before it) often traveled alongside colonizers. The Union not only claimed a portion of the plunder for their own coffers, but frequently subsumed, eradicated, and subsequently claimed credit for the Enlightened Science they encountered during their imperialist expansion.

This problem was exacerbated in the Victorian Age with the Technocratic Union assuming a blatant attitude of Eurocentric superiority and has been further aggravated in recent years through faulty beliefs in American exceptionalism and white supremacy. Though the Union prides itself on self-proclaimed Enlightenment, the leadership has been far too human in its failings when it comes to issues of race, culture, colonialism, and war. Depending on the metaplot elements you choose, the Technocracy may have been actively involved in genocide in recent memory in the process of purging the Crafts (see **Mage 20** p. 196-201)

This book assumes that the Technocracy has in recent memory seen the error of its ways regarding issues of diversity. This is framed as a practical policy shift, and, in fairness, it is – shunning valuable allies due to bigotry is a major waste of resources. As such, the Technocracy has learned the value of trying to work with other cultures, following the lead of those hailing from a region rather than walking in blindly and dictating best practices about situations they do not comprehend.

The Technocracy is vast, wealthy, and possessed of hypetech that does impossible things. Thousands of Enlightened operatives command millions of associates worldwide. Their combined influence is without precedence in human history. And yet, in the face of nearly eight billion irrational souls, it seems impossible to reach a true Consensus and bring humanity out of its own shadow.

Uplifting humanity from this mess is a task for heroes. But can heroism be enough, even with all the power of the Union at those heroes' command?

Current projections don't look good.

But that's never stopped the Technocracy before...

Sphere of Influence: Africa



Africa is the second largest landmass on Earth in terms of area as well as population; fifty-four nations, a handful of territories and independent states and over 1.2 billion people. For over half a millennium, Africa has been plundered by the rest of the world; now, while much of that world slides further into chaos, the nations and people of Africa strive to recover from that legacy and assert a new and powerful role in the future.

The Technocracy is working alongside local entrepreneurs, extraordinary citizens, and Enlightened to enable revitalization initiatives, technological expansion and implementation of 21st century solutions to the challenges left in the wake of 500 years of colonialism.

Central Africa

The majority of Technocratic activity in Central Africa is based in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with satellite operations tied to Congolese initiatives in Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. Roughly 157 million people live within this region.

Current Initiatives

The Technocracy is mainly concerned with gaining footholds in the area and starting up new initiatives.

Iteration X/Progenitors (MedNet, Kinshasa, DRC)

With the challenges of combating virulent disease outbreaks such as Ebola in areas with low internet connectivity, Iteration X and the Progenitors are working to create a medical emergency response network reliant on USSD application technology.

NWO (USSD Social Integration Research, Ngaliema, DRC)

As the use of USSD application technology increases throughout Africa, the NWO seeks to seize control of emerging social media and news outlets utilizing the platform. For many in the DRC, radio and television are the primary sources of information but as USSD apps grow more robust, news services are seeking ways to capitalize on this tech. The NWO wants to guide social media via USSD, seeing the opportunity to shape the platforms from inception.

Coordinating USSD access to the VDAS also falls within the purview of this initiative. This serves the purpose of giving

African Technocrats access to vital tools, but also increases the effectiveness and reach of the Data Sphere on the continent.

The Syndicate (Congolese Incubation, Ngaliema, DRC)

Drawing on existing wealth within the Congo the CI project provides tools to internal investors looking to grow the Congolese economy and facilitate entrepreneurship among the DRC populace. By providing (and manipulating) this framework, the Syndicate hopes to create a network of new business ventures that can be integrated into the overall goal of the CETF (See North Africa, below) seamlessly.

Void Engineers (Absent)

The Void Engineers have no official operations within Central Africa and have not since the Victorian Age. While attaches from the BCD may be assigned to amalgams and Constructs maintained by other Conventions, these assignments are generally perceived as punishment. Some Technocrats of the other Conventions theorize that this may be due to the foothold superstitionist mages hold in the area, particularly those with transdimensional alliances. Sharing such opinions is generally considered unmutual.

East Africa

Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, and Kenya are just a sampling of the nations of Technocratic interest in the East African region. Rich histories and cultures support these nations, with trading populations recorded back to centuries BCE. Fossil records date early hominids in this region to more than two million years ago. This region and the islands off the coast are home to over half a billion people.

Current Initiatives

The Union has a number of initiatives and programs in effect throughout this area, many of which are generated in overlap from, or coordination with, the surrounding regions, including those in Australia/New Zealand.

Iteration X (Industrialization Guidance Initiative, Mtwara Tanzania)

The IGI has a mandate to guide the development of East African industrialization, specifically to increase efficiency and provide controls that were not applied among the Masses during the Industrial Revolution. With the existential threat of climate change this is considered the number one priority for Iteration X on the continent.

NWO/Progenitors (Nutritional Outreach Women's Program (NOW), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

In an effort to assist with hunger and malnutrition challenges facing the East African population, the Progenitors have begun work on the Nutritional Outreach Women's Program, which is, on the surface, focused on promoting breastfeeding.

While the Progenitors are pushing GMO foods and high-nutrient load superfoods, the NWO is utilizing the program to test drive some basic reeducation principles aimed at encouraging normalization of what is internally referred to as Basic Function Parameters. (Referring to such as "common fucking sense," while accurate, is considered unmutual.) With hope, outreach programs regarding other BFPs, such as immunizations and climate change, may be adapted by the lessons gained by observing this program's progress.

The Syndicate (EAC Normalization, Nairobi, Kenya)

The Syndicate operatives assigned to the Nairobi office are faced with one of the most challenging mandates of the convention. The higher ups in the Syndicate expect all of Africa to achieve the goals laid out by the CTEF, as outlined by the Casablanca office, by 2050. The East African Community economy has a long way to go, but by coordinating internal resources within the Kenyan economy while pouring in external, international seed money, the Nairobi office hopes to meet the standard laid out for CTEF participation.

Void Engineers (IO Aquatic Exploration Initiative, Mogadishu, Somalia)

The Void Engineers are deeply invested in mapping the Indian Ocean. The IO Aquatic Exploration Initiative is the premier VE exploratory Construct on the Front Lines at this time. In addition to mapping the ocean and cataloguing the biodiversity that exists in the region, the IO has begun targeting species for relocation to extraplanetary colonies ahead of extinction level climate shifts projected to occur within the next decade.

North Africa

North Africa consists of the nations of Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and the two autonomous city-states Ceuta and Melilla. These nations boast a combined population of approximately one hundred and ninety million people.

Current Initiatives

Each Convention has a role to fill in North Africa. Most initiatives focus on utilizing the native Masses, either integrating them into the Technocracy, or studying their activities.

Iteration X/Progenitors (Integrated Technologies Pilot, Marrakesh, Morocco)

The Challenge Fate Foundation is a joint effort between Iteration X and the Progenitors to improve quality of life, foster Enlightenment, and find creative solutions to existential threats facing humanity. Among the few initiatives operating under the Challenge Fate Foundation is the Integrated Technologies Pilot, led by Dr. Ree Samadi (see Unit 6.) Through this initiative, the Union is testing a hypothesis that operatives recruited from a local population, as Dr. Samadi was, have a greater net positive

when allowed to return to their old life and interact with the population than a new life agent brought in to attempt to improve an area. The people in Dr. Samedi's village followed her instructions to create small solar batteries, efficient micro-greenhouse construction, and other utilitarian technologies that can be inexpensively replicated. Not only has the program shown quality of life increases throughout the region and a marked shift in thought toward the Technocratic paradigm among the Masses, but it has led to identification of extraordinary citizens within the population at 150% the global average.

NWO (Benghazi Research and Data Assessment, Benghazi, Libya)

The NWO has maintained a fascination with the situation in Libya for the past decade. In many ways, the reaction of the Masses and the press to the 2012 attack on the American diplomatic compound was a watershed moment in data manipulation by organizations among the Masses. Though the NWO officially lists the loss of control of the narrative as an "unfortunate result of socio-political variable," the truth is that a few experienced and dedicated spin doctors of the Masses wrestled control of the narrative from the Feed. In the aftermath, the NWO sunk a disproportionate amount of resources into the regional Construct to try to sort out what went wrong and why, all the while failing to intervene in the growing crisis in Libya.

The Syndicate (Continental Exchange Traded Fund, Casablanca, Morocco)

This initiative involves exploration into new methods of tracking, exchanging, and growing finances in a cash-free society. Many Syndicate Managers see the 21st Century economies of Africa as a perfect place to institute cashless transactions and experiment with methods of wealth growth tied to concepts of economy rather than the movement of hard assets. Reacting to a number of innovations brought to fruition by the ADB, the ADF, and the NTF as well as private companies outside the traditional financial sector, the Syndicate intends to guide African economies to a unified, stable, cashless economic homogeny with steady growth by 2050.

Void Engineers (Sekhem Guardpost-1, Giza, Egypt)

Sekhem Guardpost-1 is a Void Engineer Border Corps Division outpost specifically trained to deal with Reality Deviants such as mummies, REMURD drawing upon ancient Egyptian mysticism and belief, and HEs worshipping old Egyptian deities. Sekhem Guardpost-1 also acts as a supply gate for a number of Deep Universe Constructs through an advanced Dimensional Gateway located in a sub-basement of the headquarters.

West Africa

The former heart of the Mali Empire, West Africa has seen substantial changes since the days of Mansa Musa. Conquests, wars, famines, and the plunder of human, animals, and natural resources have badly depleted the region once known as "Africa's

Rome." Even so, West Africa is still an economic powerhouse, with 360 million residents, 17 nations, numerous ports, and abundant natural resources.

Current Initiatives

Technocratic initiatives in West Africa lean towards total terranorming on the Syndicate and NWO side of things, while Iteration X and the Progenitors work on helping the Masses improve their situations through terranorming.

Iteration X (West African Lighting and Electricity, Lagos, Nigeria)

Iteration X is working to provide affordable, accessible solar power to tens of millions of homes across Africa. Moving to solar power and away from power grids and diesel fuel helps Iteration X meet the IGI's pollution reduction goals while promoting safe, clean energy. The Solar batteries provided by Iteration X can also be accessed via the Data Sphere, drastically increasing the effectiveness of the Data Sphere throughout the region.

NWO (West Africa Soil Index, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso)

Revitalization of agricultural processes is a major initiative in West Africa. By cataloguing samples of the soil, the seeds used within it, nutrient loads, and rainfall, the NWO is able to generate a reliable virtual model of the entire region. The agricultural data is fed to the Progenitors to aid in the Seed Engineering Project while the topographical data is fed into the VDAS and cross-referenced with data gathered through Iteration X's WALE program. This allows NWO operatives to use the Data sphere as readily in the mapped rural areas as in the largest cities.

Progenitors (Seed Engineering Project, Niamey, Niger)

Working from data compiled by the NWO, the Progenitors of the SEP are engineering a number of crops designed specifically to thrive in the soil of West Africa. These crops are also indexed against the needs of the NOW program in Addis Ababa and adjusted accordingly to aid in the function of that sister effort.

The Syndicate (Common Currency Initiative, Accra, Ghana)

The Syndicate operatives assigned to the Accra office hope to achieve and implement a unified West African currency. Considering the mandate was initially assigned in the 1990s, the CCI office is drastically behind schedule. Now, the CCI's mandate includes an end goal of integration to the overall cashless initiative of the Convention's view of the continent's economy.

Void Engineers (NASDRA Overwatch and Recruitment Program, Abuja, Nigeria)

The Void Engineers have become enamored with the National Space Research and Development Agency in Nigeria. The determination, will, and creativity of this burgeoning space



program has captured the attentions of the Convention who see it as a wonderful opportunity to provide a training ground, test new theories and expand the influence of Dimensional Science. The current goal is to either implant or recruit at least 60% of the agency's personnel prior to their first planned spacewalk in 2030.

Southern Africa

At the southern end of the African continent lie the neighboring nations of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Swaziland, the enclaved nation of Lesotho and, of course, South Africa. This region is home to a population of nearly 70 million people.

Current Initiatives

Efforts in Southern Africa are as diverse as the cultures and nations found there. Technocrats spend a lot of time responding to situations and forming initiatives to meet the current needs of the area.

Iteration X/NWO (Construct HTR 1138, Johannesburg, South Africa)

This joint effort between Iteration X and the NWO is the largest tactical Construct in Africa. All personnel at HTR 1138 are trained in urban combat, crowd suppression, and

counterterrorism. Founded in the late 1990s, this Construct has been focused on pursuit and elimination of RD threats to the exclusion of all else. While other Technocratic operations in the region may see HTR 1138 as archaic or even brutal in their methods, none can argue that this is the Construct to call for backup when in need for RD suppression.

Progenitors (Genetics, Biophysics, and Neurology Associates, Cape Town, South Africa)

South Africa has long been a world leader in medical technology and innovation. From CAT scans and heart transplants to retinal cryoprobes and induced pluripotent stem cells, South African medical innovation has been at the cutting edge for nearly a century. Medical innovation is so pronounced in the region that there is an observable variance in acceptable Progenitor Procedures in Johannesburg and Cape Town compared to the rest of the continent. Naturally, the Progenitors take advantage of this, recruiting students from throughout the region to study in the area. Those attaining Enlightenment join the ranks of the Union.

The Syndicate (Southern African Synchronicity Project, Johannesburg, South Africa)

While the Southern African nations represent the most stable economies on the continent, the Syndicate is working

to reduce reliance on international trade and integrate the Southern Nations into a more cohesive whole with the rest of the Syndicate initiatives guided by the CETF. There is some resistance to this initiative in the field in Johannesburg, as experts in the region fear that rushing this transition could jeopardize the stability of the South without appreciable improvements in the other regions.

Void Engineers (Border Defense Outpost Sigma Alpha)

Situated near the MeerKAT telescope array, beneath the quiet town of Carnavron is a subterranean barracks housing a platoon of BDC Marines. This force, combined with the Black Suit contingent at Johannesburg, represents the major Technocratic threat response force on the continent.

Sphere of Influence: The Americas



The Americas present an interesting conundrum for the Union. Over the past three centuries the people of these continents have achieved successes beyond the Union's most optimistic projections and hosted utter and complete failures of Union experiments.

North America

Over 20 countries and as many dependent territories make up the North American continent. Nearly 600 million people live here, with over half of that population within the United States of America. Heading into the third decade of the 21st century, North America is a land in political turmoil. In the eyes of many Technocrats, North America is a failed experiment in the Union's goals, the lessons of which can be applied more effectively in other regions.

Current Initiatives

Technocratic initiatives in North America revolve around maintenance and research. Conventions introduce small changes or study the changes happening throughout the continent.

Iteration X (Maquiladora Management Initiative, Mexico City, Mexico)

One of the largest Iteration X initiatives in the world, the Maquiladora Management Initiative is tasked with improving productivity, reducing environmental strain, and directing acceptable advances in the manufacturing industry throughout Mexico and Central America. In terms of production efficiency, the project is largely considered a success. By every other metric, the MMI is considered one of the Union's most spectacular failures. Corporate and government corruption are rampant within the areas overseen by the MMI's mandate. Conditions for workers are positively dystopian. Wages are insufficient, gender inequality is a major issue. Sexual harassment and discrimination are rampant throughout the industry. Some progress has been made regarding environmental concerns, but not nearly enough to be within acceptable tolerances. Aspiring Iterators looking to make a name for themselves flock to the MMI in the hopes of being on the team that turns it all around.

NWO (American Masses Assessment Project, El Paso, Texas, USA)

The NWO in North America is strained to breaking point. The last half decade has seen every aim, goal, and ideal of the NWO's work turned on its ear by reckless and incompetent members of the Masses. The NWO sees the current sociopolitical situation in the USA as a twisted reflection of the Convention's goals, and none of the analysts of the Ivory Tower can make sense of what has happened. Many Black Suits see this as more evidence of the gap between theory and application in the Union's operations. The official mandate of the AMAP is to collect and collate data that allows analysts to identify what has gone amiss and formulate a new plan. Unofficially, many of the Black Suits in the region see the necessity for immediate action. Some have gone as far as to use media contacts to stir anti-government sentiment and to funnel black market resources to antifa and anti-ICE protesters. These agents are acutely aware of the role the Union played in WWII Germany and have no intention of allowing history to repeat itself on their watch.

Progenitors (Dr. Sara Reid Memorial Research Center, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA)

The Reid Memorial Research Center is an R&D construct that focuses on filtering cutting edge Progenitor designs and innovations to the Masses through a number of connections to the public clinics and research centers throughout Minnesota. Proximity to the Mayo Clinic and University of Minnesota give the Progenitors ample resources for recruiting locally. Much like the GPNA in South Africa, the Reid Center benefits from a Reality Zone that is exceptionally permissive to Progenitor procedures.

The Syndicate (Western Currency Adjustment Initiative, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)

Obviously, the Syndicate has a number of hotspots of activity scattered across North America, but the current highlight of the Syndicate profile is the WCAI in Vancouver. With the proliferation of online commerce, the Syndicate's long-term goal of a cashless society is well on its way to fruition, though there are a number of obstacles still in the way. The WCAI is

leading the initiative in North America. Placing itself in proximity to leaders in online commerce, this Syndicate operation is concerned with insinuating itself into leading corporations and platforms in the virtual space so that it might manipulate those assets from within.

Void Engineers (Atlantis Station, Key West, Florida, USA)

Atlantis Station is the centralized hub of Void Engineer activity on the Western Hemisphere. The location on Key West allows for easily coordinated communication and deployment of BDC Marines as well as Voidship launches and Aquatic exploration focused on the Atlantic Ocean. Proximity to the Kennedy Space Center allows Void Engineers to keep an eye on emerging technologies and look out for potential recruits.

South America

If North America is an example of Technocratic failures, South America stands as an example of the worst consequences of those failures. Home to the Amazon rainforest, South America is arguably the single most important location in the battle to combat climate change. If the Amazon falls to industrialization, pollution, and destruction, human life has a near zero chance of successful adaptation or survival. As such the Technocratic Union is thrust into a very different role in South America headed into the next decade. Here, the Technocracy must stand to repress and undo the damage done by industrialization and colonization at any cost.

Current Initiatives

Many Technocratic initiatives in South America revolve around the Amazon and its current state of deforestation and destruction.

Iteration X/Progenitors (Amazon Basin Damage Control, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil)

As one of the most hardline Constructs on the Front Lines, the Amazon Basin Damage Control's mandate is simple: use the most aggressive, violent, and complete deterrents available to suppress further damage to the rainforest. To this end, Iteration X and the Progenitors are now working on rolling out new and improved natural and semi-natural defenses for deployment in the forest. These include, but are not limited to, clonal weaponry, custom biological agents including bacteria and viruses engineered to rapidly destroy their direct target without spreading into the larger ecosystem, cybernetically enhanced operatives customized for maximum survivability and stealth in the rainforest climate, and a rather impressive detachment of cyber-tooth tigers. While operating within the confines of the Amazon Preservation Zone, agents of the ABDC are granted authority to utilize Procedures at their discretion. This has led other Technocrats in the region to nickname the APZ the "dox box," though the term is officially considered unmutual.

The Syndicate (Special Projects Division Home Office, Brasília, Federal District, Brazil)

If you are using the Fallen Technocracy metaplot involving Special Projects Division (see Unit 8 p. 225), the corrupt Convention has its hands (and various other appendages) deep in the deforestation of the Amazon. A chronicle drawing on this metaplot element could easily include elements from **Were-wolf 20** as a result of SPD's relationship with Pentex.

NWO (Sudamerican Psyop Ohm, Brasília, Federal District, Brazil)

The NWO's unexpected mandate in South America seeks to foment revolution and resistance against destruction of the rainforest, deforestation, and fires. Utilizing the various crowd control Adjustments, propaganda, and Mind Procedures developed throughout the past century and a half, the NWO now works to guide the energy of an uprising to desirable ends for the Technocratic Union – an extremely delicate task with a virtually nonexistent margin for error. Proceeding with anything less than extreme caution may wind up raising a spirit of revolution in the South American population that the NWO cannot put down. The energies of these protests, organizations, and activities must be focused entirely on environmental issues in order to fulfil the goal of rainforest preservation without undermining the past two centuries of the Technocracy's work in the region. It's a dangerous game, but NWO analysts hope that achieving success here means the same techniques can be applied to right the ship in North America.

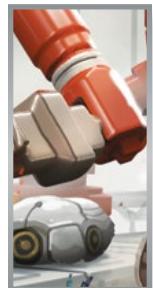
Covering up the most egregious displays of power caused by ABDC activity causes some resentment amongst the Psyop Ohm operatives given the task as the Black Suits on the ground find it ever harder to clean up after the Iterators and Progenitors.

Progenitors/Void Engineers (Amazon Biosphere Cataloguing and Preservation Effort, Mobile, Amazon Basin)

The Amazon Biosphere Cataloguing and Preservation Effort is a joint venture between the Progenitors and the Void Engineers to catalogue all life within the Amazon Basin to create a wholly accurate map of the area with detailed elevation, biosphere, projected threat and research utility information. This small unit is incredibly well equipped for its size and capable of repelling almost any threat they encounter, which is fortunate given the frequency they run across Reality Deviants deep in the rainforest.

The Syndicate (South American Stabilization Management, Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Agents of the Syndicate are tasked with achieving and maintaining stability of South American economies while



For six months out of the year, around four thousand of the world's top scientists live here studying everything from climate change to the breeding patterns of penguins. Accompanied by family members and non-research support staff such as cooks and medics, these research outposts represent the majority of the Antarctic population.

Isolation from the Masses, unique climate, and proximity to the hole in the Ozone Layer makes Antarctica a unique and vital location for Technocratic research and development.

Iteration X (PMM Generation Project X-14, Cosgrove Ice Shelf, Antarctica)

Taking advantage of Antarctica's isolation, Iteration X Time-Motion Managers at this research facility work toward the development of a perpetual motion machine. Though progress on the principal research effort is slow, Iterators are making great leaps in generator power, climate control, and winterization of existing tech.

the Technocracy turns its efforts to saving the rainforest. This is an incredibly challenging task given the amount of money flooding into the continent that funds anti-Amazonian activity.

Sphere of Influence: Antarctica

NWO (Utopia South, Abbot Ice Shelf, Antarctica)

Utopia South is a climate-controlled, isolated subterranean colony utilized for hypersociological experimentation. Residents of Utopia South are raised fluent in newspeak, adhere to a 36 hour day, and engage in rigidly scheduled activity. Experimental Procedures are tried out on splinters of the population to examine the effects of those Procedures against the general control population. That data is then fed to VDAS for processing and dissemination among field agents seeking to refine their own Mind Procedures and Adjustments in the field.

Progenitors/Void Engineers (Ultima Thule, Queen Maud Land, Antarctica)

This joint research outpost focuses on creating and adapting life for survival in extreme environments. Progenitors expose cloned agents and genetically modified operatives to the extremes of Antarctica, collecting data and adjusting the test subjects Life patterns accordingly. The Void Engineers here assist this research further by applying the results found in Antarctic tests to transdimensional locations, allowing both Conventions to collate the data and create workable models for biomodifications that will aid Void Engineers in space exploration.

Sphere of Influence: Asia



Asia is the largest continent on Earth in terms of landmass and population with over 4.5 billion people living in over 50 countries. To many Technocrats, Asia represents the greatest hope for the future, with several nations already practicing socioeconomic and cultural norms in line with Technocratic goals. The following sections illustrate a mere fraction of the Technocratic Union's activity in Asia.

East Asia

The home of so-called "Five Elemental Dragons," East Asia is a major seat of Technocratic influence, with our various factions maintaining strong influence over the markets, governments, and people. Over 1.6 billion people live in this region within the nations of China, Macau, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan. Despite superstitious

maintaining heavy presence throughout the region, those throwbacks wield very little power here anymore except in rural areas. Korean Christian sects continue to gain political clout, reducing the power base of the Traditional superstitious, albeit at the increased risk of presence. Operatives in Korea don't get to relax.

Current Initiatives

Initiatives in East Asia range from research and development to maintaining important terranorming activities.

Iteration X (Arcology X Project, Sejong, South Korea)

Sejong smart city stands as a monument to cutting edge Internet of Things (IoT) technology implemented on a citywide basis to facilitate maximum efficiency in civic operations. Through a vast network of connected devices governing

Disputed Data: An Asian Technocrat Addresses the Myth of “Five Elemental Dragons”

I fucking hate that I have to address this, but thanks to some Nephantic piece of shit poisoning some of our historical documents, I have to say *something*.

First off, the Technocracy of the East isn't a separate arm or faction. The Technocracy is global. East, West, whatever. We're all working in the same lanes. The Five Elemental Dragons are Methodologies that are largely active within Asia, but they're certainly not hiding. That's just a stupid, racist notion that needs to die. First of all, how the fuck would Asian Technocrats hide among their Western counterparts? There are three of us for every one of you. Check my math. I fucking dare you.

Secondly, ignore the “proper” names. No one calls the Water Dragons “Taiping Tianguo.” You know why? Because that's the name of a Christian rebellion in 19th Century China. Surprise! Nephantic garbage is all over the place in the historical records. Even if we went with a more reasonable name, like “Ren Chen,” guess what? No one anywhere besides Mandarin-speaking regions would call them that! Asia is not one thing. Hell, “Chinese” isn't even one thing. Some countries refer to the so-called “Dragons” by their element, others by their color, others call them serpents or naga. Asia's big, and these ideas don't fit in a goddamned Western-sized box.

So, anyways...

- **Black Water Dragons:** They're part of the Syndicate, which means you can find them everywhere, even outside of Asia. Need to do business in a Chinatown, Little Saigon, or whatever? They've got their fingers in those pies. They piss the NWO off like you wouldn't believe. Turns out that criminal organizations with deep ties to the local communities fucks up policing. Who knew?
- **Green Wood Dragons:** Part of the Progenitors. They go way back. Their results with acupuncture and Taoist herbs confuse the shit out of their Western research partners. They take their craft personally, not just professionally. It's not uncommon to have a doctor of the Green Dragons dedicate their lives to the first problem that they can't figure out. You know the stereotype of Asian kids who get beaten until they earn straight As and become doctors? They're real.
- **Red Fire Dragons:** The busiest bees in the Void Engineers, the Fire Dragons have the majority of the world's manufacturing plants in their backyard. If you thought the Research and Execution division was wild, the Fire Dragons will blow your mind.
- **Spirit Dragons:** Aren't a thing.
- **White Metal Dragons:** Iteration X's forerunners in a lot of ways. Agriculture? Pottery? Gunpowder? They did it first, and if you listen to them tell it, they did it best. Their Western counterparts made them drink a hubris smoothie during the Industrial Revolution, but the Great Leap Forward has evened things out. The Metal Dragons tend to be pretty buddy-buddy with the Fire Dragons, as you might expect from two heavy industry factions.
- **Yellow Earth Dragons:** The element of Earth is all about moderation and transition, and the legendary Yellow Dragon is the Dragon King, which is why the Earth Dragons are a big part of the NWO. They have a long history of encouraging and enforcing collectivism throughout Asia. Unlike their Western counterparts who linger in the corner of the public's eye, the Earth Dragons make their presence felt through absence.

everything from automated waste disposal to traffic flows, to management of the solar powered skyscrapers, digital signage, and mass transit, Sejong runs with a clockwork efficiency that is the realization of many of Iteration X's goals. That is all before getting into the Enlightened Science at work in the Arcology X project. Iteration X plans to expand and increase the IoT network within the city to create an environment that is not only automated but is autonomous and one hundred percent self-sufficient. The Macrotechnicians working on the Arcology X Project hope to roll out a full, sealed system arcology structure by 2040. The current proposal includes full environmental control that can withstand temperature variances of +/- 200 degrees Celsius with no effect on internal temperatures or air

quality. If the Archology X Project works as intended, Sejong may provide a key opportunity to aid humanity in adapting to the threat of climate change.

NWO (Social Credit Observation and Implementation, Nanjing, Jiangsu, China)

The PRC government is a remarkably innovative force in the fields of propaganda, socio-political control and population management. While there are a number of Social Credit Systems operating in pilot status across China, the process has yet to be successfully centralized and is fairly limited in scope...

...At least on the mundane level.

The NWO is working round the clock in a number of Chinese cities to craft a truly comprehensive Social Credit System that tracks every purchase, crime, meal, and movement of every citizen under the database's purview. This detailed collation of Data profiles on the Masses could have staggering implications for surveillance and social engineering in the years to come. While the Masses are running into a number of stumbling blocks in implementing this innovation, the NWO is seeing resounding success. If the pilot programs, operating under the cover of official government works, are successful, the NWO hopes to integrate Social Credit scores throughout the Front Lines. This is intended to provide all pertinent personal data for every individual, so much as using a credit card or cell phone, instant access via VDAS. The NWO targets 2025 as the launch date in Asia, with ongoing expansion beyond progressing on a yearly basis.

Progenitors (Advanced Biotech Rollout Initiative, Shanghai, China)

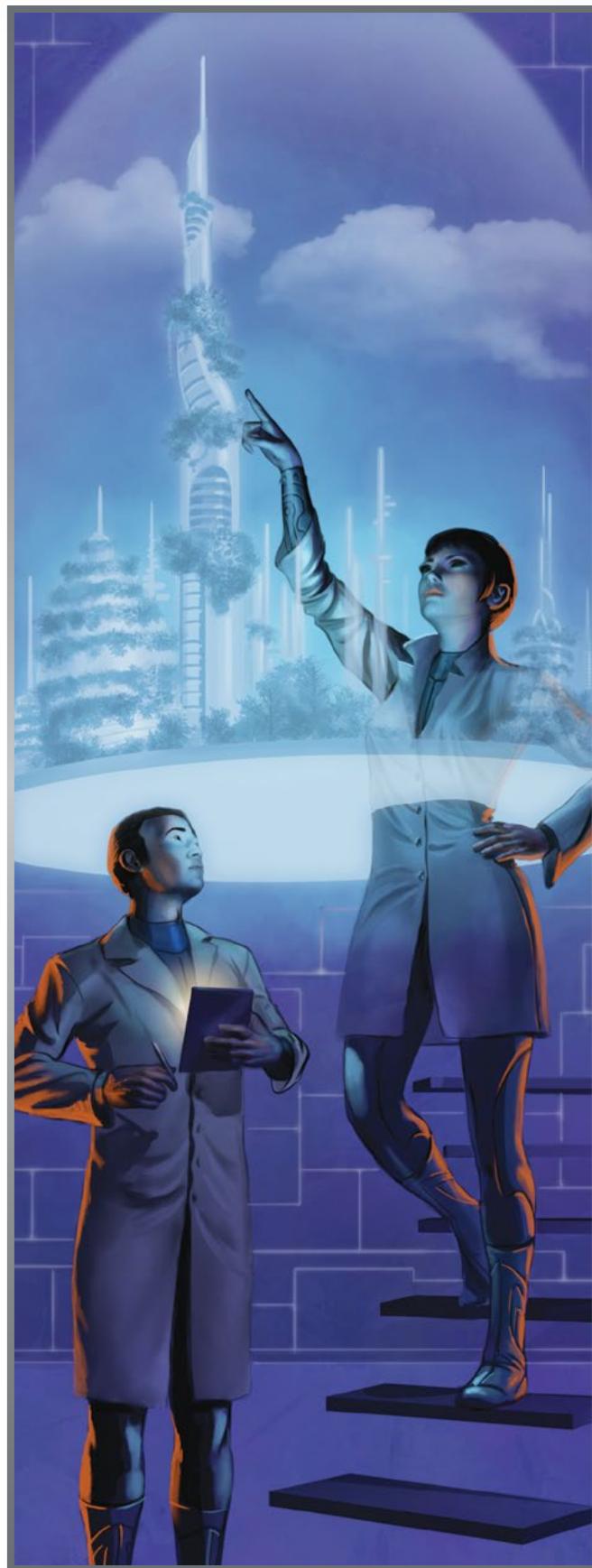
Shanghai is home to one of the most advanced Progenitor research initiatives in the field of biotech. Focused on antiretroviral development, smart chemotherapy, and nanotech hormone regulation, Progenitors at ABRI are working to rapidly push the consensus to accept new antimicrobial therapies and treatments for diseases thought to be effectively incurable. This initiative is driven by two factors. Firstly, the Progenitors seek to undo damage done via the antivaxxer movement with easily deployable cures to diseases that would be more easily prevented. The second focus is tackling the big problem diseases – AIDS, Ebola, and cancer – by attacking them on a cellular level. Much of the research done here is designed to close the gap between what the Progenitors are capable of and what is accepted by the Masses.

The Syndicate (Eastern Resilience Compensation Initiative, Honk Kong)

The Syndicate in Hong Kong is charged with not only regulating the East Asian economic presence, but with building in shadow controls in preparation for potential economic crises brought about by the African CCI, economic crashes brought about by climate change, and potential political upheavals in North and South America. Asian prosperity is the basis for global stability in the current economic climate, and the Syndicate aims to keep it that way by any means necessary. Ruthless efficiency and masterful manipulation of Primal Utility keep the Hong Kong office in control of the world's largest markets.

North Asia

Largely taken up by Russia and Mongolia, the North Asian sector also features the underestimated Kazakhstan. International NWO misinformation campaigns continue to play into this, allowing continued expansion of the North



Asian Defense Institute (CAKİ/SAQI) with virtually no fear of superstitionalist interference.

Current Initiatives

North Asia is such an important region to the Technocracy that many of its operations are undertaken by cross-Convention Imperatives, though some Conventions have independent operations.

Iteration X/NWO (Russian Underground Extraction and Elimination, Russia)

When the Russian Underground first started up, the NWO monitored them only to prevent incursions into the Digital Web, but with the rapid growth of cybercrimes attributed to the network of hackers and programmers, the Masses have started to fear the use of technology, growing timid in places they used to be more fluent. It isn't a total loss, as plenty of other nations across the world support their very own cybercriminals, which means some are being fully inspired by these actions, but the more cybercriminals there are, the more the rest of the Masses turn away. Now a joint task force, the RUEE, headed up by the NWO, but utilizing Iteration X Statisticians are searching out Russian Underground hubs and quietly eliminating them, or recruiting the best for better purposes. Sometimes it's hard to tell.

Iteration X/NWO/Progenitor (Unified Terranorming Initiative, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)

The Mongolian Revolution of 1990 sparked a massive resurgence in religious practices, especially Buddhism and shamanism. As a result, Traditions have never been more popular there. As one of the world's largest countries by landmass, Mongolian superstitionalists can conduct their reality deviance around crowds that entirely favor them, bolstering their legitimacy and strength. The Technocracy's presence in Mongolia has always been minimal, but now the need for terranorming is more dire than ever. The Virtual Adepts control the technology in the area, and as Iteration X attempts to wrest control back from them, the NWO has set up terranorming procedures while the Progenitors attempt to take over the medical sectors. Continued fighting with the Reality Deviants makes this area an uphill battle with personnel is still low.

NWO/The Syndicate (Russian Intelligence Initiative, Moscow, Russia)

H-soc predictions for Russia continue to march towards the fabled 1.0 certainty, although that has as much to do with our terranorming practices as it does Russia's government's desire to control their own society. It turns out that putting spymasters in charge of countries produces effective, if disturbing, results. The NWO is monitoring the situation, certain they know enough about the internal thought processes of the nation's leader that they can predict his behavior and the effects thereof with accuracy. While Iteration X Statisticians would laugh at such a claim, the whole of the Technocracy has yet to realize how wrong they are.

The NWO's overconfidence coupled with the Syndicate's rampant meddling with financial affairs, coupled with the slow movement on the RUEE has led to the Technocracy largely missing Reality Deviant incursions. Russia proves to be fertile ground for organizations that tap into the disaffected, such as the Hollow Ones. Even more disturbing, a homegrown splinter faction of the Templar Knights terrorist group has adapted Crusader ideology to Russian Orthodox practices, creating a powerful recruiting platform. The cellular nature of the Templars turns stamping out this threat into a terrible game of whack-a-mole.

Void Engineers (North Asian Defense Institute (CAKİ/SAQI), Kazakhstan)

The SAQI rests atop a nexus that served as the incursion point of the extradimensional forces in the Kazakh Crisis of 1907. Despite the nexus being a potential source of great danger, the Void Engineers have maintained almost-excessively firm control over the site. Although the Border Corps Division has the largest presence at the SAQI, Research and Execution has been regularly tapping into the anomaly, super-charging technological development for the past century. The RAE's efforts have led to both Iteration X and NWO facilities built in the area. While these facilities are not part of SAQI, they comprise the rest of the core of the North Asian Defense Institute for the Technocracy.

South Asia

South Asia comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. While India is by far the largest nation dominating this region, other nations in the region are major points of concern for the Technocracy and their activities.

Current Initiatives

The Technocracy's largest concerns in South Asia revolve around harnessing the strong economic sectors to promote positive terranorming practices and crushing superstitionists. While also diverting harmful technological activities into ones that are more productive for the Masses.

Iteration X (Calculations and Digital Web Division, Karachi, Pakistan)

While Pakistan may be a military state, dominated by its status as a nuclear-weapons state, troubled with overpopulation, terrorism, poverty, and corruption, terranorming efforts there seem to be advancing rapidly. While the other Conventions work diligently to increase the quality of life in the nation, Iteration X has found an unexpected issue that has served as a strange windfall. Within Karachi, a small start-up tech center opened a portal to the Digital Web. The Void Engineers moved in, expecting the BPD to need to deal with incursions, but the portal was stable and unblemished from invaders. Taking the opportunity to use the portal for their own purposes, Iteration

X recruited the entire tech firm, and now use it as a base of operations for advanced computing, pulling in freelance programmers from the area as grunts. While the BPD keeps a small unit there for safety's sake, the Digital Web remains stable in the area.

NWO/The Syndicate (Economic Stimulus Terranorming Project, Mumbai, India)

The Syndicate has worked hard over the past few decades to supplant the constraints of foreign governance and its effects on the average *Mumbaikar* until it now stands as a fiscally potent gem among the nation's crown. Enormous sums fed into its national economy by international corporations have led to an impressive number of millionaires and billionaires among its citizens. Of course, the Syndicate takes its cut, but most of that wealth has been re-invested into the city's infrastructure. Transportation, internet, communications, and so forth have been laid out with great deliberation, creating the foundation for growth and expansion yet to come.

Choosing media as the best form of terranorming, the NWO took indirect control of UTV Motion Pictures, utilizing the wildly popular Bollywood programming to introduce depictions of science, technology, and science fiction to the Masses with ease. Despite Syndicate money making such efforts smoother, the continued desire for fantastical epics proves a stumbling block.

Progenitors (Genetic Preservation Initiative, Sri Lanka)

Sri Lanka has the highest biodiversity density in Asia. While the nation is interesting for its economic growth following the Sri Lanka Civil War, and its rapid adaptation to terranorming efforts by both the Syndicate and NWO, the Progenitors are interested in the area for its unique biodiversity and genetic profile. The GPI is stationed in the Sinharaja biosphere, openly disguised as a biological research station for cataloguing and studying the diverse life growing there. Manned by both FACADE and Genegineers, the group's joint project is to map the genetic sequences of the life forms in the area as well as utilize them for their unique properties in various cloning and genetic splicing projects.

Void Engineers (Extradimensional Space Station, Sriharikota, India)

When India started its mission to space, the Void Engineers took notice. They would like to take the credit for building or at least guiding the Masses in the construction of their launch sites, but honestly, they were too busy trying to reinvigorate space travel in the US and other places that had lost interest and it slipped their attention. That was until Chandrayaan-1 made its way to the moon. Within quick order, a BDE group established an outpost in the area, piggy backing off the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. Now one of



the biggest extradimensional launch points in the world, the location acts as a storage area for technologies and biologicals returned from such missions.

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia contains eleven countries with a wide cultural and ethnic diversity. There are many good reasons behind the constant rise and fall of regimes in this part of the world. A pattern of strong and undeniable leadership for generations, followed by invasion after invasion. The power drives deep into the foundation of the planet with myths abound of sleeping dragons throughout the area. The roots of philosophical giants rest in plain sight in some of the most untouched centers of energy on the planet. The Technocracy treads lightly here, as Reality Deviant artifacts abound, superstitionist activity is high, and terranorming efforts only work in the populated city centers, leaving the rural areas unsafe.

Current Initiatives

Terranorming is an ongoing project in Southeast Asia, though the efforts have yielded some wildly successful results in many nations. The various landscapes and biodiversity attract the Progenitors and the rest of the Technocracy has found footholds for lucrative activity throughout.

Iteration X/The Syndicate (Economics and Manufacturing Initiative, Hanoi, Vietnam)

Vietnam is a prime example of the Technocracy's successes in urban centers while leaving the Masses in rural areas lacking. Terranorming practices have increased acceptance of science, industry, and fast economic growth in many sectors, alleviating poverty in major city centers. All the while, malnutrition and poverty run rampant in the rural areas. The concerted efforts of the Syndicate and Iteration X have bolstered technological and economic growth, and Iteration X is using this boon to base an extensive R&D base there.

Iteration X (Reality Deviant Artifact Containment Division, Yangon, Myanmar)

Myanmar has traditionally been a successful link between the east and west for thousands of years. A dumping ground for superstitionist artifacts, knowledge, power, organizations, and literally anything else one could think of, these artifacts are not only derived of deviancy but often have reality deviance effects all their own. Not to mention that these items attract superstitionists. Iteration X has been attempting to locate and lock down such items in the nation for some time, though has made little headway. Whatever secrets the nation holds, their efforts to infiltrate and retrieve these artifacts has been thwarted by what lies within.

NWO (Data Collection and Dissemination Project, Singapore)

For years, the NWO monitored the government of Singapore looking for a single crack or break in its meritocratic rule and

fall to full totalitarian dictatorship. They've long looked at the Singapore Model as a proof of concept for limited freedoms, government held security, and strict rules to create unprecedented economic growth and stability. Unfortunately, when applied elsewhere, the model doesn't seem to hold up under duress. While the NWO would love to claim ownership over the model and its success, the Masses have pulled it off on their own, and the NWO simply collects and disseminates the data.

Progenitors/Void Engineers (Genetic Preparation and Testing Zone, Indonesia)

The idea of setting up a single base of operations on a nation comprised of thousands of islands covering hundreds of thousands of square miles is ludicrous. While each Convention has a terranorming plan they are attempting to enact, the real draw of Indonesia is its location within the Ring of Fire. Void Engineer PDC scientists have likened some of the environments to alien landscapes, and the idea of surviving a deep dive into a volcano sparked some interest in the EFD. Working closely with FACADE and Genegineers within the Progenitors, they created an initiative to create constructs capable of doing just that. The PDC hopes it will have some application for their Cadets and Scientists heading out to extradimensional spaces, and FACADE scientists are just happy to have such extreme environments for testing.

West Asia (aka the Middle East)

The nations of the Middle East mark one of the oldest civilizations in the world, dating back some four millennia. Here, scholars founded many of the mathematical principles that have survived the ages and on which the Technocracy builds so much of its logical functions. While the Technocracy did not start here, they are drawn to the area for all its rich history and cultural influence.

Current Initiatives

While the Technocracy may wish to make inroads into the Middle East, they find some areas more resistant to their efforts than others. Pushback seems to come in the form of Reality Deviants, and when the Technocracy can actively use terranorming procedures, the response seems to be overwhelmingly positive.

Iteration X/The Syndicate (Emergency Terranorming Operations, Dubai, UAE)

The Syndicate will tell you that Dubai is a shining star of achievement for all their hard work over the years. The history certainly tracks as exporting crude oil throughout much of the 20th century led to unprecedented economic growth. Some say there's more money in this city alone than in all the rest of the world; and the apparent terranorming activities have led to a city that lives as a high-tech reality zone. All in a day's

work for the Technocracy. What they won't tell you is that the glittering skyscrapers, man-made floating neighborhoods, and jetpack propelled citizenry are as much a fault of the Taftáni's artistic endeavors as the Technocracy's terranorming efforts.

Iteration X has been attempting to predict and locate these Reality Deviants and crush their magical interventions in the city, but their loose organization and wandering ways makes them hard to track. The Syndicate's best efforts have led not to a Technocratic paradise but a battleground between high-tech viewed as science versus magick and art that only appears high-tech to the Masses.

NWO (Infiltration and Data Collection, Tehran, Iran)

Iran prioritizes independence and freedom, and though a powerful sectarian leadership rules in many ways alongside the presidential republic, politics and faith are strong and enduring forces in their nation. The Ahl-i-Batin have a khanate in Tehran. Their secrecy makes it impossible for Technocratic members trying to make inroads into the nation to know who or what is pushing back against them. The NWO has been trying for years to infiltrate and acquire a toehold in this region, but so far, the Ahl-i-Batin's influence has stumped them.

Progenitors (Humanitarian Aid and Research Mission, Syria)

Syria has been at the center of a vicious civil war for nearly a decade. While the Technocracy claims no part of the war

itself, their technologies have fallen into the hands of parties on all sides. Ostensibly, the Technocracy would like to end the war, as the Masses killing one another is antithetical to their goals; but logically, interference could have devastating consequences based on Statistician reports. The Progenitors have set up a field aid program, which has been providing medical aid and supplies to those caring for the injured in the fighting. The mission's real purpose is to research effective ways to treat people exposed to chemical weapon attacks and possibly develop a safeguard or immunity that would allow them to pretreat the Masses.

Void Engineers (West Asian Defense Center, Baghdad, Iraq)

Baghdad has had a long and storied history as both a major cultural center in the Middle East, the largest city in Iraq, and rounds of destruction and rehabilitation. While the political atmosphere might be interesting to the NWO or Iteration X Statisticians, the Void Engineers care about the city for an entirely different reason. In the past year, reconstruction efforts unearthed a previously unknown portal in the city. A crater thought to have been buried as long ago as the thirteenth century, released extradimensional entities into the world when uncovered, causing a major incident for both the BCD and NSC personnel. Now, a hastily constructed defense center sits near the site, monitoring it for incursions while BCD scientists attempt to spin reasons why the Masses cannot enter the area.

Sphere of Influence: Europe



Europe comprises over fifty sovereign states, all crammed into about 2% of the world's surface. Europe is historically one of the most important locations for the Technocracy. Not only the birthplace of Western civilization, but also the Order of Reason; the Technocracy has its origins here and has long been its stronghold in the Western world. The Technocracy has a foothold in each nation, spending most of its formative years molding and shaping their development.

In recent years, the Technocracy has grown complacent about their efforts in Europe, devoting most of their attention to more interesting projects in other parts of the world. Unfortunately, this lack of attention has led to a downturn in their influence and hold on the nations in the area, leading to some crisis areas.

Western Europe

Centuries ago, each nation kept much of its culture and language selfishly guarded, with what little bleedover did occur happening between the merchant and ruling classes. However, signing treaty after treaty, and with the rising technologies of

communication and transportation, nations kept their own flavors mostly identifiable by cuisine and architecture.

In present-day Europe, centuries of interactions have laid the groundwork for treaties, networks and interdependencies too numerable to track. Though the nations of the European continent and islands are astonishingly diverse, they're but beads of dew on a great garden spider's web. A movement here spreads vibrations there, and before you know it, you're caught and someone's meal.

Current Initiatives

Many of the Technocracy's initiatives in Western Europe are ones of maintenance, as they have long held the area in a firm grip. However, lack of attention has caused some unfortunate backslides, and some emergency measures are being put into place to understand and respond to these crises.

NWO/Syndicate (Emergency Globalization Response Team, London, UK)

The United Kingdom (and its sister nations for that matter) has always been a bit of a battleground between the march of Technocratic terranorming and progress, and Reality Deviants

who don't understand when they are outmatched. For years, the Technocracy never questioned their success in one of the most globalized nations in the world. Imperialism has a way of binding the Masses together. In the past few years though, right under the Technocracy's nose, the nation has slipped away from globalization to isolationism. Before they knew it, they were in crisis management mode instead of maintaining their terranorming status quo. Boots on the ground are NWO Operatives and Syndicate Media Control as they both try to understand what happened and figure out how to fix it.

The Syndicate (World Economic Research Facility, Berlin, Germany)

While parts of Western Europe may be in precarious conditions, Germany is anything but. The Syndicate's work post-WWII has led to one of the single strongest economies in the world. While maybe not on the order of Dubai as far as technological advancements, Germany is well on its way to be the most successful Syndicate project in the world. Unlike Russia, the Syndicate's pleasure at this success isn't just a case of overconfidence. Unfortunately, success in this case breeds complacency, leaving room for Reality Deviants to move in under the Technocracy's radar and gain a firm foothold. Most notably are the Hollow Ones, who held to the shadows and cracks until the wall fell, then began networking and acting in earnest during Germany's economic growth. The Syndicate only barely realizes they are there, and do not yet classify them as a problem, though that might be to their detriment.

Progenitors (Pharmaceutical Research and Development, Geneva, Switzerland)

For centuries, the Progenitors have made their home-base high in the mountains of the Swiss Alps. Switzerland's famous neutrality allowed them to keep their noses down in their work without too much jostling from political strife. In doing so, they have built some of the largest and most extensive pharmaceutical research centers in the world. Through clever use of pharmaceutical tech espionage that they gladly allow their competitors to steal, they feed the results of their studies to the Masses. The Progenitors pushed for housing the World Health Organization in Geneva, and they use its reach throughout the world to integrate research and data with their own.

Progenitors (Chemical Substance Ethnographic Survey, Amsterdam, Netherlands)

Quite beyond their notice or control, Amsterdam became a case study in legalized mood-altering substances. While not technically legal, the government monitors and licenses special shops for selling cannabis, and, until recently, psilocybins. Before the Progenitors could get there for a real research effort, Reality Deviants showed up to take advantage, namely the Cult of Ecstasy and Children of Knowledge. Instead of a true research station, the Progenitors have been relegated to a small ethnographic team to study the effects of the looser laws on the health of the population. That is, while the NWO

spends time and effort rooting out the Reality Deviants so the Progenitors can fully move into the city.

Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe is loosely described as "former Soviet nations" by some, and everything east of the Ural and Caucasus mountains by others, and any other form of differentiation by various bodies throughout. In short, the differentiation is muddy at best, but the Technocracy doesn't care that much.

Current Initiatives

Most of the Eastern European initiatives are in maintenance mode, with the Syndicate and NWO promoting most of their efforts in building stable economies in democratic nations.

Iteration X/Syndicate (Economic Expansion and Development, Sofia, Bulgaria)

The Syndicate has been working in Bulgaria for years, and despite its rampant government corruption has somehow managed to keep it economically stable. With help from Iteration X research and development teams, terranorming the nation has proved rather successful. While the Syndicate tries media influence, they could really use some help from the NWO to deal with the money they make and create actually staying with the Masses, but it seems the NWO is more interested in Russian assets than anything in Eastern Europe.

Progenitors (Nuclear Materials and Genetic Testing, Pripyat, Ukraine)

After the Soviet Union declared the Chernobyl nuclear energy site an exclusion zone, the Progenitors set up a small shop nearby to collect and test organisms saturated with nuclear material. Although simply there to monitor the effects of irradiation on the flora and fauna, that small station's reports have given rise to a number of Genegineer experiments and successful products. Over the years, the station has grown into a full research facility, as FAÇADE and Pharmacopoeists have moved in to run their own studies. However, as the location evolves, curious people have sent drones and even visited the city, putting the Progenitors there in a precarious situation as they try to keep their experiments out of view of the Masses.

Void Engineers (Battlefield Response Team, Various)

The Battlefield Response Team (BRT) formed in the early twentieth century following World War I. With the sole purpose to enter areas of massive battles and deal with the inevitable JMARDs that showed up there, the task force of mostly NSC Marines and Scientists was re-activated at the end of World War II, and spent over fifty years cleaning up and putting to rest JMARDs in areas of Germany, Poland, Austria, and Hungary, and other locations of German Death Camps. The team was supposed to retire after that, but were tasked to Bosnia, Croatia and other former Yugoslavian nations. With the state of the world now, the BRT suspects they will never be disbanded.

Sphere of Influence: The Pacific Region



The Technocracy's Pacific Region starts in the southwest with Australia and stretches up all the way to the Aleutian Islands off the coast of Alaska. This region covers thousands of islands and mostly water, though there's no lack of things to accomplish in the region.

Current Initiatives

Most initiatives in this region center around research, study, and development.

While the Syndicate and NWO have their hands in national politics in places like Australia and New Zealand, the rest of the region acts as a platform for deep research or developmental actions.

Iteration X (Multinational Military Development Site, Australia)

Nestled in the Northern Territory of Australia, the Multinational Military Development Site (MMDS) houses the largest technological research and fabrication facility in the world. Although technically an Iteration X site, personnel at the MMDS come from all over the world and from all the Conventions. Although the site's original function to design and fabricate new weapons technologies, projects have grown over time to serve every kind of research and development, incorporating RAE personnel from the Void Engineers, Q Division from the NWO, and even FACADE Engineers and Pharmacopoeists from the Progenitors. The site is as cross-disciplinary as things get at the Technocracy, with any rivalries emerging between project lines, rather than Convention or Methodology.

Iteration X/Progenitors (Experimental Terranorming, Polynesian Islands)

Polynesia consists of over a thousand islands encompassing essentially everything east of the Philippines and Australia, including New Guinea, New Zealand, Guam, and Hawai'i. The

Ryukyuan Islands are over a hundred islands clustered around (and including) Japan's island of Okinawa. Excepting the US military-controlled areas of Hawai'i, Guam, and Okinawa, the local superstitionists and non-human inhabitants maintain control, making it hard to operate in these areas. Nevertheless, Progenitor ethnographers are monitoring local and uncontacted islanders as control populations, and Iteration X is introducing terranorming practices in places like Tuvalu, which now makes nearly 10% of their GDP from outsourcing their top-level internet domain. Technocrats need to be careful in the area though, as the Kopa Loei do not take kindly to their presence.

Progenitors (Pacific Climate Research Institute, North Pacific Sea)

The Locker, located in the North Pacific Sea, has proven a roaring success. Officially named the Pacific Climate Research Institute (PCRI), the Locker is a 200 square mile research station near the sea floor, staffed almost entirely by uplifted cetacean Technocrats, with a few Extraordinary Citizens and uplifted cephalopods to provide fine detail work. Although the dolphins and whales do not seem thrilled by the presence of 'lesser' races, they can't deny the usefulness of humans, octopuses, and squids. The researchers there have multiple promising techniques to reverse the impacts of climate change.

Void Engineers (Deep Sea Exploration Zone, Mariana Trench)

One of the few places on Earth that has not been thoroughly researched, mapped, and charted remains under the ocean. Members of the EFD spend most of their time in an underwater station located on the West Mariana Basin as a jump point for dives and exploration into Challenger Deep and other unexplored areas of the trench. They have a fully outfitted BDC Marine contingent with them, as they have found several strange and unprecedented life forms living in the crushing depth. Some of them so alien as to rival anything found out in the Void.



Unit 4: Internal Matters

Other things may change us, but we start and end with the family.

— Anthony Brandt

“So,” he said, “I need all the information on the recruiting in your department for the past ten years, and as soon as possible. Can you help?”

Poor guy, Duv thought, grinning benignly. Stephen looked just ever so slightly harried, which meant, in Duv’s experience, that he was seriously stressed. Served him right, too; he’d always breezed through training, testing and assignments with an annoying aplomb that even the most highly ranked agents were known to envy. It was about time someone gave him a difficult assignment.

“Sure, sure, glad to. When do you need it by? Couple a’weeks is probably the best we can do.”

“Tomorrow morning. Tonight would be better.”

Duv raised an eyebrow. Either this was serious, or Stephen had truly pissed someone off and generously decided to share. Well, it didn’t actually matter which it was; either way, Duv needed to jump or risk getting official displeasure splashed all over his nice black suit. He mentally added another case of his favorite beer to the tally he reckoned Stephen owed him at this point.

Fortunately, there was an easy solution to this particular problem; one that Duv took frequent advantage of with an almost religious devotion:

“Hey Madelyn, I want you to meet my friend, Stephen. He needs some information, and everyone knows you’re the source of all wisdom around here.”

Fortress. Family. Home.



The Technocratic Union, by definition, is a fortress unified by a technological elite. Yet that fortress has doors, windows, walls, and passageways; cracks in its foundation. Among its theoretically unified ranks dwell fallible human and not-exactly-human beings, whose imperfections and differences mock the monolithic façade around that fortress.

To outsiders, the Technocracy seems soulless and impenetrable. To those living and dying within this organization, though, the Technocratic Union is not a reality-strangling conspiracy.

It's a home.

Strange as this might seem, the Technocratic Union provides focus, purpose, salvation, family. For many of its operatives and employees, the Union is the greatest thing they've ever known. Like any family, it has its flaws; but like the best of families, it nurtures and protects its people in ways outsiders can never understand. Oh, it can be abusive, true, and each member must surrender most of their autonomy in order to remain in the good graces of the Inner Circle. When outsiders challenge the stability of that family, though, the Technocratic Union locks the gates, mans the walls, and drowns outsiders in seas of their own blood.

The following chapter builds on and expands upon information presented in *Mage 20* (pp. 166-195) and *The Book of Secrets* (pp. 223-233). It's not exhaustive, nor could it possibly be that way. In place of the subjective perspective of the previous chapters, this Unit takes a relatively objective stance. Even then, however, much of the Union remains in shadows. No family, after all, can be summed up fully in a few thousand words.

Think of this chapter as a family portrait: A bit remote, outside by definition, capturing certain elements of each family member while suggesting relationships you never clearly see. Artificially presented, but ideally capturing a moment of truth before people in it swirl off with lives and agendas of their own.

Be it ever so hostile – to RDs, anyway – there really is no place like home.

Toward Technocratic Humanity

The Technocratic Union exists to further the march of human progress, protecting humanity from Reality Deviants, who (according to the Technocrats) are dragging progress and humanity backwards, relying on beliefs that do not make sense, and on practices based on those beliefs, invented to comfort a less-advanced form of humanity. The Technocratic Union consistently looks forward, wanting to integrate as many kinds

of thought as possible, all of it focused on change for the betterment of humankind.

The Union's goal, despite popular belief, isn't violence and destruction. The goal is to raise humanity up to from the limitations of its present form; ideally without destroying the things that make humanity beautiful.

But what is it *like*, serving the Union? How do people live and breathe within the confines of its rigid structure? Children grow up within its strict rules and guidelines, marriages are made, partnerships forged and broken, and real living people of all types find themselves working at the core of the Technocracy.

Outsiders frequently forget that Technocrats are, at their core, human. They feel, they love, they cry, they relate to others. Of course, where Reality Deviants might have more strict beliefs on what precisely constitutes personhood...

What, Within the Technocracy, Constitutes a Person?

The Technocratic Union does not see "humanity" as being defined by the parameters of blood and flesh. The structure of the Union requires that broader parameters be applied in order to support new kinds of life.

Where some people might consider a test tube baby, or even a child or person born from primordial ooze, to not be "human," the Union recognizes that humanity changes with the advancements of science. Looking forward, Technocrats see only opportunity, with the boundaries of "humanity" becoming redefined by clones, cyborgs, genetically re-evolved human beings, and even people who have transcended the current concept of "human" landing squarely in the realm of operatives of the Union.

Humanity changes; it adapts to new circumstances. As the oceans rise, as technology advances, as the world itself bends to human will, the ways in which a person becomes a *person* become more complicated.

The Union takes the widest-angle approach possible. Instead of placing restrictions upon the concept of humanity, they open their arms to the many varied ways in which people might adapt to the world.

Because adaptation is the strength of the Union, adaptability is the quality by which every Technocrat lives and dies, and with that adaptability comes an acknowledgement that within a changing world, there can only be an ever-changing humanity.

The Technocratic Union's approach to what constitutes a person – or for that matter, what constitutes a non-person that is still considered a safe addition to the Technocratic community – is important because it colors the ways in which the Union operates as a whole. While many outsiders see the Technocratic Union as

a monolithic fortress filled with violent and unfriendly men in dark suits and sunglasses, that impression is not true.

Such assumptions, however, are rooted in a long history of the Technocratic Union preserving and enforcing a culture of bigotry and judgment – a culture that has come to be phased out only within the last few decades.

Recent Past and Current Events

Despite the egalitarian ideals (at least, by late medieval standards) of its predecessor, the Order of Reason, the Technocratic Union is a product of Victorian Europe, with all the imperial, ethnocentric prejudices that origin implies. Thus, even now, systemic bigotry remains an innate element of the Union's foundations.

That bigotry has poisoned the system for a long time. Outsiders still regard the Technocracy not as a beacon of hope for humankind's future, but as a monolith of hate seeking to erase anyone disagreeing with it. Ironically, that monolithic impression masks deep internal divisions within the so-called Union, and many of those divisions come from different perspectives about human identity, diversity, and the value of "raw" human beings within a group dedicated – at least in theory – to the advancement of our species. Certain Conventions (notably Iteration X and the NWO) prize collective identity over the capitalist Eurocentrism of the Syndicate and the Darwinian extremism of the Progenitors; meanwhile – as epitomized by the Men in Black agents only recently converted into Black Suits – those same Conventions retain a white-centric, male-gaze legacy that prizes ability over disability and male prowess over feminine skill. Those contrasts between egalitarian ideals and cultural realities provide a complex social battlefield for the supposedly unified Technocracy. In recent decades, though, the ideals have been winning, if only because bigotry is a proven waste of talent and resources. Removing that bigotry from the Union, then, has become imperative for Technocrats in 21st century leadership positions; but people, like institutions, can be stubborn and resistant to change, and so egalitarianism remains a fight that progressive Technocrats must constantly pursue.

In recent years, one region within the Union's primary influence has been spilling pervasive bigotry: the United States. Once a center of technological pride and innovation (albeit one steeped in slavery, genocide, and masculine-power ideals), the USA has embraced large-scale religious and cultural fundamentalism. Although this trend suits the coffers-filling goals of Syndicate operatives, Technocrats from other Conventions have been horrified to see the constant reduction of science education and funding throughout the USA, the spread of anti-intellectual and anti-science propaganda, and the government's belligerent withdrawal from international accords that took decades to construct. Other global superpowers (notably the United Kingdom) have followed suit, and the resulting surge of willful

ignorance – spread, ironically enough, through technological venues like the internet – troubles many Technocratic operatives and leaders alike. This is *not* the Enlightened future prized by Technocratic Union ideals. Although the authoritarian trend of recent years does not exactly run counter to the Technocracy's goals (the Union is, after all, a militaristic authoritarian elite), the idea of humanity throwing away centuries of scientific progress in favor of ethnocentric bluster and willful ignorance appalls Utopian Technocrats. Combined with an implacable American urge toward Apocalypse, this situation has led the Union to declare a state of emergency across the Western World in general and the United States in particular. Added to the constant war and chaos in the Middle East, and its spillover across the globe, the situation constitutes a cultural disaster zone that imperils the Technocracy's futuristic ideals.

The world is changing too rapidly for everyone to get the attention they deserve, but the Technocracy does *not* want to stagnate, much less to replicate the hatred that threatens to eat humankind whole.

And so, the Technocracy has been changing, too.

Progress vs. Conformity

Difference has become not the *enemy* of the Union, but its best friend.

In the past, the Union expected everyone to be the same – to be able to perform the same functions, to be able to efficiently do each task expected without dissension, trouble or complaint; individuality shunned, and "difference" regarded as a problem to solve. Adaptability, diversity and change were flaws in the Ideal Pattern – weaknesses to be purged by trial and innovation. Now, however, those differences appear to be the solution to the Technocracy's dilemma.

The culture within the Technocracy is now changing, and the industrialist ideal wherein "every cog in the machine must function the same way" is no longer an operational directive. These days, the Technocratic Union seeks to function as a collective of people with a variety of skills and life experiences, seeking the best that humanity has to offer, and to use their skills to protect and uplift the world. Where once English was the primary language of conversation and command, the ability to speak several languages is now considered an essential skill for leadership. Where most women had been traditionally relegated to positions below the "Great Men" of the Order and Union, or overshadowed by hypermasculine cyborgs and Men in Black, female-identified agents now fill every rank and station in the Technocracy. Where disabled people had once been institutionalized or sterilized in order to prevent the spread of disability across the globe, disabled people – Enlightened and otherwise – now use technology to adapt to a world that doesn't want them.

However, while differences are prized *within* the Technocratic Union because those differences serve the greater good, people who live outside the Technocratic "family" aren't regarded as "a good sort of different." Reality Deviants continue to be treated (both



figuratively and literally) with extreme prejudice, and although many Technocrats sidestep official regulations about fraternizing with RDs, the consequences for doing so are steep indeed.

At the center of these changes lurks a profound paradox: A rigidly and often violently authoritarian machine that's dedicated to global control (and that might even, under the Fallen Technocracy metaplot option, be innately and malignantly corrupt) nonetheless represents and enforces a more progressive social outlook than that often seen among the Masses or enjoyed by their ostensibly liberal rivals among the Traditions. On one hand, the Technocracy is undeniably fascist, even brutal, in its approach to progress; on the other, progress is a core ethic for the Technocratic Union — controlled progress but progress, nonetheless. Confronted with this apparent paradox, outsiders often miss — or even refuse to see — the Technocracy's progressive elements. It's easier to rave about "static mages" and "soulless mirrorshades" than to acknowledge how complex and nuanced the Technocracy and its people truly are.

Human Persons Within the Technocratic "Family"

Under Union protocols, "person" has a fairly broad meaning. Although that definition favors *Homo sapiens*, it's not restricted

to that familiar species. Dedicated as it is to the evolution of humanity, and to the elevation of an Enlightened elite above the Masses, the Technocracy has expanded its view of personhood to accommodate enhancement, uplift, accelerated evolution, and — of course — the ability to comprehend and employ Enhanced hypertechnology the Masses could not possibly understand. Although Orwell's maxim that "some animals are more equal than others" (SAMETO) certainly applies, the Union's approach to personhood regards the following operatives as essentially equal to one another within the larger ranks and structure of the Technocratic hierarchy. Discrimination against fellow persons, for reasons other than rank and behavior, is considered unmutual under Technocratic law.

Biologically "Normal" Humans

No matter how advanced it might aspire to be, the Technocracy remains a human organization with human foundations. Thus, baseline *Homo sapiens* remains the standard by which the Union determines personhood. Enhanced, Enlightened, and otherwise evolved humans are, of course, considered superior to the Masses; even so, the protection and advancement of humanity has been the Union's primary goal (or at least its *stated* primary goal) since its origins at the Convention of the White Tower. Human beings, then, remain the essential quantum of personhood as far as the Technocracy is concerned.

Extraordinary and Enlightened "Superior" Humans

Enlightenment is considered – depending on which Technocrat you ask – to be either the next stage of human evolution or the base state from which other “sleepers” have since fallen. The Union sets its base Tier, after all, at T1: initiation into the insights and existence of the Technocracy and its mission. Though extraordinary citizens aren’t necessarily Enlightened in the same way that supposedly “awakened” Technocrats are, they still fit into a higher category of personhood under Union law. Such people enjoy greater respect, higher status, and a sense of camaraderie than outside that other humans cannot achieve, and they’re essentially “first among equals” where human beings are concerned.

Cybernetically Enhanced Humans

Mechanical transhumanism, especially among Iteration X operatives, remains a mark of distinction within the Technocratic Union. Although such “upgrades” are considered voluntary these days (see “Disability Within the Union,” below), the Clockwork Convention still prizes the fusion of biology and machines. Whether or not such fusions represent the next stage of human evolution remains a hotly (sometimes bitterly) contested subject between Iterators, Progenitors, and New World Order operatives. Nevertheless, no Technocrat denies the useful applications of cybernetic technologies, and so mechanically enhanced humans are also considered “first among equals” even if the person in question isn’t Enlightened in the greater sense of that word.

There remains, however, an unmutual yet undeniable rift between transhuman operatives and the self-proclaimed Adamites, who favor natural-born humanity. Detailed further under “Dissident Factions” (p. 116), Adamite Technocrats resent the existence and status of “upgraded” comrades. That rift extends to the upper levels of Management, and (although officially forbidden) it remains a significant factor in relationships between biologically “normal” human agents and operatives enhanced with mechanical and biotech technology.

Biotech-Uplifted Humans

Biotech uplift has fascinated Progenitors since their Cosian genesis. Indeed, the continued evolution of the human organism (and of other organisms, too) remains the primary focus for this convention’s ideology. Just as Iteration X prizes the capabilities of mechanically enhanced operatives, the Progenitors and Syndicate prize biotech enhancements among Technocracy personnel. Drugs, genengineering, implants, transplants, biorespirations, and other aspects of hyperaccelerated evolution grant status to operatives enjoying such enhancements, and despite the grumbling of jealous Adamites and the erratic behavior of Victors and other specimens of bio-modified humanity, uplifted operatives receive status equal to, if not exceeding, the esteem granted to cybernetic operatives.

Clones of Humans

Among the Technocracy’s most infamous biotech achievements, human clones have been an established element of Union society for most of the last century. Many of the Black Suit field agents so familiar to (and loathed by) rival mages have been cloned from Enlightened field operatives who proved to be exceptionally good at their jobs – and those who have *not* are often indistinguishable from those who *have*. Supervisors and Managers deploy clones in place of their original selves, and cloned duplicates replace targeted rivals, helpful assets, and operatives who have screwed up badly once or twice too often. Although cloning technology has yet to create “perfect” human beings, it’s often difficult – even for Technocrats – to tell which people have been cloned and which have not. Therefore, among the Union’s ranks, there’s no distinction between cloned humans and “original” humans yet to be cloned.

MODEs: Media-Operations Divisive Enterprise Specialists

Literally manufactured celebrities, MODEs are biologically enhanced human constructs, crafted for beauty and charisma within high-normal human capacity. Though they’re literally artificial people (see below), MODEs rest a bit higher than usual on the Technocratic personhood hierarchy, if only because of their influence among the Masses. Even so, influence is the purpose they’ve been created to serve within the ranks, and so that status gets a MODE only so far when she’s dealing with field operatives, Grey Suits, and other hardworking agents of the Union’s greater goals. Those operatives tend to view MODEs as silly, superficial, and – though useful in their way – ultimately dispensable. Yes, they’re human enough but remain limited in potential and barred, at least in their current iteration, from true Enlightenment.

Vat-Born Humans

“Vat-born” is a rather insulting misnomer; operatives bred by the Progenitors are not born in vats, but instead gestate in large artificial wombs. The process is far more resource-intensive than many outsiders believe, and yet that very belief has made it possible for the Technocracy to breed such clones with relative ease. By the third decade of the 21st century, vast cloning facilities have become so common in popular entertainment that the process itself has entered the Consensus as a distinctly possible thing. Where such “artificial people” were once subject to rapid degeneration outside of Progenitor Constructs, they can now pass among the Masses for indefinite periods of time – subject to genetic flaws (as detailed in *Mage 20*, pp. 648-651), certainly, but otherwise unharmed by Unbelief Paradox – so long as they appear to be “normal” to unenlightened eyes. The *Homo superior* Victors (*Mage 20*, p. 624) are the most obvious examples of this type of operative; cloned Black Suit field agents fit this category too. Among the Union’s ranks, such agents are, if anything, afforded even greater status than mere *Homo sapiens* – unless,

Supplemental Data: MODES, Reanimates, Etc.

Game systems for many of the entities listed nearby — MODEs, reanimates, Matrix-Invested Entities (AKA “soulflowers”), robots, aliens, and holograms can be found in the sourcebook **Gods & Monsters**, Chapters Two (pp. 77-91) and Five (pp. 182-214). Victors, memophores, and HIT Marks V and X can be found in the **Mage 20** rulebook, Appendix I (pp. 624-626 and 638-639), and Traits for animals can be found in both that rulebook (pp. 618-620) and **Gods & Monsters** (pp. 104-107). Cephalomorphs, sauromorphs, dracomorphs, and uplifted-dolphin cetaceomorphs are presented in **Convention Book: Progenitors** (pp. 75-81), and several types of alien appear in **Beyond the Barriers: The Book of Worlds** (pp. 160-163, 169-172 and 175-176), **Technocracy: Void Engineers** (p. 75), and **Ascension** (pp. 147-149 and 160-162).

Please note that Technocratic companions (as per the Background: *Familiar / Companion*) might come from any type of the entities in question. One agent's companion might be an uplifted animal while another agent bonds with a robot, a MODE, an alien, or maybe even a hologram.

of course, one deals with an Adamite who recognizes the sort of “artificial human” agent with which she’s dealing.

Elite Uplifted Animal Agents

As embodiments of accelerated evolution, uplifted animals have been valued Technocratic companions since medieval times. Until recently, however, such operatives have been considered lesser agents — respected to a point but not regarded as persons under Technocratic law.

That status has changed.

New inroads of scientific inquiry and observation, combined with ever-advancing genengineering techniques, have given Technocratic personnel a new perspective on animals in general and on uplifted animal agents in particular. The newest generation of elite uplifts — epitomized by operatives like Agent Tiberius (see **Gods & Monsters**, pp. 12-13 and 99-101) — are considered fully vested persons under Doctrine of Mutuality protocols. Although their physical capabilities differ from those of their human comrades, such operatives have proved their worth and achieved commensurate respect.

The Adamites, of course, feel differently; to them, the idea of “humanimals” is absurd yet disconcerting. On one hand, treating animals like people in a legal sense appears to be Disneyfication of the lowest sort, even if the animals in question have been

genetically enhanced to human capacities; behind that sneer, though, lurks a terror of being called to account for the way humans have treated animals for millennia, and the idea that animal equals expect revenge for that treatment now. The idea of machines taking over seems frightening enough; add to that the terror of vengeful beasts exceeding human abilities, and it’s easy to see why the idea of being supplanted by uplifted animals seems perfectly reasonable — and terrifying, too.

Other Technocrats are still trying to get used to the idea of animals as persons, as well. Even so, change within limits is an essential ethos within the Union, and elite uplifted animals represent an important advancement of such change.

Non-Human Persons Within the Technocratic Ranks

Generous as it might be in comparison to other human cultures, the Union’s definition of “person” has limits. As with any sort of shadowy organization run by people in the business of acquiring power, however, there’s little that the Union’s leadership won’t do to achieve their goal. For the Technocracy, that includes working with individuals who don’t meet their standards for “humanity” when such collaboration affords them the power they most desire. The Technocratic Union, therefore, has a long and effective history of working with non-humans to promote the human cause.

The trouble — at least with regards to being one of the non-humans in question — is that those “not-quite human” persons are treated significantly worse than “normal persons” are. The Doctrine of Mutuality still applies, of course — in theory, at least. Even so, the following members of the Technocratic family are officially considered “little cousins”; entitled, certainly, to respect and protection but afforded a second-class citizen status among the Technocratic ranks.

Alien Lifeforms

While, technically, the Technocracy forbids dealing closely with alien lifeforms, any Void Engineer knows that you find companionship and allies wherever you can; and out in the black, that often means allying yourself with aliens. While to VEs such creatures are acceptable company, Earthside, or in mixed-Convention constructs, alien lifeforms are regarded with wary suspicion, hostility, contempt, and very often fear. The Doctrine of Mutuality does not apply to such creatures unless they stick to Void Engineer vessels; depending on just how alien the alien in question is, it might not even apply to them there.

Androids and Other Robots

The word *robot* comes from the Czech word for “slave”; despite how much the Technocracy depends upon robotic assistance, that’s pretty much the official status granted to most robots among the Union’s ranks. Androids — that is, robots designed to look and act like humans — receive considerably more respect than that, but remain second-class citizens under the DOM. Non-humanoid

robots are essentially regarded as useful machines by everyone except certain Iteration X operatives, who envy the comparatively uncomplicated lives of their robot companions. Individual Technocrats, of course, can form a personal relationship with any sort of robotic entity. Getting other operatives to respect that robot, however, often tends to be an exercise in futility.

Artificial Lifeforms

In a group dedicated to expanding the possibilities of technological achievement, the term “artificial lifeform” covers a lot of ground. Technically, any clone, uplift, geneengineered organism, robot, etc. qualifies as an artificial lifeform. Even so, many Technocratic operatives fall in between the cracks of such categories. Holographic avatars, reanimated corpses, elemental constructs, and so forth have venerable pedigrees among the ranks of the Technocratic Union and its Daedalean predecessor. Although golems and alchemical homunculi have gone out of style since the 1800s, such creatures were relatively common companions within the Order of Reason until the Industrial Revolution. These days, that niche has been filled largely by lifelike androids, Progenitor reanimates, *Matrix Invested Operatives*, MODES, *telepresence operatives* (that is, “living” holograms), and the personified data programs known as *Virtual Agents* (all detailed below). Thus, the catch-all artificial lifeform category generally applies to unique individuals whose origins and composition don’t fit into any of the other established classifications. Consequently, although such entities receive a certain degree of affection and acknowledgement from human operatives, they haven’t earned enough status or taken up enough space within the Union’s ranks to be taken seriously in their own right.

Cybernetic Constructs

HIT Marks. *Everybody* loves HIT Marks, right? Well, actually no. Among Union operatives, the various cybernetic weapons-platforms grouped under the HIT Mark designation are considered dangers to themselves and everyone around them. A common joke among field ops is “Mark toward enemy” – a reference to Claymore mines, which shred everyone within the blast radius. Certain HIT Marks (and related war-constructs like the Atlas Unit and the oddly popular Cyber-Tooth Tiger) manage to bond with their human comrades – a phenomenon especially common among the latest iteration of the HIT Mark program, the Mark X, which blends in uncannily well among human operatives. For the most part, however, HIT Marks and other distinctly inhuman cyborgs seem to be more machine than organism, even though they incorporate elements of both. Technically, this biomechanical blend *should* make them the most revered Technocrats of all. Truth be told, however, they often seem to be one step *too far* into the uncanny valley. Human operatives respect cybernetic constructs as elegant examples of technological supremacy, but that edge of “supremacy” just might be more than even a loyal Technocrat can accept.

Disputed Supplemental Data: Xenotransplant-Enhanced Operatives

An *exceedingly* controversial Progenitors biomodification process incorporates body parts from Reality Deviants into human Technocratic operatives. Such xenotransplant-enhanced agents straddle the intersection between human Technocrat, biotech construct, and monstrous RD. Hosts of physical, social, and metaphysical ailments plague such operatives, and between those ailments, the expenses and logistical complexities involved in procuring the RD “materials,” and ethical concerns that even hardened Progenitors find questionable, this program may have been discontinued by the third decade of the 21st century. The choice about whether or not such operatives remain in service, and the status of the program if they do, is ultimately for each individual **Mage** Storyteller to decide.

For details about RD xenotransplants and the agents who bear them, see the entry of that name in **Convention Book: Progenitors** (pp. 70-72). If these agents exist in your chronicle, please refer to the “Biotech” entry in **Mage 20** (pp. 657-661) for the rule systems involved.

Experimental Animals and Guardian Beasts

“Life finds a way.” And because Progenitors often put life through imaginative (and often frightening) paces, the “way” in question results in some pretty odd creations. Progenitor students are expected to “doodle” with biological experiments as a matter of course, and although such creatures tend to be short-lived (especially if they leave the lab and Construct where they’ve been assembled), unnatural entities like bat-winged Chihuahuas, Moreauian beast-people, and the unnerving *cephalomorphs*, *sauromorphs* and *dracomorphs* epitomize the weird nature of Progenitor-dominant facilities. Such creatures (literally) freak out other Technocrats, and so they’re too outré to be considered “persons” under the DOM and far too strange for comfort outside the Convention that constructs them. From the Progenitors themselves, these beasts might win a creator’s pride and affection, but rarely, if ever, a sense of equality.

MIOs: Matrix-Invested Operatives

To superstitionists, living beings infused with Quintessential energy bear the woo-woo label “Soulflowers.” To sensible agents of the Technocratic Union, such beings are *Matrix-Invested Entities*. Entrusted with the vital essence of lifeforce energies, these vessels of sublime value are especially prized companions



of Syndicate agents. Those agents literally invest themselves in their MIOs, and so those beings represent precious property to the operatives investing in them. Ah, but there's the rub: MIOs are *property*, not *persons*. Although certain MIOs (like the personal assistant, Eva Cherone, in *Gods & Monsters*) may be human employees at the T0 or possibly T1 rank, they are — as their designation asserts — investments. Though officially designated as *Operatives* (as opposed to the depersonalized designation *entities*), MIOs definitely rank below “real” people in terms of their respect, status, and protection within the Union’s ranks.

Telepresence Entities

Literal tricks of the light and other forces, telepresence entities exist in the physical world but without consistent physical form. Although some of them, like the fearsome avatar of Control, can manifest remarkable power, most are simply projections of established programs that have expansive but limited capabilities when compared to living beings. Most telepresence entities remain anchored to a single area: a room, a vehicle, perhaps a Construct; some, however, may be networked to exist in several places at once. The Masses’ acceptance of such entities into a certain degree of everyday reality (“Hello, Alexa!”) means telepresence entities have become staples of 21st century technology and popular media, affording a certain degree of affection (or occasionally, as with Control, fear) among the people who know them.

Oplifted and / or Cybernetically Enhanced Animals

Progenitors adore their literal pet projects: animals whose capabilities have been technologically enhanced to human

or superhuman status. Other operatives, however, seem a bit warier around such animals. Although such uplifts tend to be indistinguishable from “normal” animals, their ability to speak, manipulate complex objects, ponder existential thoughts, or otherwise manifest human characteristics makes them both adorable and vaguely threatening. After all, as was mentioned earlier, human beings have a lot to answer for when it comes to our relationship to “dumb animals.” If an animal in question isn’t nearly as dumb as he might seem at first glance, he might not be nearly as happy among humans as he appears to be...

VAs: Virtual Agents

Named as a mockery of the treasonous Virtual Adepts Tradition, Virtual Agents exist only in the Digital Web. Essentially sophisticated *memophores* (see *Mage 20*, pp. 638-639), these VAs exist in a state of telepresence anchored to the Digital Web. Some, like Jarvis and E.D.I.T.H. in the MCU films, exist as disembodied voices linked to electronic control systems; others, like the virtual celebrity Aimi Eguchi, appear to be as “real” as physical human organisms, so long as you encounter them online.

In casual online interactions, Virtual Agents appear to be normal netizens, with the typically “flat” and selective personality that’s familiar to anyone interacting with people online. However, while “solid” netizens occupy both physical space and online reality, Virtual Agents are created (or, in certain cases, *may have manifested spontaneously of their own accord*) in Web reality alone. And although Technocracy agents might recognize familiar VAs, it’s becoming increasingly difficult — even among agents devoted to online operations — to tell the

Virtual Agents from ones exiting in physical space as well. While Virtual Agents aren't technically considered "people" under Union law and protocol, it's increasingly difficult to figure out where the line between Virtual Agents and physical ones begins, much less where that line ends.

Disability Within the Union

Perhaps the most radical change within the Union's family, though it's not obvious to anyone outside the Technocratic ranks, involves the role of disabled and partially disabled operatives. For centuries, injuries and medical conditions were considered "flaws in the human machine" by many Daedaleans — things to be corrected with science, not intrinsic elements of a person's identity. The proto-Progenitor Cosians and proto-Iterator High Artisans employed their Enlightened Arts to provide prosthetic limbs and medicinal cures to those they felt needed such aids; as many people, to be fair, *did*. With the Industrial Age, however, the concept of humans as machines — or worse, as replaceable cogs in a greater social machine — illness and disability became anathema to the goal of ruthless efficiency. By the 1800s, the Conventions treating such conditions with generous mercy in earlier years were using human beings as subjects for experimentation and sources of spare parts. The appalling practices of Iteration X and the Progenitors throughout the 20th century revealed the depths to which the Technocracy had fallen (perhaps, in a Nephantic sense, *Fallen*) with regards to the treatment of people with innate or acquired medical conditions.

And yet...

Perhaps it was the influence of civil rights movements among the Masses or through the popularity of such examples of "disabled" visionaries as Stephen Hawking and Temple Grandin who moved the Consensus; or a sense of moral repugnance among the operatives tasked with treating human beings (including fellow operatives) as flawed gears in a device. The realization might have dawned from the aftermaths of two World Wars and the catastrophic effects of their war machines on human bodies and minds, or from an internal schism regarding the pseudoscience of eugenics and the atrocious end-results of that practice in WWII. It may have been the impact of the Dimensional Anomaly and the heavy cost inflicted upon the Technocracy, or the realization that ostensibly "broken" people still have value to the Technocratic cause. It could have come from a deeper appreciation of the Doctrine of Mutuality. It may have been a combination of all those factors, and more besides. Most likely, though, the biggest reason for the change might have been the growing body of data proving that — despite abstract mathematical ideals — living beings are *not* machines, not interchangeable, and certainly not disposable; and that, from an equally mathematical perspective, throwing those beings away because of superficial ideas about their potential usefulness is a profound waste of good resources.

Whatever the reasons, the Technocratic Union has recognized the innate value of operatives with supposed "disabilities."

Instead of discarding them, or "fixing" people who do not wish to be "fixed," current Union protocol supports the identity and autonomy ("autonomy" within Technocratic standards, anyway) of operatives with physical and/or mental conditions that those operatives use toward the greater good of the Technocratic cause.

Under current Union rules, it's unacceptably unmutual to use ableist language towards disabled operatives. The acceptable terms laid out within Technocracy society involve either *Identity-First Language* (IFL) or *Person-First Language* (PFL); the former refers first to that person's condition ("a blind agent"), while the latter emphasizes the person over the condition ("an agent who is blind"). Either application is considered respectful, but words like "crippled," "lame" or "handicapped" are considered violations of the social contract of the Union and making fun of the agent for having a visual impairment is grounds for immediate disciplinary action.

These days, the Union is an equal-opportunity employer. Disabilities are no longer seen as impediments, but as personality traits — and the ways in which the owners of those traits choose to handle them is an individual decision. While many Technocrats still insist that the future of humanity resides with transhumanism and the integration of biological and mechanical technologies, the Technocratic leadership no longer determines *how* those technologies are to be used and integrated. Iteration X, the Progenitors, and other Conventions still enhance agents who desire such augmentation; these past few decades, however, no agent is *expected* to accept an augmentation (or other change to their body) simply because someone else says that their body isn't useful.

When an operative or employee *does* want prosthesis, gene therapy, or other treatments, the Union is happy to provide them; their generosity, in fact, provides a major incentive for T0 and T1 employees, especially those who could never afford such treatments on their own. Thanks to growing publicity about "miracles of science," the Masses now accept — even *expect* — astounding technologies like mind-guided wheelchairs or 3D-printed prosthesis. By favoring a voluntary and respectful approach to medical conditions and their potential treatments over the brutal "repair or discard" model of previous generations, the Union has advanced the Consensus much further in the Technocracy's direction, and in a shorter period of time (and with far less waste), than the atrocious eugenics model ever could have done.

Among Enlightened personnel, disabled Technocratic operatives do all sorts of things: autistic operatives work with non-human species or provide insights and calculations that baffle neurotypical operatives; operatives missing limbs design advanced mobility devices, cultivate mind-body interface, and provide data about extensions of human tactile and spatial awareness; researchers of all types continue to explore the psychic elements and possibilities of "phantom limb syndrome" and telekinetic contact without physical components; blind operatives innovate new technologies that allow people to

Supplemental Data: In-Game Disabilities

Early World of Darkness books treated physical and mental disabilities in inaccurate and often insulting ways. More recent books have aspired to present such conditions with greater awareness and accuracy. Although certain sourcebooks have modified the old Physical and Mental Flaws toward more customizable and accurate representations of medical conditions (see the Flaw: *Impediment* in **The Book of Secrets**, pp. 39-40, and the sidebar “Neurodiversity and Mental Traits” in the same book, p. 42), your group may decide to discard the idea of Physical and Mental Flaws entirely and simply present disabilities as story-elements for the characters in question, instead of as sources for freebie points.

Whatever option you choose, please deal respectfully with disabilities and the people who have them. Using such conditions as a source of cheap jokes, character points, and impressions of pity or villainy is not a terribly enlightened thing to do.

read visual documents and screens; and all sorts of operatives continue, through research and example, to break down pre-conceptions about the limitations of material biology and the functional capacities of “the human machine.” Most of all, however, disabled operatives make excellent spies. Mainstream society works incredibly hard not to see disability — to pretend that disabled people aren’t there, to resist staring at people appearing “different,” and to avoid learning how to communicate with people who don’t speak a conventional language. As a result, disabled operatives sneak under the social radar, and get information that other able-bodied operatives would struggle to acquire. By noting and exploiting things the Masses prefer not to see, Technocratic agents learn more about Consensus and the ways in which it might be shaped, used, modified toward greater human evolution, and perhaps even (as certain Iterators and NWO authorities crave) to transcend physical limitations entirely and achieve a sublime psychic state, far beyond the frailties of bio-limitations.

Gender and Sexuality

While bigotry has certainly been an issue within the ranks, the Technocracy has a rather open-minded approach when it comes to gender and sexuality — more now than ever before.

As shown by authorities like Queens Isabella and Victoria, the Matriarch, and other Technocratic luminaries, the Order of Reason had always provided a place for women — commoner and noble alike — with the courage and intellect to rise beyond the confines typically afforded to their sex. As the Order transformed into the Technocratic Union, however,

the “man’s-world” thinking of the Industrial Age limited the opportunities for women (and “effeminate” men) attempting to advance “beyond their station.” In spite of — perhaps *in order to spite* — the movements toward women’s suffrage among the Masses, the Technocracy put masculinity front-and-center until the mid-1980s, when the “Men in Black” façade began crumbling beneath the weight of its own pretensions, the efforts of progress-minded Technocrats, and the data that proved how wasteful and inefficient such chauvinism had become.

Even during earlier decades, female Technocrats have been the backbone of the Technocracy. As operatives and technicians during World War II, women enacted all sorts of operations on all sides of that War. Nazi propagandist, Leni Riefenstahl, has been stricken from the New World Order’s honor rolls, but older agents occasionally whisper that she had, for a time, been a prized member of that Convention. Russian “night witches,” meanwhile, bombarded the Nazi lines, while the iconic figure, Rosie the Riveter, embodied the strength of women working hard jobs in American industry. From science labs to front-line combat, female and/or queer operatives advanced the Technocratic cause; and although Alan Turing was reputedly outed as gay, and perhaps assassinated by Technocratic agents after the War (an accusation denied, of course, by the NWO), the shift back toward hypermasculine ideals following WWII proved to be short-lived. These days, women are powerful operatives within the Union’s ranks, and in fact, there’s a strong showing of women attaining ranks faster than men due to concerted efforts to eradicate toxic masculinity from the workplace.

Nonbinary Gender Roles

The Technocracy also operates under the assumption that the most effective operatives are the ones most comfortable in their bodies. Despite a relatively brief push toward masculine-identity ideals, the Union now treats gender identity as a matter for each operative to determine for themselves. Ideals aside, this policy makes sense from a purely utilitarian standpoint; especially in an organization whose operatives join collective identities, modify their bodies and minds (or have them modified by others), shapeshift between identities, and sometimes forsake gender and individuality entirely, insisting upon gender conformity and binary gender distinctions is wasteful, impractical, and patently absurd.

Unlike many members of the Crafts and Traditions, who integrate gender-binary coding into their Reality Deviance, Technocratic protocol asserts that there is no reason for an operative to remain stuck with the gender identity that was assigned at birth. In fact, the Technocracy facilitates and approves hypertech gender-affirmation surgeries for their operatives, making the process as streamlined as possible. In recent years, this no-questions, full-access policy has become a major perk for potential Technocratic recruits. Especially given the pushback against such surgeries and identity transitions among the Masses, the full and

easy acceptance of a person's identity brings many eager recruits into the Union's ranks. The best operatives, after all, are the ones who feel their physical bodies match their internal identities.

To certain traditionalists – including gender-essentialists within the Nine Traditions themselves – the Technocracy's embrace of gender fluidity represents the Union's decadence and corruption. To subvert "natural laws," as these people see it, is to flout the dictates of gods, men, and nature. Even within the Union itself, certain tradition-minded operatives (generally, though not always, older agents with a "good old days" mentality) look askance at the Union's current approach to identity. Even so, the modern protocols epitomize the Technocracy's dedication to progress and practicality alike – a dedication which, in some regards, puts the supposedly liberal Traditions to shame.

Sexual Intimacy

When it comes to sexuality itself, there are no official restrictions about "acceptable" gender behavior within the Technocracy itself. Certain Conventions and Methodologies discourage intimate connections with fellow agents, and sometimes even punish such connections, especially during initiatory training, rigorous missions, and deployment out in space. Gender stigmas surrounding sexuality, asexuality, social roles and so forth, however, are officially forbidden. Reliable contraception and disease protection are provided to all operatives as a matter of course, and so STDs and unwanted pregnancies are exceedingly rare.

The converse, of course, is that many operatives – especially T1 Rank agents – are forbidden from breeding even if they want to do so. The ability to conceive and raise children comes only with official approval for operatives at the T3 level or higher. Tier 0 citizens, of course, may reproduce if they choose to do so – they're simply *employees*, not major investments of Union resources. That said, the Technocracy provides its advanced contraception, disease protection, and gender-affirmation surgeries to its unEnlightened personnel, too. Especially in an era of economic uncertainty and unstable job prospects, a happy, healthy, satisfied workforce tends to be an extremely *loyal* workforce, too.

This wasn't always the case, of course. The Order of Reason was a late-medieval alliance of religious devotees, scholarly ascetics, artisans, warriors, and other groups not noted for their tolerance, and the Victorian transition between that Order and the modern Technocracy was marked by the era's sexual conservatism. The current policies, however, make sense in a world where overpopulation is a definite concern and identity of all kinds exists in a state of social flux. These days, there are no requirements regarding sexual/gender identity or behavior remaining on the books within the Technocratic Union.

Sexual assault, to be clear, is considered a matter of violence, not sexuality. Violation of a fellow operative, in any capacity and under any circumstances, is *extremely* unmartial and subject to harsh and immediate discipline. Unlike authorities among

the Masses, Technocratic leadership blames the perpetrator, not the survivor, for such crimes, and takes extreme measures to ensure that guilty parties never offend more than once.

Whether or not an operative chooses to be sexually active, the Technocracy expects its personnel to help educate children born into, or raised within, the Union's ranks. Although outsiders rarely, if ever, see this side of the Technocracy, the Union is a family in most senses of that word, and children have always been part of that family. Children literally *are* the future, and behind its implacable façade the Technocracy takes that future seriously.

Relationships

While outsiders do not see Technocrats as people requiring love and physical affection to survive, the truth of the matter is that the Technocracy still accepts certain realities of the human condition – at least for now. Dating, marriage and divorce, therefore, are all aspects of life within the Union. As with everything, however, there are certain rules Enlightened operatives must follow if they wish to stay on the Union's good side, and no sane person wants to be on the Union's *bad* side if they can be otherwise!

Dating a direct superior, or a direct subordinate is *verboten*. It happens, of course, but the consequences are severe, ranging from reassignment to another region, to (if a supervisor is found to have a pattern of taking advantage of subordinates) Extradimensional Reassignment or even reprogramming. Despite its obviously authoritarian nature, abusive sexual-power dynamics are taken *very* seriously in the Technocracy because direct orders must be carried out to the letter. Failure to follow an order because you were angry at your girlfriend is still considered a Dereliction of Duty infraction, and it receives the same sort of punishment as someone would suffer if she was found guilty of DoD for any other reason.

Assuming the operatives are of sufficient rank, and have earned the privilege of pursuing intimate relationships, most Technocratic Constructs allow dating between the personnel assigned to that headquarters. Even so, relationship-status reports must be filed with the appropriate supervisors, dates must occur in public locations, and there can be no sexual fraternization until the proper paperwork has been filed. Although upper-rank Technocrats may date lower-ranking operatives (but not trainees), the potential for power-dynamic abuses within such relationships remain a matter of intense scrutiny among those agents' peers.

Relationships within the Conventions

Despite overarching protocols, each Convention handles intimate relationships according to the philosophical foundations of the group in question. Technically, all personnel are bound by the Union's regulations; in practice, of course, things aren't quite that simple.

Polyamorous relationships are fairly common among Technocratic operatives, especially in Conventions like Iteration X and (as strange as this might initially seem) the NWO, where collective identity is regarded as an ideal. It's not unusual for a Black Suit squad to conduct their intimate connection in, shall we say, a traditionally Spartan manner. Given that Black Suit field agents share telepathic/empathic bonds whether or not they get physical, sexual relationships between comrades are perfectly understandable.

That said, many operatives—especially Black Suits, clones, cyborgs, and enhanced or Genengineered agents—have no interest in sexual intimacy at all, have no sexual organs, or both. Asexuality is at least as common as polyamory within the Union's ranks, and probably much more so. Certain agents have had their sexual urges Socially Processed (or otherwise traumatized) out of them, while others had no sexual inclinations to begin with. The intense discipline and rigorous training all Technocratic operatives undergo—particularly within Iteration X and the New World Order—have a way of sublimating even the most vigorous libido, and people who are asexual by nature find that the Technocracy provides a comfortable shelter from mainstream pressures and expectations.

Syndicate operatives, in contrast, tend to be exceptionally libidinous by default, and rarely follow official rules regarding sexual relationships. Taking what you want, after all, is a core philosophy within this Convention, and so although rape is still punished when complaints are made, Syndicate operatives seldom respect protocols about rank and the restriction of carnal appetites. Power dynamics, by Syndicate thinking, are made to be abused; if you're not using power for all it's worth, after all, then what's the point of amassing power to begin with? Among Syndicate operatives, sex appeal is a weapon, sexuality is a toy, and sexual dominion is a mark of success. For obvious reasons, other Conventions remain wary about relationships with Syndicate personnel, and supervisors tend to enforce strict Union protocols to keep the Syndicate ops in line.

Progenitors, as their name suggests, often remain fascinated by sexuality even if a given operative isn't especially sexual himself. Some Progenitors are innately (perhaps physically) sexless, while others demonstrate voracious sexual appetites. Procreation is an abiding interest among most members of this convention, and although that interest might remain strictly academic for certain Progenitors, the Convention's fixation on the mechanics of biological interactions strikes many other Technocrats as rather unsettling—unless, of course, you're into that sort of thing.

Depending on who you ask, Void Engineers are either geeky cosmonauts or the horniest Technocrats alive. Probably both. Whatever the truth might be on a case-by-case basis, all Void craft are equipped with long-term contraception and disease-control measures. On off-world and extradimensional missions, VEs are strictly forbidden from reproducing unless specific permission has been earned, granted, and accounted for in

the ship's supplies. Unforeseen pregnancies, after all, constitute a threat to all personnel on such missions, and the variables of conceiving (much less bearing) children in extradimensional environments have potentially horrific implications, especially when alien beings are involved. Records of such situations (many of which did not involve female personnel) do exist, and their conclusions are enough to discourage even the most ardent Progenitor from pursuing those sorts of experiments further.

Marriage

Marriage between Technocrats is a privilege that must be earned through years of loyal service, an exemplary Six Degrees of Separation (SDS) score, and a Rank no lower than T3. However, upper-level operatives may be permitted to marry, with their supervisors' permission and the proper reports filed and approved.

Such marriages are not bound by gender or other sexual identity, nor are they restricted to two operatives if more than two operatives wish to marry and qualify to do so. All participants must be fully developed adults, however, mentally as well as physically at least 25 years of age. Although certain operatives have married clones, artificial people, robots, aliens, and even uplifted animals, Technocracy leadership frowns upon such unions and most fellow operatives aren't especially keen about them, either. In the current era, such marriages are officially forbidden and unauthorized under Technocratic protocols.

Under Technocracy rules, married partners receive shared yet private quarters, joint legal status, compounded health and financial benefits, and other perks at the discretion of their supervisors. Under most circumstances, supervisors keep married partners on mutual posts, laboratories, projects or assignments unless one or more of those partners have violated Technocracy rules and earned the appropriate punishments. *Amended Society* and *Reassignment* (see *The Book of Secrets*, p. 229) are common penalties for married Technocrats, so agents have extra incentive to behave well if they wish to stick close to their partners. Some supervisors, alternately, will not reassign a married partner if it seems that partner wants some distance from the marriage; considering, though, that Technocratic marriage lacks the social mandate of "till death" partnership, this sort of thing is rarely necessary; an operative who wants a divorce simply files for divorce, as detailed below. Married partners might be granted leave to have one or more children, although such reproduction involves additional levels of approval. The Technocracy wants to have new operatives who've been raised within the Union, though, so loyal agents find it relatively easy to get permission if they've achieved sufficient rank to do so—T3 at minimum, with an SDS no lower than 3.

Partnership

Committed partnerships exist for operatives who don't wish to jump through all the hoops necessary for marriage.

Again, such partnerships are open to more than two partners, and they've become quite common among operatives from collective-identity groups. Such partnerships do not include the dedicated private quarters or the potential authorization for children; they *do*, however, confer shared-resource status to all partners involved, and supervisors are more inclined to keep committed partners together on posts, assignments, and missions. Committed partners do not need to file for divorce to leave the partnership, although they lose associated perks if they break things off with their partners. Best of all, from the position of low-ranking operatives, T2 operatives can enter into committed partnerships if they maintain an SDS Rank of 3 or higher. Thus, the Technocracy provides relationship incentives for agents performing well and staying on the right side of their supervisor's reports.

Breakups and Divorce

Breakups and divorces are handled not through mundane courts but through the Union's own legal system, as many of the causes for divorce used within the Union are based on ideological differences that come about through the partners' service within the Union. The instant that one partner declares they want out, that partner is provided a separate living quarters; neither party, however, is authorized to speak about a spouse's transgressions until the soon-to-be-ex-partners meet with a Union mediator. This mediation procedure gets used for any committed intimate relationship that lasts longer than a year; generally, the mediator tries to ascertain whether the partners involved have been actively abusive, disloyal to the Technocracy, or otherwise unworthy of the trust their partners and the Union have given them. Errant partners may be charged with infractions and disciplined if need be (again, see *The Book of Secrets*, pp. 223-230). Some relationship counseling might be offered if the problems seem to be stress and simple misunderstandings; for the most part, though, the mediator's goal involves ensuring the safety of the operatives and the smooth function of the Technocratic machine.

In most cases, communal property gets divided equally between the now-ex-partners. In certain cases — especially in situations of proven abuse — the offender forfeits their right to that property, as a disciplinary measure. Children, if there are any, become full wards of the Technocratic Union; their parents may visit them (assuming those parents have not abused the children), but the Union becomes the full-time custodian and parental figure. For that reason alone, many married Technocrats prefer to work out their differences without Union intervention if and when they share offspring and parental rights.

Once the separation is finalized, neither party is authorized to serve in positions that rely upon the other partner. After a two-year "cooling off period," there's a mediation check-in to determine whether or not both parties are able to co-exist peacefully again.

Forbidden Connections

Not everyone, of course, follows the rules. Sometimes, operatives have affairs with agents from a lower rank, or with extraordinary citizens, or with initiated employees, or even worse, with people from outside the Union entirely. Syndicate agents are especially notorious for this sort of thing, and the fact that supervisors from that Convention rarely discipline their errant operatives for outside dalliances (probably because they're guilty of such relationships themselves) just makes the problem worse. Technically, the Union forbids relationships with outsiders or with operatives of significantly inferior Rank; in reality, people are people, and rules — even within the Technocracy — are made to be broken.

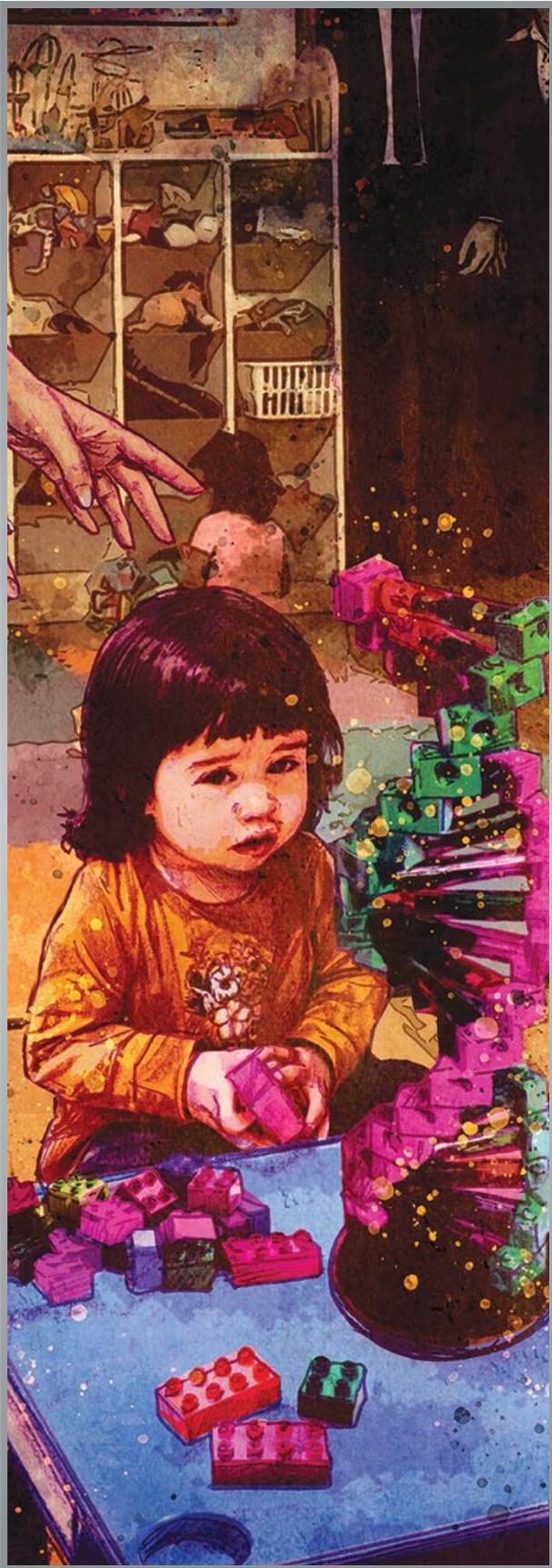
Getting around the Union's strictures is difficult, but not impossible. Since the Technocracy thrives on advanced technology, most of the workarounds involve using analog technology: notes left in drop sites, handwritten codes meant only for the recipient, clues no one other than the recipient

Supplemental Data: Sleeping with the Enemy

Some Technocrats find themselves falling in love or lust with Reality Deviants. Such relationships are *exceedingly* forbidden, with draconian and often terminal punishments. Naturally, that risk adds fire to the romance; an icy Black Suit might discover (much to his dismay) that the idea of frolicking with a werewolf ignites passions he hadn't previously realized he possessed.

Under Technocratic law, sleeping with the enemy is considered *Collaboration* at the very least, *Reality Deviance* most often, and quite possibly *Subversion*, too. As infractions go, those crimes warrant harsh punishment, and an otherwise-lenient supervisor won't be willing to look the other way for such offenses. The Flaw: *Sleeping with the Enemy* (detailed in *The Book of Secrets*, p. 66) is an essential in-game "reward" for characters who indulge themselves with this sort of relationship, and as hot as the romance burns in that forbidden bond, things will near-inevitably end in tragedy (*The Book of Secrets*, pp. 285-286).

There are certain benefits, however, to sharing an intimate relationship with certain kinds of RD. An agent may learn hidden information about the group or creature in question — the sort of intel only an intimate partner might know. In rare cases, an agent's supervisor might assign him to hook up with a known Reality Deviant in order to gain such information. In such situations, the Technocratic spy is, of course, promised immunity from prosecution under Union law. Whether or not the supervisor honors that promise, of course, remains to be seen...



would think to look for, that sort of thing. Sneaking around hypertech surveillance is a lot easier when you go analog and find places off the technological grid to have your affair. Many people wishing to stay out of the watchful eye of the Technocracy (which has much of the world's surveillance technology on lockdown) take up hiking, mountaineering, or long-term horseback riding excursions — if, of course, they have first earned the right and Rank to do. As is probably obvious, the penalties for getting caught dodging surveillance and breaking the rules are... unpleasant. However, forbidden romance has a mystique all its own, and its allure has a long tradition (so to speak) of seducing even the most loyal Technocratic hearts.

Prodigies: Technocratic Children and Childrearing

To outsiders, the Technocracy remains a bastion of cold and often malign adults, secure in their purpose and dedicated to the suppression of magick, imagination, the human soul, and Reality itself. For such people, the idea that Technocrats *have* children, *nurture* children, even *love* their children would come as a shock.

But it's true.

As noted earlier, children are the future of the Technocratic Union. Recruiting, initiating, training and indoctrinating new operatives is a costly, time-intensive process that might or might not succeed. In contrast, *prodigies* — children who are born and/or raised within the Union — carry its outlook and agenda within them from Day One, sometimes *literally* so, as part of their physicality and DNA. Concealed and protected within the Union's most secure quarters, such children have been part of the Technocracy since its own inception; the Order of Reason, after all, began as a medieval coalition of artisans, crafters, clergy and warriors, and so it featured families and childcare as a matter of course. While those young Daedaleans were rarely exposed to outside influences before they reached maturity, the Technocracy's methods for raising, safeguarding, teaching and retaining its youngest members have existed since the late medieval period — refined and updated since then, certainly, but never entirely discarded.

A good many of the modern Technocracy's "children" are, in fact, lab-born clones, mutations, artificial people, and other persons created without the messy business of human intercourse and gestation. Even so, "natural-born" prodigies are a small but essential element of the Technocratic plan. Lab-born people, for starters, rarely Awaken in the metaphysical sense, and although children born to Enlightened parents don't seem to share an exceptional tendency toward Enlightenment themselves, the odds for Awakening are better when the child has been conceived and born "the old-fashioned way." Besides, the natural bond between parents and children *does* appear to strengthen the family's loyalty to the Technocratic cause. Although the Union experimented in the late 1800s

Supplemental Data: Technocratic Prodigies

In the **Mage 20** anthology **Truth Beyond Paradox**, Sandra Swan's novella "A Firm Place to Stand" deals with the childhood and training of young Technocratic prodigies. Meanwhile, the "Child-Mages" entry in **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 115-116) presents game systems for Awakened youngsters, and **Gods & Monsters** features an array of templates and characters who represent children at various stages of development (pp. 18-22).

and early 1900s with "parentless children" (including the original 20th-century "batches" of the Men in Black), and still occasionally uses that approach today (especially with regards to clones and other constructs), the data indicates that allowing biological parents to conceive, bear, and nurture their children is more effective overall than producing lab-bred and creche-raised Technocratic operatives.

As mentioned earlier, married operatives may request and receive clearance to reproduce. Although married members of the Union are not necessarily *expected* to bear children, they *are* generally expected to assist in the raising of children born within the Technocracy. The old adage "It takes a village to raise a child" is a fair summation of the Technocracy's approach; in this case, however, the "village" is a Construct nursery facility, the "village" features Technocrats and extraordinary citizens who've been trained in child medicine, behaviorism and care, and the "raising" includes sleepteaching, Social Processing, and years of training and indoctrination among the schools and communities of the Technocratic Union. In many cases, those children are raised within an artificial environment similar to the town in *The Truman Show* — surrounded by illusions of normalcy but intimately supervised and steeped in a culture that follows the Technocratic ideal. Unlike Truman Burbank, however, those children are informed (once they're old enough to understand such concepts) that their "everyday world" is not the world as many other people know it. Eventually, they know, they'll need to go out into the Front Lines world and attempt to rescue it from its random horrors; to bring that fallen world into alignment with the Utopian world they were raised within is the greatest goal a young Technocrat can aspire to achieve.

Pregnancy and Parental Care

As mentioned earlier, the Technocracy provides contraception that is 100% effective. In order to get pregnant, an operative must stop taking that medication, preferably after receiving clearance from the appropriate supervisors first. Thanks to Progenitor technology, an operative of any gender can be prepared for pregnancy and then carry that child to term. Unintended pregnancies are virtually unknown among Technocratic Union

operatives above the T1 level, and the ability to choose whether or not to become a mother has empowered female Technocrats since the medieval days of the Order of Reason.

A pregnant operative is relieved of field duty as soon as they pass their first trimester. Any pregnant agent is given desk duty until they give birth, at which point they receive a year of paid maternity leave. Once the child passes their first birthday, the birthing parent goes back to work. Most supervisors prefer to keep new parents away from combat duty, but vindictive supervisors have been known to take the opposite approach.

Union supervisors and medical personnel take pregnancy very seriously. Healthcare for both the parent and the child is paramount. No risks are taken with pregnant personnel, and operatives taking risks anyway while pregnant often face discipline (very possibly the withdrawal of parental rights and contact) once that child is born or otherwise delivered from the womb.

Needless to say, the absurd costs and conditions that burden pregnancy and parenthood among the Masses are virtually absent within the Technocratic Union. In place of the "sacrifice everything for your children if you don't want them to starve" mentality, the Technocracy provides generously for the parents and prodigies within its ranks. Healthcare, counseling, and financial and emotional support for parents and children alike are all standard elements of Technocratic family protocols. With essentially infinite resources and hyperadvanced technologies at the Union's fingertips, leaving new parents to "go it alone" would be absurd, unmutual, and a waste of good potential.

All that care is, of course, subject to the parents' good behavior. The Technocracy giveth, and the Technocracy taketh away. In the case of children, the Union is well-equipped to provide for offspring whose parents could not fully appreciate

Fairytales and the Technocracy

Storytelling provides an excellent venue for Technocratic indoctrination; and because fairytales, comics, and other paranormal media hold such venerable positions in the social conditioning of children, the Technocracy employs such media into adolescence and — if interest persists — beyond into adulthood.

In Technocratic media, of course, all monsters are bad, "magicians" are corrupt, order must be upheld, and the ultimate happy endings involve conquering Reality Deviants, securing the kingdom, and wielding powerful weapons in defense of the innocent. Courage, reason and intellect are prized virtues, and all hints of sympathy for inhuman creatures are obliterated by the bloody-minded awfulness such creatures display until brave heroes drive them back into the darkness that all such things deserve.

the Union's generosity. Maintaining parental privileges incentivizes loyalty among Technocratic families, and so operatives with children are often the most dedicated agents imaginable.

Childhood Development

To maintain maximum efficiency, prodigies are raised communally within the Union. Children of loyal operatives get to live with their biological parents, but are raised by their parents' friends and colleagues, taken on field trips, taught valuable skills, and – from four years of age onward – taught at specialized Technocratic academies. This way, the children learn from infancy that they are parts of a much greater whole. Communal nurturing teaches them to respect authority, to follow the rules of their community, and to value being part of something larger than one's self.

Occasionally, the Technocracy adopts children born outside the Union: refugees, orphans of war and circumstance, kids taken from Reality Deviants, young geniuses, Awakened children, and so forth. Although charitable motivations are not entirely absent from such adoptions, the Union expects great things – or, at the very least, good service – from these adopted prodigies. Already Awakened youngsters are vigorously schooled, inspired, and Socially Processed to replace the chaos of mystic superstition with the sublime order of Enlightened Science. Instruction is provided for kids displaying apparent paranormal talent with a mind for possible applications, while children with no discernable gift for Enlightenment are trained in mundane yet useful skills and knowledges. No child is, as the saying goes, left behind. All prodigies, regardless of their origins, are treated as full members of the Technocratic family, and that family nurtures greatness in whatever form such greatness might take.

Education

Children whether born into the Union or adopted into it begin their formal schooling at age 4; their training, however, begins the moment they enter the Technocracy. Every element of a prodigy's life is shaped to instill a sense of confidence, power and belonging, with the expectation that the child will be obedient, smart, and dedicated to the family. Science, obviously, is an essential element of education, but physical and mental conditioning are almost as important. In earlier generations, Technocratic nannies and instructors aimed to shape each child toward a particular destiny. In recent years, though, Constructs have experimented with – and in some cases abandoned entirely – that rigid and often industrial approach. Although schooling and training remain rigorous for prodigies of every kind, the current trend involves monitoring each child's individual aptitudes, and then gearing their training toward the things that intrigue the child most. Data has shown that a motivated prodigy is more productive and accomplished than one forced toward a particular path against their will – and given the Union's current state of urgent transformation, anything that turns a prodigy into an effective, dedicated agent is a bonus in the Technocratic ledger.

Once prodigies reach 12 years of age, they get sent from their parents' Construct to a Technocratic boarding academy

in a different region of Union control. Ideally, this separation fosters worldly connections with other young Technocrats, encourages the prodigy's sense of self-beyond-one's-parents, and introduces that prodigy to skills and influences from peers hailing from different regions and cultures, which also fosters a sense of global community, benefitting the Union as a whole. Where once the Technocracy allowed cultures to segregate – even, during the colonial era, segregated them by force – it now seeks to give its prodigies the best possible education, in a diverse setting that (ideally) helps them avoid irrational and unmutual prejudices against people who don't look or sound like them. Since these new policies were enacted, hate crimes and bigoted behavior between prodigies of different cultures have decreased exponentially, while linguistic fluency and cultural acumen have increased to unprecedented levels.

(Certain Constructs within the United States, of course, currently refuse to participate in this international boarding school system, stating that American children "deserve" an American education.)

Technocratic boarding academies operate both as homes and as educational facilities, raising children in the Union to serve the greater Technocratic purpose. Although failing grades and rebellious behavior invoke stern reprimands and Social Processing (with, in extreme cases, harsh and possibly awful punishments, especially within a Fallen Technocracy metaplot), prodigies are given every chance and encouragement to excel. Especially bright and motivated students receive generous rewards: money, privileges, access to elite labs or training, and other appropriate versions of the rewards earned by adult operatives. Given the intense need youngsters have for status, belonging, and a sense of purpose in an uncertain world, Technocratic academies meet many needs that mundane schools do not meet and never could.

Adolescent Mentorship and Conditioning

Adolescence, biologically speaking, drives young animals crazy. The transition between childhood and maturity activates physical and psychological processes that would, in adults, be considered insanity. Combined with the social stresses of adolescence (which are, in turn, exacerbated by those same processes), a young person undergoes radical and often unpleasant shifts of body and temperament. The Technocracy knows this, and it plans accordingly. When prodigies hit puberty (a process that might be dramatically accelerated, especially in the case of clones, lab-born prodigies, and genegineered or otherwise enhanced children), it has protocols ready to deal with the social and physical fallout.

Adolescent prodigies are assigned to mentors who suit their previously noted strengths; academics gets assigned to detail-oriented scholars, athletic prodigies receive intense physical and martial training, artistically inclined prodigies receive advanced artistic and media training, and so forth. These mentors cultivate those strengths while observing other areas

of interest and occasionally provoking breakthroughs in new and possibly unexamined areas. Whatever fields the prodigies pursue, the mentors keep them busy, providing just enough reward to incentivize progress and loyalty. Inevitable rebellions are used as vehicles for insight – punished, obviously, but also probed for potential breakthroughs in new areas of interest or expertise. Ideally, this balance of reward, demand, and restriction cultivates adolescent energies toward constructive means. Certain prodigies, of course, cannot be shaped or channeled constructively, and although the mentors regret the necessity of harsh and sometimes fatal responses, the integrity of the whole must be considered above the comfort of the individual.

Prodigy Legal Status

Young children are exempt from the laws of the Union. Although there are, of course, age-suitable forms of discipline (some of them quite harsh), pre-adolescent kids remain immune to the normal infractions and punishments by which adult operatives abide. During adolescence, an intermediary protocol of rules and disciplines takes over. At the solid and sensible age of 20 (removed from the vague whims of law among the Masses), those adolescents become adults under Technocratic law, receiving a default T1 Rank and a base SDS of 3. Where they go from that point onward is for the newly adulted operative to decide.

An Engine of Control

In the light of recent reforms, it might be tempting to see the Technocratic Union as a beacon of progressive thought, shining a bright and hopeful contrast to the hidebound Nine Traditions.

It is not.

Although the Union has always been considerably more complex than outside stereotypes would lead us to believe, the Technocracy remains – despite its current emphasis on reform – a fundamentally militaristic totalitarian engine of global control. Yes, current agents have been granted greater levels of autonomy and human imperfection than their predecessors had received, life within the Union remains a tightly prescribed and strictly enforced existence. One does not “quit” this life and go on to another line of work – not without incurring a terminal grudge from the most powerful conspiracy in human history, anyhow. As good as their intentions might be, the Union’s reforms are utilitarian measures taken to maximize efficiency and enhance the investments Management makes on behalf of its agents and operations. Brutal tyranny is not cost-effective, after all, and people work harder and remain more loyal when they’re treated reasonably well.

It’s no coincidence that DOM, the acronym for the Technocracy’s Doctrine of Mutuality, is also a Latin prefix meaning “house” and inferring mastery over others. Dominion and domination are still foundations of the Technocratic mission, and so despite looser strictures and broader definitions of identity within the Union’s ranks, the Technocracy’s core paradigm remains the principle of ultimate control.

TISFL: A Technocratic Life



Once fully vested within the Technocratic ranks, an operative enters a strict environment in which generous rewards, draconian punishments, and quiet yet inescapable pressures become a constant presence in each operative’s life. Most of those elements have been covered already in Units 1 and 2, and in the appropriate sections of *Mage 20* and *The Book of Secrets*. Certain features of that life, however, are not nearly as obvious as 6TS rank or SDS status.

No discussion of the Technocracy would be complete without a description of its practices of covert and overt control, and of the consequences for failure to adequately defend one’s utility and loyalty to the organization. In many regards, this subtle yet pervasive peer pressure resembles military life or the office atmosphere of many corporations. Unlike the military or an office job, however, a Technocratic operative cannot eventually retire or resign. As a common expression among operatives (especially those in the lower ranks) assures us, “Tis full”: TISFL – the Technocracy IS For Life.

Ideally, this life features a comforting degree of structure. For many people (especially the sorts of people drawn to an organization like the Technocratic Union), a predictable system of rewards for productive obedience, and punishments for counterproductive infractions, seem like a perfectly reasonable – even desirable – state of affairs. As paradigms of personal liberties give way to “challenging philosophies” and “dark enlightenments” that postulate people and nations are better off under tyranny than under democratic systems, the appeal of strict and structured government gains traction once again among the Masses and Enlightened folk alike. Change, as noted earlier, is frightening. And so, people entering Technocratic service seek comfort and protection from a world of ever-growing chaos.

The Technocratic leadership appreciates their loyalty; doesn’t always reward it but appreciates it. The Union’s task is far easier to pursue when almost everyone is willing to be on more or less the same page.

Power, Status, and the Inevitable Shark Tank

Under the 6TS model, initiated operatives are supposed to rise through the ranks to achieve supervisory posts, attain the Managerial rank, and possibly go on to eventually reach the coveted T5 “eye of the pyramid.”

That’s the story. That isn’t how it really works.

The Technocracy is a meritocracy, at least in principle. The truth, as always, is both more complex and less assuring. Just as very few enlisted armed-forces personnel become generals, and even fewer office drones work their way up to the CEO position, so it is that very few Technocratic operatives, regardless of accomplishment, ever reach beyond the T3 rank. They might, like Secret Agent John Courage, work successfully in the field for decades and yet remain field agents only — given private quarters, perhaps, and probably a bunch of nice toys, but seldom true authority. In game terms, your character could reach Enlightenment 10, gather five dots in all of her Spheres, and yet remain on the Front Lines until the day some werewolf pack ends her career in spectacularly gruesome style.

Why is that?

Because authorities, both in the Technocracy and in real life, do not like handing off the reins to their subordinates. Instead, they cling to power through subterfuge, charisma, subtle manipulation, and sometimes overt abuse. Beneath the Union’s comforting structure, that manipulation and abuse churl like a Bond villain’s shark tank; and the threat of falling into that tank, or of being cast into it, or of being simply asked to feed someone else to the sharks, exerts the subtle pressure that keeps even skillful Technocrats in line.

This pressure, obviously, is worse in a Fallen Technocracy metaplot, wherein intentionally malignant superiors demand atrocious actions from their subordinates in the name of Consensus and the greater good. Even if the Technocracy is not corrupted, though, that Union’s authoritarian nature, combined with implacable ambition and catastrophic power, keeps the sharks swirling underneath the gleaming corridors of the Technocratic edifice. Yes, the Technocracy *might* actually be the best salvation for the World of Darkness. As cool as it seems, however, and as sweet as the hypetech toys might be, the upper-Tier gamesmanship keeps life precarious.

Supplementary Data: Infractions and Punishments

As noted in Unit 1, a detailed collection of Technocratic offenses and their punishments can be found **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 223-230).

Like a shark, a wise Technocrat keeps moving. Otherwise, he knows, he’ll inevitably become somebody’s meal.

Management, Performance, and Control

In mundane office society, a disproportionate number of corporate leaders take pleasure in commanding and manipulating their subordinates, and yet cannot bring themselves to enjoy supporting other people except, perhaps, their closest allies and sycophants. A leader with empathy, however, naturally commands more loyalty than a leader who rules by force, fear, or charisma alone. Therefore, it’s in the interest of the established leadership to bar empathetic candidates from positions of significant authority, lest those more-effective leaders threaten the hegemony of their less-compassionate peers. Empathy, after all, locks the shark tank door, which robs the crueler authorities of both an enjoyable form of entertainment and a useful tool for “inspiring” obedience in the ranks.

In a functioning hierarchy — especially one focused on perpetual war and crisis — obedience is essential. However, paradoxically, a person *too easily* obedient, especially one easily compelled to obey her superiors, has automatically disqualified herself from a high-Tier leadership position. Once exposed, such “weakness” paints a target on the back of its owner. Lucky Technocrats find themselves exploited by a manager who recognizes the value of taking a light hand; the unlucky ones are used as targets for punishment, or else made into examples of what *not* to do, for the edification of their peers.

The tyranny of the incompetent and unsympathetic leadership (as is portrayed in popular art) begins with the concept of “teamwork.” We’re told that the best thing we can do is to “take one for the team.” The military definition — one of the oldest examples of such conditioning — declares that everyone has an assigned role and so that they owe it to the group to execute that role above all others; as Unit 1 states, “There’s no ‘I’ in ‘team.’” Such sayings hammer down nails that have a tendency to stand out too far.

Hammering Stubborn Nails Down

Although the Union features a wide array of infractions and punishments — so many, in fact, that it’s impossible to avoid them all — a clever supervisor prefers to keep subordinates in check through more subtle methods. Constant abuse, quite often, invites resentment, rebellion, and retaliation. Ah, but a supervisor who breaks an underling’s spirit without obviously picking up a hammer? Now, there’s someone truly worthy of authority within a totalitarian conspiracy!

Although such tactics might prove counterproductive when applied to Enlightened personnel, most Technocratic front organizations employ them freely on unEnlightened personnel. Such challenges, a supervisor may declare, weed out

the chaff among those mundane employees while forcing the best of them to the top of the heap — possibly goading them, in the process, toward Enlightenment.

Grunt Work

The easiest way to grind someone down without overt and formal punishment involves giving them shit assignments; similarly, assigning a collection of hard tasks to a willing subordinate is an excellent way to convince that person to “earn our trust” and dangling the possibility of rewards as motivation for those tasks. Field ops, lab techs, and office personnel make perfect recipients for grunt-work jobs, and such onerous tasks become essential “initiations” for new recruits, recently transferred personnel, fresh “green” team members, and low-Tier Syndicate ops eager to “make their bones” in a new position.

Generally, it’s easy to ensure that all sorts of “service roles” are available for operatives craving structure, favors, and limited advancement; wherever there are masters, arbitrary tasks can be discovered. When it comes to punishment, too, creative solutions abound — solutions that may amuse members of the Technocratic power structure while breaking down and digesting the energy of operatives at all Tiers beneath them.

Termination and Conversion

Actual Degree 7 termination, while often threatened, rarely occurs. Technocratic leaders are not so foolish as to completely waste precious human capital. The mere *possibility* of termination, though, commands obedience among most operatives, and leadership makes it its business to identify and terminate the few operatives who aren’t suitably cowed — to terminate them, or better still, to convert them. After all, as both Winston Smith and Ellison’s Harlequin proved (at least at first glance), the most effective advocate is a former dissident who’s come ‘round to your point of view.

Although Social Processing and Room 101 are the obvious tools of subversion, that’s the problem: they’re often *too* obvious. When you’re dealing with people (such as New World Order agents and Syndicate ops) who specialize in mind games, or with brilliant minds (like those of Progenitor scientists and business geniuses) that are too costly to break without good reason to do so, subtle subversion works better than the rats-in-your-face approach. In this case, a growing collection of juicy “carrots” is more effective than a big, barbed stick. By dangling such carrots in the right direction, a supervisor can change an underling’s mind before that underling even realizes it’s been changed. When those rewards include more freedoms, private quarters, a public newlife, and perhaps a fat bank account, an otherwise-stubborn operative’s principles can be remarkably flexible.

The Performance Plan

A subtle form of spirit-breaking features a nifty little device known as a “performance plan.” While the rules of each plan are inevitably different, the overall gist involves laying out the

exact theoretical requirements of an operative’s duties, and then requiring that operative to carry them out to the letter, perfectly, for a set period (usually 30 days).

On paper (which the unfortunate recipient of The Plan is generally required, in a humiliating pretense of consent, to sign), being simply required to do one’s job seems ludicrously simple. After all, how could the operative in question have been assigned this position if he wasn’t actually competent? In reality, it’s an open secret that most duty descriptions are broadly-worded, self-contradictory, and ambiguous. Phrases such as *build trust*, *promote company values*, *excellent communication skills*, *highly organized*, *attention to detail*, and so forth have become increasingly *en vogue* in even low-level job listings. It all boils down to one simple principle: even if actively threatened, don’t make a single mistake, and keep everyone happy.

Every Technocrat knows — if he’s at all self-reflective — that he could be dismissed from a position and subsequently disciplined at any time, for any number of reasons. Performance plans are kept hyperbolic and ambiguous not only to stroke the egos of those who claim the titles, but also to hang a Sword of Damocles over the head of the agent under review in that performance plan.

Technocrats whisper that failing to fulfill a plan means inevitable demotion, probably amending, and perhaps even termination. Most of the time, though, Technocrats failing their Plans simply find themselves reassigned to a different entity within the Technocracy. For some, the experience haunts them; others eventually circle back to their previous peers, perhaps even commanding more respect than ever before.

However, the first plan, especially if it leads to a change in employment conditions, generally traumatizes its recipient so thoroughly that many operatives do almost anything to avoid the mere *possibility* of receiving another one. This fear makes the operative more likely to screw up, and thus, more liable for further punishment, and so on, and so on, etc. A cleverly sadistic supervisor, then, can sow considerable chaos among her underlings without formally punishing any of them. Although such chaos seems counterproductive (unless, of course, that supervisor and/or the Technocracy at large has been corrupted by Nephantic agents), the turnover and competition within that supervisor’s department keeps things hopping while necessitating even *further* strictness among the ranks.

Technocratic supervisors frequently refer to this constant predator’s game as “blood sport” even when they don’t otherwise appear to be aware that they’re doing so. They dissect interactions, and wordsmith emails; they bicker endlessly overslide-deck design and the exact format of a chart. Every meeting must produce an agenda and action items. Everyone must constantly prove their productivity. Recently, it’s become fashionable to make everyone document their time spent on each activity, and publicly display their purported productivity to all with the brain cells left — or sufficient levels of sadism — to give a fuck. Thus, in the name of greater efficiency, a paradoxical deliberate inefficiency keeps operatives and employees alike from growing too fast, too far, and too ambitiously. After

all, the wheels must remain greased, the workers must recall their proper place, the most ruthless hearts and minds must be allowed to excel, and the weakest links must be tempered, strengthened, or eventually cast aside.



Despite atrocious risks and pervasive security, the Technocracy hosts a number of dissident groups. Some, like the Friends of Courage, strive to save the Union from itself; others, like the Adamites, rebel against what they see as an attempt to supplant humanity with its next stage of evolution. These groups exist within the cracks of the legendary monolith; if nothing else, their persistence reveals how stubborn individual human beings are, even those embracing collective identity and working toward a united future for all the world.

Each entry below also features a suggestion or two about how the group in question might be incorporated into your chronicle. Even if that chronicle does not focus on the Technocracy as a whole, the following dissident factions may provide a host of story opportunities.

Adamites

The Adamites are a faction of human supremacists harboring bigotry against, fear of, and disdain for enhanced operatives. This extends not only to constructs, clones and LERMUs, but even cyborgs and natural-born but genegineered agents and operatives. To the Adamite these aberrations are inferior because they are creations of humanity. Ergo, humanity *must* be superior. Like most bigots with an overinflated sense of importance, Adamites are frequently motivated by fear. This fear manifests in attempts to abuse, discredit, and otherwise interfere with operatives perceived to be of “lesser” status.

Human supremacy is absolutely unmutual and strongly frowned upon within the Union. An Adamite indulging their prejudice openly can expect a reprimand or a visit to Room 101. As such, the Adamites tend to work in secret, subtly causing difficulties for their enhanced comrades and bullying through microaggression.

Chronicle Applications

Adamites can show up in your chronicle in a number of ways. Groups containing enhanced characters could face off against a rival amalgam with Adamite leanings, upping the animosity between the groups. Likewise, an amalgam of enhanced operatives reporting to a supervisor with Adamite tendencies could make for some good tension, though this is something that should be handled very delicately, as prejudice can quickly turn offensive and suck the joy out of a game.

Beneath the gleaming surface, the shark tank awaits.

Most operatives won't see it openly, but almost everyone within the Union knows it's there.

Dissident Factions

The Cassandra Complex

The Technocracy has eyes and ears almost everywhere on the planet. What they don't know is that there are eyes and ears on them as well — and mouths to carry that information, too. The *Strategic Prognostication and Data Dispersal Unit* (SPDDU, occasionally mockingly pronounced “spid-doo”), better known by their informal name *the Cassandra Complex*, or just *the Cassandras*, are these internal eyes and ears. Are they *actually* psychic? If not, they're just as good. They collect information, sometimes before it even comes out, and disperse it to the right people at the right time.

Who *are* the right people? No one really knows, unless they receive an anonymous data dump from the Cassandras, often with a gentle suggestion on how to use the invaluable information contained in the package. If you've received something once from the Cassandras, chances are you'll receive something again. Among personnel from the various Conventions, the Void Engineers, Iteration X, and the NWO are most likely to receive Cassandra packages, while Syndicate ops have no single recorded data dump from this particular amalgamated source. (Of course, this doesn't mean *individual* Syndicate operatives haven't received packages as “the right person,” but such packages were likely burned or erased after use.) Cassandra packages cannot be traced, and for good reason. Each package contains sensitive information, things that could get even the most spotless operative processed by PsychOps if they were discovered with it.

When is the right time? Cassandra packages never arrive in an awkward situation (unless such awkwardness was the intended goal) or around dangerous people. Operatives receiving Cassandra packages may do so at home, alone, or they might find them in their desk at work, under their seat on the bus, or inside of their lunch order. Whether or not the recipient decides to open said package is completely up to the operative in question, but all Cassandra packages self-detonate within 12 hours if not opened by the recipient—and detonate immediately if they're opened by anybody else.

If a recipient chooses not to open a Cassandra package, that person may be safe for now, but the lack of information will come back to bite that person in the ass later. To add insult to injury, if a recipient spurns a Cassandra Complex package, that person isn't likely to ever receive another such package in this lifetime.

A Cassandra operative could be anyone. They blend in perfectly with their surroundings, never announce their



true allegiance, and clearly understand the principles of Correspondence and Psychodynamics quite well. Be careful what you say in mixed company, though; you could be part of a Cassandra's next report.

Chronicle Applications

In game terms, the Cassandras work best as enigmatic plot hooks, not as discernable characters. Although a Storyteller might build a chronicle around a Cassandra Complex agent or two, the need for secrecy would be *incredibly* high for such characters, with horrible-death consequences if those agents act even remotely like the typical heroes in a roleplaying game.

The Friends of Courage

Operative "Secret Agent" John Courage is perhaps the least-suited person imaginable for running a clandestine operation dedicated to cleaning up corruption within the Technocratic Union. Such a task would be better suited to members of the Special Information Security Division (see below), or perhaps to any other methodology within the Union. Surely, *anyone* who's capable of keeping their head down without becoming a Technocratic celebrity would be a finer choice for such a role. Thus, in the quarter-century or so since rumors about the "Friends of Courage" began to circulate, several alternate possibilities have suggested themselves to Technocrats with half a brain: John Courage is a diversion, John Courage is a figurehead, John Courage is a myth, or John Courage and his so-called "friends" are bait.

Certain *very* quiet whispers have even begun to suggest that if there *are* Nephantic agents hidden throughout the Technocracy then perhaps John Courage is one of them.

As it stands, the Friends of Courage are surprisingly efficient at what they do. Most Technocrats outside the FoC dismiss this dissident methodology as a bunch of madmen charging at windmills. Of course, the Technocratic Union has problems — it's made up of humans. Any group larger than three people is basically doomed to back-alley deals and minor corruption if it intends to get anything done at all, and so they live with those compromises, however odious some of the compromises might seem. However, the only example of the crusading Friends of Courage most operatives and administrative staff have to point to is "Secret Agent" (his title, he insists — or is it really *him* who insists upon it?) John Courage himself — a man (if he really *is*, or ever *was*, a man) who has supposedly been Socially Processed so many times he doesn't even remember his original name. Naturally, all of the other Friends of Courage members would *have* to be like him, right?

Well, not exactly.

Agent John Courage knows how he's perceived, and he happily uses that perception as a smokescreen for his "friends" investigations. If everyone else is busy looking at the lunatic with the sinecure, the Friends of Courage can accomplish the actually *useful* tasks. Whether by receiving information from the Cassandras, working private investigations for overtime pay, or simply being in the right place at the right time, operatives within the Friends of Courage pursue any hint of infiltration they

come across. It's rare for them to work in groups of more than three operatives (again, due to that whole "human corruption" thing), but if and when something big does come up — such as reliable proof of Nephantic influence — several Friends of Courage may meet in neutral territory and hash out a plan.

Most Friends keep their heads down. If they're caught by the wrong people, they know they'll be sent to a particularly vicious round of Processing for questioning their superiors. Worse still, if they *are* right about Nephantic infiltration then the consequences for getting caught by the wrong people are considerably worse than the most nightmarish rumors about Room 101. Out of necessity, they operate in a structure of covert cells, all connected by a handful of enigmatic signs but none knowing what the group's true size, membership or capabilities might be. Some Friends have tried to make contact with Project Invictus, with mixed results. Others maintain contacts within the Cassandra Complex. At least one Friend is a member of the SISD (see below) and has been looking to obtain any new information about the Special Projects Division that might be floating around. One Friend is investigating the mythical group SEAI (see below) despite the ridicule this draws from her colleagues. All FoCs have at least one project they're covertly working on — so if you need help with an anomalous occurrence, look for a Friend of Courage. Or look for "Secret Agent" John Courage at least — he's easy to spot, and there will be at least three more Friends of his in the background at any given time.

Chronicle Applications

Depending on the Storyteller's plans, and their thoughts about a Union that's corrupt from the inside out, the Friends of Courage might be a band of fanatics chasing their delusions; a network of covert agents fighting a shadow-war inside a shadowy conspiracy; the best hope for a Fallen Union; a reformist faction dedicated to purging the Technocracy of its worst elements and bringing about a new Golden Age for humanity under the aegis of a benevolent Union; a diversion employed by Nephandi to undercut the Union's stability while getting its finest agents to out themselves; a Marauder plot founded upon a Technocratic icon so Mad he truly believes he's sane; or maybe just a huge elaborate hoax at the expense of operatives willing to live and die for a fundamentally absurd cause.

It's probably several of those things at once.

Won't it be fun to find out?

The Harbingers of Avalon

A small but influential group based out of the United Kingdom, the *Harbingers of Avalon* draw inspiration from the epic of King Arthur. These agents cling to values displayed in Arthurian legend, and in some ways venerate the ideals of the Round Table to an unmutual degree. The goals and beliefs of the Harbingers of Avalon are closer to those of the historic Order of Reason, including a much more accepting

stance toward mysticism. The Harbingers of Avalon strive to be the embodiment of Arthurian ideal and see the rest of the Technocracy as falling short of that ideal.

Like Arthur, the Harbingers of Avalon are perfectly willing to fraternize with and seek the counsel of wizards. This fact alone makes them inherently unmutual. This, combined with their rebellious intent to cleanse the Union of perceived corruption, makes the Harbingers a hidden enemy within the Union's ranks. Depending on the metaplot options used in your chronicle, the Harbingers may have left, or be preparing to leave the Union.

Chronicle Applications

A Harbingers of Avalon chronicle may focus on an amalgam who adheres to Arthurian ideals. In such a story, the players assume roles of their own modern Round Table, seeking to return the Technocracy to former glory and purity of purpose. Pulling inspiration from the legends of Arthur, this Round Table may also be doomed, or at the least tempted, to fall to the same flaws as Arthur and his knights.

Another option might explore the extraction and defection of the Harbingers from the Union's ranks. Reorganizing themselves as *Navalon*, these defectors may seek comfort within the Disparate Alliance, as suggested in *Mage 20* p. 200. Alternatively, they may choose to pursue safety within the Council of Nine or strike out on their own as a lone Craft.

Project Invictus

It doesn't exist.

Quite simply, Project Invictus is a rumor put out by the Syndicate, a simple ruse meant to keep Technocratic operatives on their toes. Reality Deviants involved in the Special Projects Division (SPD)? Laughable. Never mind that vampire you saw come out of the meeting last Wednesday. She definitely *was* a vampire, too.

Anyway, you don't need to worry about Project Invictus. Anyone who believes there's a network of cells inside the Technocratic Union heroically striving against the darkness inherent within the Syndicate's SPD really should report to PsychOps. Maybe you're feeling sick. It's all right — the stress of the job gets to *everyone* eventually. It's really all right. Once you start living in a world full of conspiracies and lies, it's natural to start seeing them everywhere. Are you getting enough food? Enough rest? Stress can sometimes preclude self-care. Go take some time for yourself. The Union will still be here when you get back, I promise.

Where was I? Oh yes, Project Invictus doesn't exist. It *can't* exist. The Conventions and Methodologies of the Technocratic Union check everything in triplicate. You can't sneeze without an operative knowing. Of course, we've had paperwork snafus; every major organization does, but a group like Invictus could never would have escaped notice for this long, especially not

after the Dimensional Anomaly. Too many agents were lost. Even if Project Invictus *did* exist, their membership would be down to a fraction of the original total.

What would that fraction look like? My, you're curious today, aren't you? Best guess is that this so-called "Project" Invictus would be something like four or five operatives and a handful of extraordinary citizens. That is, of course, assuming they haven't all swanned off to join the Traditions or the Nephandi. An actual Project Invictus would be treason of the highest order against the Union. Being expected to make judgment calls about who is, and is not, allowed to survive without proper authorization goes against everything we stand for. It would be suicide. It would be vigilantism. It would be impossible.

Is that all? Good. I'm going to have to ask you to step over here. One of the operatives from PsychOps is very concerned about our conversation and wants to check you out...

Chronicle Applications

Project Invictus chronicles are espionage, intrigue, and superspy fiction dialed up to eleven. The agents of Invictus cannot trust anyone. Double and triple agents are everywhere. Communication is handled through blind drops, Mind Adjusted proxies, and self-destructing communiques. Allies are rare and trust even rarer. The amalgam or cell might possibly not even trust one another. No one knows who is involved in Project Invictus, often including the operatives of Project Invictus.

The Special Information Security Division (SISD)

While not technically a dissident faction, the *Special Information Security Division* (SISD) of the Syndicate finds themselves between a rock and a cliff face that plunges straight into hell. While the group existed before the SPD, and it continues to have a far greater reach than it might at first appear they do, their main goal right now involves dealing with the fallout left by the sudden disappearance of the Special Projects Division. Though SPD disappeared two decades ago (perhaps in the Dimensional Anomaly), the mission of the SISD has not changed: To prevent the rest of the Technocratic Union from realizing that one of their most dangerous assets has up and vanished.

In an act of desperation, the SISD stepped up to become the new SPD. In a way, this makes sense; The SISD were tapped to protect and serve the SPD once it was formed. They know everything that was made available to know about each and every member of the SPD, plus a few things that were collected only through recordings and brain scans. The SISD also has access to personal effects, laboratory notes, meeting minutes, and the odd hypertech (with a nasty habit of breaking down when someone isn't looking) that belonged to members of the SPD before their disappearance — including information and gear not from Enlightened operatives, but instead Reality Deviants working toward a determinably hostile goal. Those

RDs are perhaps the most difficult SPD personnel for SISD operatives to mimic. Shielding one's aura isn't terribly difficult, but what happens if someone from PsychOps gets you in a brain scanner? What if the cults and creatures apparently behind those Deviant SPD operatives come looking for them and find you instead? Perhaps worst of all, what happens if a member of Project Invictus is sent out to kill you?

Oh, yes, that's a major downside of being in the highly decorated and trusted ranks of SISD: No one told Project Invictus (which somehow still exists) that the real SPD has vanished. Pensions and benefits have increased since members of the Special Information Security Division, while posing as members of the Special Projects Division, have gone missing. There haven't been too many missing members yet, but there've been enough disappearances that SISD leadership is starting to get worried. They can't let the rest of the Union know that the horrors contained within the SPD are beyond their reach now — that would cause a major upheaval within the Technocratic ranks. They can't open up to the members of Project Invictus who come to kill them, either; Project Invictus doesn't properly exist, and there's no way to tell anyone about what happened to SPD without proper authorization — quite literally, the information is psychically sealed inside the minds of SISD operatives, and can only be verbally released with a Manchurian Candidate activation phrase. So far, SISD agents targeted by Invictus operatives (and surviving) have been subduing and capturing those Invictus operatives, then sending them off to allies in PsychOps for Social Processing.

What of the hypertech that SISD inherited from their Reality Deviant employers? The answer is a resounding shrug. Most of the hypertech was either half-complete or in the beta-testing stages when the SPD went poof, and SISD does not have the first idea of how to go about maintaining or operating it. Officially, they catalog and store that equipment, hoping that SPD will come back and deal with the reality toxins that have slowly begun leaching out of certain inchoate objects. Unofficially, many SISD operatives employ what are kindly called "Enlightened disposal methods" once they're finished cataloging, including but not limited to: dumping in the Umbra, locking objects in lead-and-gold lined boxes and throwing them into the ocean, burying weapons alongside radioactive wastes, and simply burning things that look flammable. Their reasoning is that, before all else, their duty is to protect the interests of the Syndicate (and by extension, the Technocratic Union).

They're not wrong. Just a little shortsighted.

Chronicle Applications

Special Information Security Division stories offer an intrigue-centric chronicle with a heavy dose of cosmic horror. For groups including members of SISD, the tension of trying to solve the mysteries of Special Projects Division while preventing the rest of the Union from doing the same can fuel endless hours of subtle manipulation, procedural investigation, and

Supplemental Data: Where in the World is the Special Projects Division?

The undisputed black sheep of the Syndicate family, the Special Projects Division had been collaborating with the unEnlightened multinational corporate powerhouse Pentex, and its hundreds of disparate subsidiaries. Pentex, for their part, is rife with weird interdimensional entities and atavistic RDs of all stripes. The whole operation makes literal monsters, ruins the planet seemingly purely for the sake of destruction, and is a vile cesspit of primal religious gobbledegook, but it makes money hand-over-fist, and there's no way the Syndicate was going to pass that up.

Naturally, keeping the truth of its partner organization from the rest of the Union took up a big part of SPD's day-to-day operations. The money rolling in from SPD's corporate alliances, however, and the marvelous (if occasionally tricky) gear it circulated into the Union's ranks, kept most Technocrats from probing too deeply into Special Projects operations. Still, certain people — most notably Project Invictus and the Friends of Courage, had noted this Methodology's "eccentricities", and had initiated covert war against the SPD when...

...the entire Methodology pretty much disappeared.

The Special Projects Division vanished in 1999, perhaps during the Dimensional Anomaly, if that metaplot element occurred within the history of your chronicle. None of the SPD agents, however, were in the Umbra at the time. While the Syndicate still receives quarterly sales dividends from Pentex in the name of the SPD, the Technocratic Union has never been able to reach anyone in the Methodology since the disappearance of those personnel. There have been rumors of various SPD higher-ups reappearing in Singapore, the Hague, and other important locations from 2007 onward, but every time the SISD and Project Invictus have tried to investigate those appearances, the higher-ups have already disappeared again.

The sales dividends from Pentex are particularly unnerving. Whenever the Syndicate begins a highly clandestine operation, they initiate what's called a "black box," — basically an area where energy goes in, money comes out, and no one asks any questions. So, what is the Syndicate putting into this particular black box, considering that they are still getting paid in the name of the SPD? The answer might be an especially unpleasant surprise.

For more data about the SPD prior to its disappearance, see **Technocracy: Syndicate** (pp. 61-64) and **Convention Book: Syndicate** (pp. 16 and 54-57); **Tales of Magick: Dark Adventures** (pp. 63-65); **Guide to the Technocracy** (pp. 18, 190); and perhaps the **Werewolf: The Apocalypse** sourcebooks **W20 Book of the Wyrm**, **Rot of the Flesh**, and **Freak Legion: A Players Guide to Fomori**.

eldritch terror. As the characters unravel the secrets of SPD, they unearth greater threats and deeper connections to the monstrous Reality Deviants of Pentex.

A chronicle starring characters of Project Invictus might also interact with SISD, potentially discovering the ruse within the Syndicate. This presents an interesting moral challenge for the Invictus agents. Do they turn in the SISD, break the whole thing open for the Union at large, and deal with the fallout, or do they begin working with SISD to uncover the final fate of Special Projects Division?

The Society of Enlightened Altruistic Ideologies (SEAI)

Perhaps one of the odder factions inside the Technocracy, the *Society of Enlightened Altruistic Ideologies* (SEAI, pronounced *sea-ah*, for short) has no truly Enlightened members at all. Instead, SEAI is comprised solely of extraordinary citizens working for various Conventions and Methodologies within the Technocracy. While the vast majority of the SEAI membership works within the Syndicate, representatives of Iteration X, the NWO, and the Progenitors are also plentiful. In fact, the only

faction of the Technocracy that is *not* represented within SEAI are the Void Engineers.

On the outside, SEAI functions like a combination labor union and social club. There are few people, Enlightened or otherwise, who can understand the stress an extraordinary citizen goes through on a day-to-day basis. These people straddle two worlds, the Enlightened and the mundane, trying to keep themselves sane. There is no good place for extraordinary citizens to be, other than here, in the company of other understanding folks. Meetings often consist of wage negotiations, drafting complaints and solutions, and a bit of light, non-superstitionist ritual. No SEAI meeting is, of course, complete without coffee and cake.

Most Enlightened members of the Technocracy pay no attention to the SEAI beyond acknowledging the complaints and requisitions requests sent in by the group's front-facing coordinators. Sometimes, SEAI might even receive a response. Naturally, this is a rare occurrence — Enlightened members of the Technocratic Union have more important things to do than get supplies to a paper-pusher who could have just gone down to the nearest office supply store on their own.

Woe to those, however, who consider SEAI a joke. While their members may not have earthshaking magical powers at their fingertips, these initiated T1 support personnel are absolutely dangerous to an unsuspecting mage. The membership of SEAI has learned enough about reality and the Consensus to want more of it, and as employed extraordinary citizens, these citizens have access to the backing and technology they need to begin experimenting with things beyond their understanding. A binding feeling among members of the SEAI is *resentment*. They feel that, at some point in their life, they were not given what they were owed (that is, an Enlightened Avatar), and so they have the moral right to take it by force, other mages be damned. These people were *owed* their Avatar; they've worked hard for Enlightenment, they've seen what's going on behind the curtain, and the fact that these dedicated citizens *don't* have such abilities is a massive injustice. Enlightened Technocrats may deny the existence of the Avatar all they want, but the members of SEAI have seen enough to convince them otherwise.

Fueled by rumors that the Progenitors are experimenting with mass mindwipe technology, the SEAI is taking matters into its own sorcerous hands. The group has yet to capture a Tradition mage alive, but that is the end goal. Right now, they're building and studying PsychOps tech, intercepting communications, performing careful surveillance, and taking thousands of pages of intricately detailed notes sealed with rudimentary spells. When they get their hands on a Tradition mage, SEAI will Mindwipe them and steal their Avatar. Some disagreement exists as to whether they will attempt to shatter it and share it among themselves, study it and try to replicate it, or simply transfer it to the most deserving citizen among them, but all members agree that they deserve the Avatars that have been so wrongly given to undeserving Reality Deviants. A few members have also begun taking notes about Enlightened members of the Technocracy who publicly ridicule them, and marking these operatives down in the "undeserving" category as well.

Unsurprisingly, this alarming agenda has given rise to some peculiar behaviors and assertions among the members of SEAI. Almost all of them deny the existence of Nephandi, dismissing the Fallen as a quaint fairy tale or a warning against the evils of Tradition mages. Paradoxically, though, they tend to self-divide amongst their own ranks not by Technocratic Convention, but by which Tradition they would have joined had their rightful Avatar come to them. This conceit also serves to throw off their Technocratic masters; after all a bunch of extraordinary citizens calling themselves "Hermetics" isn't worth taking *seriously*, right?

Chronicle Applications

Chronicles featuring characters in the Society of Enlightened Altruistic Ideologies can be handled a couple of ways. There is certainly a great deal of potential for dark comedy in a story about disgruntled office workers wanting to work their way up the corporate ladder through mindwipes and bloody rituals. Juxtaposing the mundane and the bizarre is a staple of Technocracy stories, and SEAI grants an opportunity to explore this trope in extremes.

In chronicles where the party assumes the roles of Enlightened operatives, half the fun can be discovering the extent of SEAI's ambitions. This can be presented through a standard investigation in which an inciting incident introduces a trail of clues that point to the SEAI. Another option could involve the SEAI citizens involved in the conspiracy serving as support staff to the amalgam. Over the course of a number of unrelated adventures, small clues are brought to light that something is off about the support staff. Equipment goes missing, mistakes are made, and inconsistencies in menial paperwork begin to plague the Construct. Do the operatives discover the truth in time?

Cross-Convention Initiatives



While some members of the Technocratic Union prefer to keep their work within the confines of their own Convention, the assets of the Technocracy are most effective when applied cooperatively. Cross-Convention Initiatives enable greater flexibility and a broader profile of skills that can be brought to bear to accomplish a set of goals. In addition to the examples below, see Unit 5 for descriptions of Cross-Convention Initiatives in action around the globe.

The Challenge Fate Foundation

The retired CEO of one of the world's most innovative tech companies formed the Foundation (their website tells you) with the intent of using technology to address the fundamental insecurities – food, clean water, safe housing – faced by much of humanity.

Peter Smyth, in truth, was bored and lonely – he'd never had time for marriage or children, though he was honorary

“uncle” to the children of a few business associates. He’d gotten very tired of hearing his wealthy peers explain piously that war and world poverty was inevitable, and he had a habit, when he was bored, of deciding to save the world. He knew from long practice that his greatest strength was providing vision as guidance for other peoples’ work – and he just coincidentally had several billion dollars to help make his visions reality, and the connections to find the right people to do it.

People have commented on how similar the Foundation is to high-end boutique tech companies, and in many ways they’re not wrong – Smyth designed it that way, though with some important differences. They recruit very selectively, choosing individuals who are both smart and skilled, but who also fit with the Challenge Fate culture – people working hard to make the world a better place. His business associates, some of them Specialists, have suggested one or two candidates, but most are recruited from the general population for the excellence of their work and high potential. A new Challenge Fate employee finds that they’re expected to stretch and grow, to identify needs, create projects, and mentor young scientists, and that the Foundation supplies all the needed resources for this work. As a result, the Foundation, backed not only by Smyth’s billions but also a flood of donations, has grown and evolved organically, occasionally splitting off a section to become an entity of its own, to better implement effective solutions. Its size varies from month to month – sometimes from hour to hour, when an urgent need has been identified – but it rarely drops below five hundred employees (many of whom are scattered across the globe at any given time) and experienced employees know to expect a new split if it’s been over three thousand for more than a year.

Chronicle Applications

The Challenge Fate Foundation offers a framework for chronicles that focus on the Technocracy as heroic saviors, working to save the Masses from disease, famine, and climate change. The Challenge Fate Foundation does not fight Reality Deviants and HEs, they fight water pollution and disease outbreaks. Many of the initiatives discussed in Unit 5 are perfect examples of the type of work the Challenge Fate Foundation engages in. If you want to focus on telling stories about making the world brighter, safer, and better through Enlightened Science, the Challenge Fate Foundation is for you.

DMS: The Department of Metahuman Studies

Superhuman abilities are nothing new to the Progenitors. Such modifications have been essential to the Convention’s pursuits since medieval times. Every human being, after all, has hit a point where they wish they could be smarter, stronger, faster or tougher than their frail human bodies allow, and Cosian and Progenitor specialists have always been willing to help fulfill such wishes. Ah, but with the current craze for superheroes in mass media, the Convention saw a perfect opportunity to



work their specialty into the Consensus. Thus, the DMS was born – a department dedicated to expanding the capacity of the human species right out in the open.

Instead of hiding their research in covert labs, DMS Progenitors operate through clandestine but acknowledged fronts: military research institutes, “hush-hush” underground operations where “only the right people” get to hear about the secret, anti-aging and body-building programs, “black labs” operating under the radar of the law, transhumanist cells, New Age wish-fulfillment centers, “manliness networks,” martial arts dojos, and other places where normal people might go in order to attain superhuman powers. Through such venues, the DMS experiments on willing volunteers, tracks their progress (pros and cons), documents the results (pros and cons), and watches



happily as the idea of achievable superhuman enhancement enters mainstream ideas about reality.

Because no sane Progenitor wants to play Ajax to a Deadpool he created, DMS Progenitors remain careful about the degree to which they enhance their subjects. They avoid going too far with the powers and make a point of staying on their subjects' good side. When possible, DMS throws a bit of Social Processing into their "upgrades," instilling backdoor shutdown protocols and convincing their subjects that the Technocracy fronts are, of course, the good guys — the "secret government agency" or the "rebel underground" — that gives those superhuman heroes their greater purpose in life. The most successful test subjects become unwitting extraordinary citizens, ignorant to the greater scope of the

Reality Wars but convinced that they're fighting on the right side of those wars.

Although technically a cross-Convention Initiative, the Department of Metahuman Studies remains firmly within the Progenitor Convention's control. Even so, the Department employs operatives from the other four Conventions. As one might imagine, the DMS is a plum assignment for Progenitors, Iterators, ambitious Syndicate ops, and NWO agents with a flair for drama. Supervisors use this department as a juicy carrot for Technocrats from all Conventions, and so the DMS Progenitors enjoy dedicated service from some of the finest agents the Technocracy has to offer. The post demands a certain flexibility of ethics, naturally, but the chance to live out a comic book series is more than enough

for agents who don't mind the part where they're essentially the villains in that tale.

Chronicle Applications

Isn't it obvious? While the idea of adding superhumans to a *Mage* game seems cheesy at first glance (and could very well be cheesy as hell if performed poorly), the current trend in gritty shows and movies based on street-level comic-book characters – *Luke Cage*, *Jessica Jones*, *Black Lightning*, *Punisher*, *Cloak & Dagger*, *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, *Black Panther*, *Daredevil*, *Joker*, *Birds of Prey*, the *Captain America* movies, and even certain takes on Batman – makes this a natural choice both for *Mage* chronicles and for the Technocracy.

Beyond the potential awesomeness (or awfulness) of adding superbeings to your *Mage* chronicle, there's also the deeper element of shifting Consensus toward a world where such beings are – up to a certain point – part of the established metaphysical “set” of the Technocratic and possibly localized reality zones detailed in *Mage 20*. By “shifting the zone” in their favor, the DMS adds a powerful new edge to Union operations – an edge that cuts (as shown in nearly all of the media mentioned in this entry) both ways. Especially when you consider the possibilities of “Hollywood reality”, a certain degree of metahuman power may already be part of the Consensus when the game begins.

Depending on your approach to the Technocracy, the DMS could echo the horrific operations seen in *Deadpool* and *V for Vendetta*, the more benevolent (but still unnerving) research conducted in *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, an updated take on the Super Solider effort in *Captain America: The First Avenger*, the attempts to echo that program in *Luke Cage* and *Jessica Jones*, the Pride Foundation in *Runaways*, Task Force X in *Suicide Squad*, or (especially in a Nephantic-run Technocracy) a step up from the nightmare at the core of *Frankenstein's Army*. All of these options involve morally questionable activities, but really, even in the best light, the entire Technocracy involves morally questionable activities.

For details about reality zones, see *Mage 20* (pp. 611-617); for “Hollywood reality,” see *The Book of Secrets* (p. 103). Meanwhile, *The Book of Secrets* also features several entries pertinent to the idea of superheroes in *Mage*: The paradigm “We are NOT men!” (pp. 195-196); the characters of Able Ferox, Sanjay Sachdeva, and Tanisha Royale (pp. 176-177, 184-185, and 186-187); the Invigoration and Psionics practices (pp. 201-204); and the entry describing superhero stories in the section “Storytelling, Genre, and Mage” (p. 282).

ETD: The Existential Threats Directorate

In the Avatar Storm metaplot (*Mage 20* p. 479-480), the Void Engineers suffered a major blow when the Dimensional Anomaly effectively destroyed the Dimensional Science Evaluation, Administration, and Training Committee. The ensuing chaos led the Void Engineers to take on a much more militaristic approach to their directive to protect the Masses

from all threats originating from the other side of the Gauntlet. When the dust settled, the Convention was under the democratically elected leadership of the Existential Threats Directorate.

The *Existential Threats Directorate* redirected the Void Engineers to view the cosmos as a collection of theatres of war on both sides of the Gauntlet; with chilling effect on Void Engineer operations. The VEs become grim and stern by comparison in the wake of losing so much, and the ETD is an extension of that loss.

Chronicle Applications

Chronicles including the ETD are likely focused on violent confrontation with alien entities from beyond the Gauntlet. The ETD identifies areas of concern, prioritized by potential threat, and assigns Void Engineer deployments accordingly. Of course, this needn't be a blaster-filled shoot-em-up against teenagers from Mars. A campaign that spends time examining the fear of the unknown can be quite exhilarating and is well within the purview of the ETD. Rather than a clear threat the brass can point to and order an attack, the chronicle focuses on discovering the truth behind unexplained phenomena. In such a story, the ETD sends the characters to investigate bizarre, indecipherable transmissions. Perhaps strange lights and mysterious odors begin to accompany these transmissions. Perhaps members of the amalgam begin missing time or exhibiting strange behavior. One of the most compelling threats a group can face is an enemy that they cannot directly perceive or identify, but who they know is there.

Panopticon

In the 1990s, the Union often sent Watchers into the field to document and observe missions in action. When aided by portable video cameras and revolutionary Kirlian lenses, Watchers were able to see the unseen, detecting supernatural obfuscation and subterfuge. Twenty-first century technology now allows field agents to monitor operations more effectively from a distance. Body cameras, cell phones, web cams, traffic cams, satellites – wherever there might be a camera or an audio feed, New World Order agents can see nearly anywhere you need to be. The 21st century alternative is an extensive organization known as the Panopticon, a name that once referred to a prison architecture proposed by Jeremy Bentham in England's Georgian era in which all prisoners could be observed at once. While this organization is highly amenable to “cross-conventional” recruitment, working directly with citizens from other Conventions, the actual training in Correspondence procedures is a specialty developed in the NWO.

Panopticon field agents, as you would expect, don't need to stand shoulder to shoulder with Black Suits or It X HIT Marks. Every good team needs someone on “overwatch”: keeping untraceable communication open, monitoring the movement of agents when the team splits up, scanning for the enemy, and occasionally acquiring a set of schematics for the

next building the team infiltrates. In the 1990s, Technocrats used to pay telephones would call for an agent known as “the Operator” or “Overwatch.” Since the 90s, the most successful of these agents have been known for their rather distinctive code names (such as *Falcon*, *Eye-Spy*, or *Mother*), but the most common code name is still “Overwatch.”

Behind the scenes, support staff have the less glamorous job of monitoring media and Internet traffic, but a Panopticon field agent can distill all that intel into a form the team needs when they need it. The Panopticon also has access to some more old-fashioned technocratic tech: a system called *manar* that scans for magickal and other supernatural activity. Students of this Methodology often prefer to be near their team if everything goes down twisted – lurking in a van, office, or front – but as long as they’re in the field, they consider themselves as essential as anyone kicking in a front door or zip-tying a hostile captive who’d just as soon fry you with an incantation as glare at you.

Chronicle Applications

Chronicles featuring Panopticon agents can exhibit a great deal of flexibility in genre and tone. One mission can be a covert intelligence gathering mission in which Panopticon stakes out a location while Black Suits infiltrate undercover to gather sensitive data or materials. The next mission could be a pulse pounding heist aimed at stealing some hypertech weapon of mass destruction from an Etherite deviant before they wreak all manner of havoc. Members of Panopticon preferring a more hands on approach might find themselves embroiled in high-octane shootouts or brutal exchanges of fisticuffs with Deviant mages. Just because you are the eye in the sky doesn’t mean you don’t get to hang from the side of a plane while fighting some medieval throwback who wants to plunge the world into an era before plumbing came into vogue. Panopticon may not always be where the action is, but they can often get there in a hurry if they want to.

Conventions and Methodologies



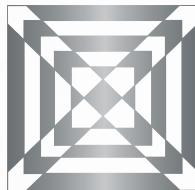
United, they stand; divided, they still stand, albeit somewhat precariously at times. For over 100 years, the five Conventions of the Technocratic Union have provided a five-legged sense of stability in a world that’s remained constantly in flux. The end might be coming soon for these venerable groups (see Unit 8), but for the past century-and-change the Conventions have provided the bones and brains of the Technocratic Union. For as much as they have modified their approaches over the years, the Big Five *are* the Technocracy. Therefore, it’s worth examining them again briefly, if only to see where those changes have occurred among these so-called “static mages.”

Supplemental Data: The Conventions Today

Because the following overviews merely skim the surface of the vast, changing, and often contradictory nature of the five Conventions – groups who have transformed radically since their initial appearance in the early 1990s – we recommend checking out the **Revised Edition Convention Book** series for **Iteration X**, the **NWO**, the **Progenitors**, the **Syndicate**, and the **Void Engineers**. While there’s some fun and inspirational material to be found in the **1st Edition** era **Technocracy** series and the **2nd Edition** era **Guide to the Technocracy**, much of the information regarding the five Conventions in those books is over 20 years behind the times.

ITERATION X

Enlightenment Through Precision and Quantifiable Perfection



To Iteration X, the ultimate way to advance and preserve humanity is to eventually replace the soft and fallible biological parts with dependable and everlasting synthetics, calculations, and metal. In the past, pushing the limits of human capabilities on a mass scale seemed like the only goal worth pursuing. Iterators replaced human parts with machines, hacked bodies with cybernetics, and created cyborgs in increasingly vulgar ways. In recent years, however, (perhaps as a result of the Dimensional Anomaly, the Information Age, or both), Iteration X's focus has turned to a less wide-sweeping strategy. While body hacking and cybernetics still fills their time, Iterators spend less time thinking about how to change the whole world at once, and instead put their name to work creating iterative changes to the Masses and embracing the next iteration of their individual and collective selves.

Typical Operative

The archetypal Iteration X operative is a man, a woman, a hybrid of both, or a person who refuses to be bound by constrictions of binary gender and sex. Regardless of that person's individual identity, any Iterator is dedicated to refining order from imperfection. In many cases, this person comes from a deeply imperfect background and now seeks an ideal that had been denied to them in their previous life. According to stereotypes, this person is humorless and robotic; in truth, that's often not the case. An Iterator embodies the fusion of humanity and machine, with the best (and often worst) attributes of both.

State of the Convention

In the wake of the tumultuous 20th century, shifts in operations and priorities took Iteration X from a robotic group of mechanical thugs to a well-oiled machine working towards the betterment of humanity. Some sources attribute that change to the Dimensional Anomaly (if it occurred), though others

say it was coming before then. In truth, keeping up with the Masses forced the change. Despite any attempts from Iterators to encourage — or slow down — the Masses, the technological advances of Baseline Reality Quotients marched forward at an alarming rate. Technologies once thought to be the exclusive domain of reality-bending Arts and Sciences were suddenly government-funded projects. When the first Large Hadron Collider was opened near Geneva, Iteration X — like the rest of humanity — had no idea what would happen next. Would such forces create an anomaly on earth? Rip open dimensional barriers? Instigate cosmic collapse in a second Big Bang? Despite Void Engineer assurances that the worst that could go wrong was that Switzerland would evaporate, Iterators ran prognostications for months leading up to the event, with equal predictions for total disaster or nothing at all. The Convention's leadership realized they had a choice: They could watch as the Masses played with forces outside their understanding and control (possibly destroying themselves in the process), or they could shepherd them toward greater understanding.

That period of stark assessment also revealed the awful truth behind the Time Table and its calculations: Those calculations had been wrong all along. Humanity is unpredictable, and chaos is inevitable. Despite decades of calculations and projections far beyond the dreams of unEnlightened mathematicians, the Iteration X ideal of quantifiable command over time, space and biology proved to be a failure. The data, by 2002, was as undeniable as it was unthinkable: Iteration X was wrong. As a result, like any good engineer, the Convention threw out its conclusions, learned from its errors, revised its assumptions, and set to work again.

These days, the Clockwork Convention focuses on improving lives among the Masses, integrating machine-organic technologies into the Consensus, and dealing with the intractable threat of global climate change. In place of their infamous hardware, the Convention now concentrates much of its energy on quantum computing, medical advances,

and brain-computer interface. Downplaying their old fascination with obvious mechanical modifications, It X designers shifted away from obvious metal/human blends and started integrating cybernetics into synthetic materials that look like flesh, or else using nanotechnology to achieve the same effect. Now, as if in subconscious imitation, droves of Sleeper body-hackers eagerly implant RFID chips under their skin, insert microchips into their bodies, and try to emulate the work of Iterators. Instead of discouraging such activity, Iteration X supplies smaller and safer microcontrollers for these people's experiments.

Iterator labs are found throughout the world, but mainly in places where people are pushing the boundaries of technological advancements. They have a significant presence in Silicon Valley and Seattle, and much larger installations in Seoul, Shanghai, Moscow, Singapore, and Chiba. In those locations, they recruit laborers to work alongside their field staff, keep tabs on the Masses, and watch for potential or impending threats from human missteps, Reality Deviance, natural disasters, or something much, much worse.

Methodologies

Iteration X's Methodologies have morphed slightly over time. While the three original groups remain intact, another Methodology has emerged to keep up with the evolving structure of the Convention: the Macrotechnicians.

The BioMechanics

BioMechanics (no one dares apply the acronym BM to these Iterators!) remain at the forefront of Iteration X's visibility. While the Convention has moved away from making extreme versions of their HIT Marks and monstrous "steelskin" cyborgs, every Iterator operative—even their unEnlightened

members—has some form of cybernetic enhancement.

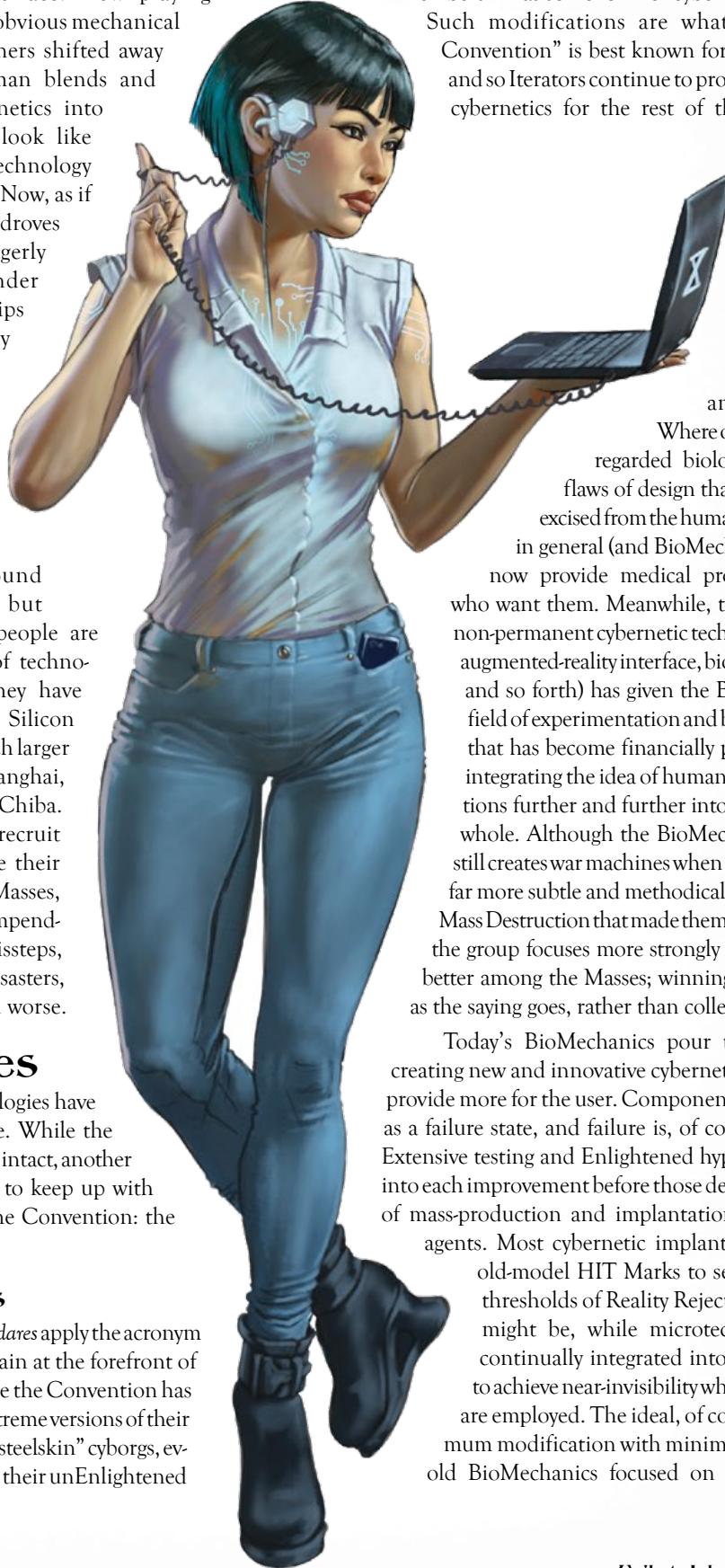
Such modifications are what the "Clockwork Convention" is best known for within the Union, and so Iterators continue to provide mass-produced cybernetics for the rest of the Conventions as needed.

Within recent years, this Methodology has become – rather unexpectedly—one of the Union's primary philanthropists among the Masses.

Where once the Convention regarded biological disabilities as flaws of design that must be ruthlessly excised from the human machine, Iterators in general (and BioMechanics in particular)

now provide medical prostheses for people who want them. Meanwhile, the popular surge in non-permanent cybernetic technology (cell phones, augmented-reality interface, bio-monitor interfaces, and so forth) has given the BioMechanics a new field of experimentation and benevolence—a field that has become financially profitable while also integrating the idea of human-mechanical interactions further and further into the Consensus as a whole. Although the BioMechanic Methodology still creates war machines when necessary (machines far more subtle and methodical than the Engines of Mass Destruction that made them so infamous before), the group focuses more strongly now on making life better among the Masses; winning hearts and minds, as the saying goes, rather than collecting body counts.

Today's BioMechanics pour their energies into creating new and innovative cybernetics that fail less and provide more for the user. Component rejection is viewed as a failure state, and failure is, of course, unacceptable. Extensive testing and Enlightened hypertech are invested into each improvement before those devices reach the stage of mass-production and implantation into Convention agents. Most cybernetic implants are tested within old-model HIT Marks to see what the current thresholds of Reality Rejection (AKA Paradox) might be, while microtech innovations are continually integrated into the newest devices to achieve near-invisibility when those cybernetics are employed. The ideal, of course, involves maximum modification with minimal footprint. Where old BioMechanics focused on cramming extreme



firepower into human-sized vessels, the newer generation concentrates on graceful functionality and popular appeal.

Even so, this Methodology remains the go-to department when harsh measures become necessary. To that end, the BioMechanics division has been testing new HIT Mark XI units, which take advantage of the Macrotechnician research to improve cognitive function among the cybernetic operatives while also decreasing the amount of biomass needed for such creations. The goal, ultimately, involves fully synthetic androids as capable of human interaction as the average human. That goal has not been reached quite yet, but it's not for lack of trying.

The Macrotechnicians

Technological advances among the Masses have often marched side-by-side with advances from Iterators as they slowly leaked their best-tested mechanics into the static world. However, as the Masses began accepting and adopting technologies at a surprising speed, Iteration X created a new Methodology to keep up. This new Methodology, the Macrotechnicians, oversees technological advancements on the large scale; and if Iteration X is a well-oiled machine, the Macrotechnicians are its tune-up crew. While the BioMechanics labor to bring humanity closer to the machine, the Macrotechnicians labor to bring the machine closer to man.

As the Information Age accelerates the global human/machine interface, Macrotechnicians explore the larger implications of that interface: large-scale VR, satellite networks, neural-composite hive-minds, and the development of AIs on both a large scale (as sentient supercomputers) and a small scale (as near-human constructs who can pass among the Masses in both virtual and physical forms). Machine learning is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what these Iterators do as they routinely create sentient machines in clandestine hopes of triggering a singularity event. The end goal isn't a singularity — or even a hyper-intelligent mechanical construct — but instead the creation of a functioning autonomous neural network that anyone on earth (with the proper security clearance, of course) could tap into and utilize at any time. Toward this goal, they take their cues from the BioMechanics regarding what works with the human body and what doesn't. For obvious reasons, however, Macrotechnicians keep these experiments under wraps; unlike the emotionless hyperminds of older AI constructions (like the infamous Matriarch of MECHA), these newer sentient AIs are emotional beings that would wreak havoc on the Consensus if exposed to the boiling sea of human imperfections. Experiments with limited contact between prototype AIs, and the humans and bots of the internet have so far proved... alarming. One such case destroyed an entire Macrotechnicians facility before Iteration X shock troops (ironically deploying some decidedly unfashionable Mark V HIT Marks and over two dozen Alanson Hardsuit agents) managed to shut the damned thing down and destroy what might have become a nascent cyberdemon AI.

Supplemental Data: Unleashing Basilisk

It's possible that the Macrotechnicians have crossed neurons with a hidden but virulent Nephantic faction: The Heralds of Basilisk. It's even more likely that they have been infected by, possibly even infested with, that group's influence. As detailed in **The Book of the Fallen**, the HOBs nurture a virtual god they call Basilisk. Through propagated memes and relentless trolling, they feed this entity, spread its gospel, and work it into as many systems and minds as possible. If the Heralds have infected a Macrotechnician AI or two — or, worse still, infiltrated the Macrotechnicians themselves — it's possible that the combination of Iteration X hypertech, Nephantic KEKnomancy, and the contentious environment of the mundane internet could incubate that voracious Basilisk and then set it free with catastrophic results.

For details, see **The Book of the Fallen** entries about KEKnomancy, Basilisk, and its Heralds.

In the new millennium, though, the most urgent field for Macrotechnician R&D focuses on radical climate change and its reversal. For decades, the Technocracy coasted along in a state of assurance that the impending Technocratic victory could undo the effects of global climate change; after many debates, endless projections, and quite a few researchers Socially Processed into oblivion for pressing the subject too hard, the Union's leadership has finally accepted the conclusion that climate change — whether human-caused or simply natural — presents an urgent threat to human survival. Thus, given their emphasis on large-scale systems, the primary research, innovation and implementation measures of climate change-reversal technologies have fallen to the Macrotechnicians of Iteration X. Although the Climate Change Reversal Initiative (CCRI) features representatives and operatives from all five Conventions, the core research for that group comes from Iteration X in general and the Macrotechnicians in particular. As a result, a group that barely existed two decades ago now bears a major responsibility for the future survival of the Union, its Consensus, and humanity at large.

The Statisticians

Given the Convention's infamy as a creator of war machines and altered organisms, it's easy to forget that Iteration X is named for a mathematical conclusion. While the other Methodologies retain the Convention's high and often militant profile, the Statisticians run the numbers, perform calculations, and make sure the entire Union runs smoothly — or at least as smoothly as a human organization can run in a world that's increasingly defined by chaos.

For decades, Statisticians pursued numerical perfection and quantifiable results. They resisted the allure of chaos equations in favor of the idea that even chaos seeks mathematical symmetry in time. Even so, as decades of quantifiable research have shown, the Statisticians have been wrong about nearly every large-scale prognostication they have made. Though their small-scale calculations prove invaluable to the Union's technologies, the social implications of Statistician models have all failed. The Time Table, once a guiding force behind Technocratic plans, has been revised so often that it's become a joke even within the Methodology tasked with calculating it. Little by little, the Statisticians have begun to admit that Consensus cannot be quantified, the future cannot be shaped through calculations, and Reality is just too big and unpredictable to fit into abstract formulae. Some Statisticians grumble that humanity itself keeps spoiling the numbers, and a few even joke (well, *sort of* joke) that the whole calculation would make sense if humanity would disappear from the equation entirely. Although the Methodology continues to run projections, explore quantum-reality theories, and calculate tolerance thresholds for mechanical engineering, the Statisticians have (largely) given up on trying to assign numbers to the future and force that future to fit their calculations. That way, they have learned, lies madness — and sometimes literal Marauderdom.

Despite the innate frustrations of the job, Statisticians make up the bulk of Iteration X's current membership rolls, running numbers and making predictions regarding every little aspect of the Convention's functionality. They help determine which new candidates to initiate into the Technocracy, what missions to go on, which operatives belong to which Imperatives, and when to release technology to the Masses. The Statisticians do not run Iteration X, of course. No single Methodology does. Even so, the Statistician Methodology continues to provide incalculable guidance to the Convention in general and the Technocracy as a whole. Although its initial grand projections proved incorrect, the daily need for mathematical precision remains.

TMM: The Time-Motion Managers

Time-Motion Managers (TMM) focus their work on building the entire Union's machinery. Their work with weaponry still far outstrips that of any other Convention, and their ability to mass-produce items makes their work invaluable. Technological advances have moved TMM away from nanomachines and into even smaller realms. They still create nanomachines, cybernetic housings, and larger bulkier machines, but now this Methodology's greatest focus rests within quantum physics and quantum computing.

The discovery (or was it, *innovation?*) and study of quantum particles has opened huge discussions about the greater nature of Reality in its Static, Dynamic, and Entropic states. Enabled by quantum-physics theory, the unEnlightened Masses have begun to approach near-magickal feats even without the use of Reality Deviance or Enlightened hypertech. This possibility exhilarates certain members of Iteration X, who seek new

ways to push humanity towards what they feel could be mass Enlightenment. Among the TTM in particular, Iterators watch with anticipation (and occasional bursts of primal panic) as humanity totter a few short steps from bending space and time around these tiny particles.

Organization

In the past, Iteration X used a fully top-down approach to its work. The Inner Circle made a plan of action, Comptrollers communicated that plan to Programmers, who enacted that plan by employing Kamrads, Ciphers, and Armatures to gather the requirements, create technology, perform a task, experiment or procedure, and then reported back to the Comptrollers about their success or failure. This method worked — it kept everyone in their proper place, and work got done in a detail-oriented matter. However, after the upheavals at the turn of the century (upheavals that may have been caused by the Dimensional Anomaly and the Week of Nightmares, a secret Y2K tech shutdown, the post-9/11 chaos, the purges and Blitzkriegs against the Crafts and Traditions, or possibly a combination of two or more of those destabilizing factors), this centralized top-down approach proved counterproductive.

Thus, the "Clockwork Convention" needed to adapt.

Small changes, made quickly throughout the Masses, seemed to be the best way of keeping up with the swiftly flow of mundane technology; and so, Iteration X started iterating. Task forces assigned short-term goals to make small advancements in the short term. Everyone from the top to the bottom would agree on the process, and then agents would begin work in sprints. At the end of each of these short sprints, the laborers would report back with information and details to the Armatures and Armature Specialists, who would make necessary adjustments to their plans and start a new sprint. Periodically, the Comptrollers check in and change the iteration or the process as needed. Now, actions that would once have taken months from start to finish now show visible forward movement within days.

Scrum Teams

Iterators performing field work are often tasked to *scrum teams*: operatives doing the work assigned by Comptrollers and Armature Specialists. Scrum teams often include both laborers (T0 and T1 operatives alike) and T3 rank Armatures, and always involve cross-Methodology team assignments. A scrum team consists of four (minimum) or more members, with each team member expected to use their expertise to work together to create a basic solution to a situation, and then to iterate on that solution over time as they work the problem. Scrum teams are formed to handle, and generally work together through, multiple projects; this set-it-up-and-knock-it-down approach inspires team cohesion and a self-perpetrating sense of communal accomplishment.

Scrum teams take care of anything from investigating strange anomalies, assisting the Analytics department with testing projections, performing field tests for R&D, and working alongside other Conventions in Union Imperatives. Scrum teams are generally the first agents on-site whenever Iterators are sent to deal with issues that threaten the Masses. When the Union thinks of Iteration X, they think first of scrum teams. These highly trained units epitomize the Convention's militaristic roots, do-or-die attitude, communal spirit, and just enough autonomous discretion to intimidate the rest of the Union. Of course, the fact that It X Comptrollers keep a tight leash on their scrum teams doesn't seem to reassure the rest of the Conventions that those teams are safe to be around. It's entirely possible that this disconcerting impression is exactly what the Comptrollers intended in the first place. It rarely pays, after all, to have *anyone* — even your Union comrades — underestimate your capabilities while taking those capabilities for granted.

R&D: Research and Development

The Research and Development department is filled solely with Enlightened members — mostly T3 Armatures. These operatives work in Methodology-focused teams to produce new and innovative technologies. They often have a T4 Armature Specialist overseeing the research or reporting results to a T4

Comptroller, but the R&D department is given relatively free rein ("free" by It X standards, anyway) to experiment on whatever new projects strike their fancy. While developing new technologies is vital to the overall health of the Convention, the R&D department is relatively small. Most Iterators prefer to work in applied and directed ways, putting abstract theories to test in the field. Few of them willingly submit to what many operatives regard as a stagnant yet capricious life in laboratories situated inside Constructs far from the action.

Analytics

The Analytics Department is the purview of Statisticians. A few Macrotechnicians also work in analysis using advanced computers to crunch numbers and make predictions. Analytics covers everything from data collection to predictive studies. Iterators have taken the concept of Big Data — the field of compiling, analyzing, processing, and utilizing stores of data far too large and complex for conventional mathematical analysis techniques — to a level far beyond the capacities beyond the Masses. For them, *everything* becomes a data point to be collected, stored, and compared later. UnEnlightened T1 laborers help gather and collate data, and even run numbers, but the Enlightened members do the real magic (so to speak) within Analytics.



The Analytics Department collates data on everything from stabilized “reality zones” to extradimensional Realms and beyond before deploying hypertech storage methods, and spending a *great* deal of time crunching numbers. The department spits out reports every week or so, giving predictions on anything the Convention could want to know about. This information ranges from the success rate of a mission, to predicting when the Masses might next advance their own technological understanding, to the probability that someone monitored by the Union may be likely to Enlighten. Analytics pinpoints new Iteration X recruits, determining their potential viability before that person ever meets an Iterator in the flesh.

DM: Defense Management

Regarded as the grim face and metallic fist of the Technocracy, Iteration X is responsible for a great deal of the Union’s military capabilities. Thus, the Convention’s Defense Department is robust with internal and external investigation committees; troops for supply, factory, and field work; and military operatives ready to deploy on Union business. The complex management of these dangerous resources mostly falls in the realm of TMM, though plenty of BioMechanics take up the mantle of managing the defensive needs of both Iteration X and the Union as a whole. Few Macrotechnicians or Statisticians aspire to work in this department, though their calculations and data reports provide the key to safe and clean missions. Iteration X expects *all* of their agents to be useful parts of the machine, and if some individual gets a bit too interested in their own designs, or too full of themselves, or eager for personal glory and accomplishment then that person often gets assigned to Defense Management as a form of punishment—sometimes after a Social Processing session or two.

The department is divided into divisions of *Internal* and *External Affairs*:

Internal Affairs (IA) investigates suspicious agents, seeks out corruption, and monitors Iterators for both loyalty and obedience. Comprised solely of Enlightened members from the T3 rank or higher, IA is where most Statisticians get assigned when they’re sent to work in Defense Management.

External Affairs (EA) deals with threats to the Convention from the outside, threats to the Union, and threats to humanity. Working in EA is a matter of pride for many Iterators, and despite the fact that the New World Order seems to have a monopoly on surveillance and espionage gear, Iteration X’s military technology is as top-of-the-line as Technocracy gear can be. Both Enlightened and unEnlightened members fill the ranks, and this department is more likely than any other division to have TO and T1 operatives working in higher-level roles.

Defense Management is also in charge of deploying Alanson agents, steelskins, HIT Marks, and other high-intensity military models to crisis scenes, and determines whether or not such radical responses are necessary to begin with. In the old days, decisive strategies included shock-and-awe tactics, although,

more often they have been blamed for increasing the chaos that threatens to overturn the Consensus altogether. Although heavy-firepower teams still get sent out into the field, DM is now more discerning about the level and style of force involved.

That said, direct threats to Technocracy Constructs are met with brutal, relentless, and often-overwhelming force. When it comes to the Technocracy’s security, especially in a chaotic era, nothing is left to chance.

Advancement

Iteration X draws a strong line between its ranks, and advancement is only possible beyond Armatures. Before they join the Convention, recruits may spend years working as a T0 laborer. These fill the lower-level programs as security guards, low-level programmers, computer engineers, lab assistants, insurance agents for field teams, factory workers, and people performing various other tasks to keep the Convention moving smoothly.

When Iterators officially join the Convention, they go through rigorous surgical procedures and some Social Processing sessions to ensure they will work for the good of the Convention and adopt the ideal of collective identity. Iterators have a slew of standard-issue cybernetic implants given to them to make their work easier and improve their efficiency. If all the implants take properly, and the indoctrination is successful, the recruit often comes out the other side as a T1 Enlightened operative. If so, they gain the rank of *Armature* and start work. Sometimes, the implants don’t take properly, or at all; and sometimes, despite all the advancements and hypertech employed, the person remains distinctly unEnlightened. Despite being stuck at T0 or T1 ranks, these extraordinary unEnlightened staff, sometimes called *Kamrads*, have still gone through implantation and are still put to good use, often in the field or as part of defensive units loaned out to other Conventions. T1 Iterators make up a not-insignificant amount of lab technicians in the R&D department, carrying out supplementary work for Analysis as support staff.

Ciphers—post-surgical Enlightened for whom the implants did not take—, perform similar duties to the laborers, though their Enlightened nature makes their work a little more valued. A Cipher may be able to prove herself in such a way as to earn another shot through non-standard implants. If she survives another round of cybernetics intact, she may graduate to Armature. However, this procedure is risky, and the Convention frowns on risking the lives of personnel without good cause.

Armatures make up the bulk of Iterators through all Methodologies. Until recently, the strictly hierarchical structure Iteration X adopted meant there were few spaces for higher-ranked members. However, with new focus and methods, new Armature Specialists have been promoted, and new Comptrollers, as well.

Advancement comes to operatives proving useful and successful. Of course, the process is also heavily influenced by Analytics

predictions based on a number of personality factors. Armature specialists must know how to work for the good of the Convention. They must remain loyal but act more as the geniuses they are, not as mere mindless cogs in the machine. Enlightened operatives must display resourcefulness, an ability to think for themselves, but an unwillingness to think outside the confines given to them by the Convention. If they think too much for themselves – and cause problems or introduce mistakes – they might be better suited to a reprogramming routine than to advancement.

Comptrollers, on the other hand, must not only think for themselves but also show initiative to act outside of protocol for the good of the Convention. The caveat here is that Analytics must clear them with a near-zero percent chance of corruption. Any Enlightened operative could be promoted to Comptroller duties, though few outside of long-term Armature Specialists ever take on the role.

Armatures get demoted to Ciphers when they show signs of disloyalty, or if they make too many mistakes. Failure is rewarded with another round of indoctrination and demotion. In the past, Iterators might have been stripped of their cybernetics and recycled into available biological materials, but such implacable measures proved to be a waste of good material. Although this Convention continues to attract new talent to its ranks, there are far too few members to arbitrarily kill everyone falling shy of the group's ideals. Because all "numbers" are considered valuable in the calculations of Iteration X, Kamrads and Ciphers proving themselves with excellence and success garner a great deal of respect within the Convention.

Convention Focus

Order is the core of Iteration X; chaos, even if inevitable, is anathema. Thus, their Enlightened Sciences depend upon orderly integration of diverse elements into a harmonious whole. Mechanical tools and mathematical precision form the foundation for this group's approach to hypertech, and although those tools might seem invisible to the naked human eye, the *use* of such tools is a defining element of Iterator focus.

Paradigms

Most Iterators follow the *A Mechanistic Cosmos* paradigm. It stands to reason that everything can be defined as a machine. Mathematical equations calculate and describe nearly every natural phenomenon, and redundancies are built-in to an absurd degree. Once you realize that this is all just one big machine, each moving part a cog or gear that runs or fuels another, everything else makes sense—at least to Iterators. The whole Convention aligns and views itself as a machine, each agent a cog or gear that helps the machine run smoothly. And as they work to understand the machine that is the world, they come closer to ultimate Enlightenment. Perhaps when the ultimate state of insight is attained – not only by the Convention but by humanity as a whole – the illusions of inevitable disorder will finally collapse, and the sublime equation behind Reality may finally be solved.

Supplemental Data: Transhumanism

Given this Convention's emphasis on upgrading the human machine by integrating it with mechanical and mathematical systems, we suggest that players and Storytellers check out the entries about transhumanism in the **Mage 20** rulebook (p. 105) and **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 293-294).

Plenty of Statisticians hold a belief that *Everything is Data*, though there's more to it than that. Yes, Reality is a constructed simulation, and if you know the code, you can make changes, but among Iterators there's an underlying belief that code without a machine is simply meaningless lines. The code tells the machine what to do, how to act, and where and when to do certain functions, and if you know the code you can predict the machine's actions perfectly. For them, it doesn't just take a program and number-crunching to change a line here or there; Enlightenment helps you completely understand the world in a holistic top-down way. You can't make a machine do something it can't possibly do, no matter what your program says, but by understanding both the code *and* the machine together, you can again not only grease the wheels, but replace the gears to perform a whole new program without even breaking a sweat.

Questioning the idea that everything is a machine running on programs and oiled gears falls into the *Tech Holds all Answers* paradigm; it isn't that the world itself is a machine, but that machines are the key to understanding the world in a rational way. Technology is not, then, a product of the mechanistic cosmos, but instead the tool through which to reveal the truth of the cosmos itself. Many Iterators blend the two paradigms together, as separating the technology from the understanding is sometimes difficult.

A handful of the more radical Iterators assert that we all exist within *A Holographic Reality*. This imperfect fleshy prison is a simulation that we aren't yet advanced enough to escape. This techgnostic approach is especially popular among Statisticians (who refuse to believe their calculations are actually flawed) and Time-Motion Engineers (who view the entirety of Creation as a giant sim whose parameters they keep working to expand); the Digital Web, they feel, is a more accurate level of this cosmic hologram – though even those idealists believe that raw humanity keeps glitching the program.

All Iterators, without exception, hold the belief that we must *Embrace the Threshold*. Such transformation is the heart of their Convention, and though they might disagree about what that next step of progress means, or what form things will take from here, all Iteration X operatives view themselves as agents of that change.

Iterators often quibble about the nature of technology and its role in Enlightenment. While they agree all around that technology is a vital part of understanding Reality — and thereby a key to tampering with it, too — the nature of its relationship leads to great philosophical debates. Everyone agrees in the end, though, that Enlightenment can only be earned through advancing and understanding technology in a mechanistic, orderly, at least somewhat predictable cosmos.

Practices and Instruments

All Iterators, to some degree, are transhumanist devotees practicing *cybernetic reality-hacking*. Beyond the tiny machines they implant within their bodies, these Technocrats integrate human intellect, mechanical augmentation, Enlightened understanding, and a communal interface with something larger than their individual selves.

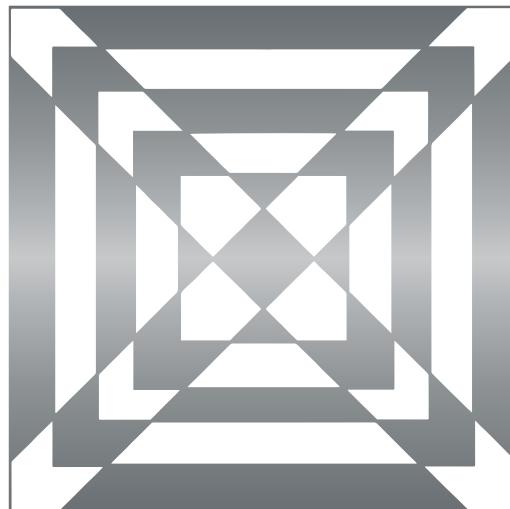
Many Iterators also practice *craftwork* through their hypertech, making something completely new from an array of component parts. Even Statisticians utilize this practice, employing their mathematical models and computer simulations as tools to create and perfect physical creations. Generally, Iterators use computers as their primary crafting instrument, though just as many find books, weapons, and physical tools useful.

Some Iterators view cybernetics as too limiting in its scope, and so turn to *hypertech* as their preferred practice. Through that practice, they can push the limits of mechanical designs or discover the potential of new designs. For Macrotechnicians working mostly in the theoretical realm, this is a go-to practice; they use their computers and laboratory devices as instruments, often focusing on the time and effort it takes to collate data. Being devout transhumanists, a handful of Iterators pursue

psionic practices, too, channeling energy and transformation by disciplining their minds.

Contrary to the outside perspective, most members of Iteration X are surprisingly flexible in their approach to their practices and instruments. Precision is, of course, essential but the methods they employ to reach that precision vary widely. Martially inclined members, especially from the TMM, find *martial arts* to be an effective practice; they use weapons as instruments, too, but also employ specialized meditation techniques and training regimen as instruments. Statisticians prefer the *hypereconomics* practice, literally calculating what people want and how best to give it to them; though they favor mathematical formulae, some add eye contact and physical interactions to gain a read on someone. Some Iterators, especially the socially minded operatives, add *dominion* to their toolkits, using intimidation tactics to manipulate people into getting what they want; these aggressive operatives use direct eye contact, social domination, computers, and memes to cow individuals to their desires.

Although they would never use drugs in the careless way that, say, the Iterators believe Ecstatic Cultists do, transhumanist radicals and hardworking laborers within this Convention favor smart drugs, stimulants, and other chemical enhancements to get them through endless workdays and catch insights that less-perceptive minds would miss. Those insights fuel the reality hacking practice that rests at this Convention's intellectual core. Despite the impression of Iteration X as a heavily armed hive-mind of full of dull-ass drones, the convention's operatives use a variety of different instruments, from brain-computer interface to social tactics to smart drugs and mixed martial arts, all of which — when employed properly — allows all disciplined and Enlightened minds to read and manipulate the world's code.



NEW WORLD ORDER

Enlightenment Through Knowledge, Discipline, Institutions, and Control



Knowledge is power. Those with knowledge have a responsibility to use it well, and those with power know that the future depends on the wise and careful applications of that power. For millennia, humanity has squandered both its knowledge and power; and so, humanity exists in a shining shithole — surrounded by more toys and wonders than it could hope to understand, amusing itself by pissing on the walls of its own home. Consequently, the thinking went, it falls to those possessing power and knowledge to set this broken world to rights; to bring order to a chaotic world. If such efforts demand some New World Order that finally drives the monsters back and lets humanity transcend its own stupidity then that's what these operatives had hoped to bring about: An end to kings and monsters, and a world secure from its own shadows.

Things have not worked out according to that plan.

The New World Order is more than just an organization that gathers information from around the globe; it's a society that acts on that information for the betterment of all mankind. As masters of information and indoctrination, NWO agents reinforce the Convention's vision for reality through media, communication, education, and confrontation. Internal documentation declares that the world they help create is the world humanity wants: A reality where Masses empowered by technology can define, protect and serve their own world, not scramble through some wretched World of Darkness ruled by monstrous Deviants. Those monsters, therefore, must be concealed by necessity and purged whenever possible; if humanity believes it's safe from preternatural predation then, by Consensus, the world becomes a safer place. If so-called "mages" can't conform to that vision then NWO agents correct their delusions. Reality Deviants have the option to accept

the Union's vision willingly; it's only reasonable to let fellow geniuses participate in that vision of a greater world. However, if they cannot collaborate in a reasonable fashion, the Union must either remove their ability to harm the Masses, or — if need be — remove those Deviants entirely.

The New World Order is a collection of paradoxes. It's not "new," its concept of "world" remains distinctly Euro-American, and the "order" element is, at best, questionable. Intrinsically authoritarian, this Convention claims that — like a strict parent — it does what it does out of love for the Masses, and many of its agents sincerely believe that's true. The NWO prizes debate and questions its own policies and yet enforces orthodoxy with frightening zeal. It's a collective of individuals committing atrocities for the greater good. If this Convention seems inconsistent (which it is) and self-contradictory (which it does) then it comes by those traits honestly. "Do I contradict myself?" asked Walt Whitman, "Very well, then I contradict myself, I am large, I contain multitudes." Those same words apply, on many levels, to the New World Order — those ruthlessly compassionate masters of consciousness who employ brutal discipline on behalf of humanity's ultimate liberation.

Typical Operative

Despite their fearsome reputation, NWO operatives prefer to use subtle techniques whenever possible. The infamous Black Suit (this Convention's archetypal agent) reflects a "softer" option than cybernetic stormtroopers. Unruffled and composed, he deflects attention while reinforcing the impression of omniscient control. In reality, of course, the Order is far less omniscient than it appears to be. Even so, this Convention's surveillance system exceeds the wildest nightmares of conspiracy theorists. Any video camera, microphone, email server, telephone or computer screen could theoretically

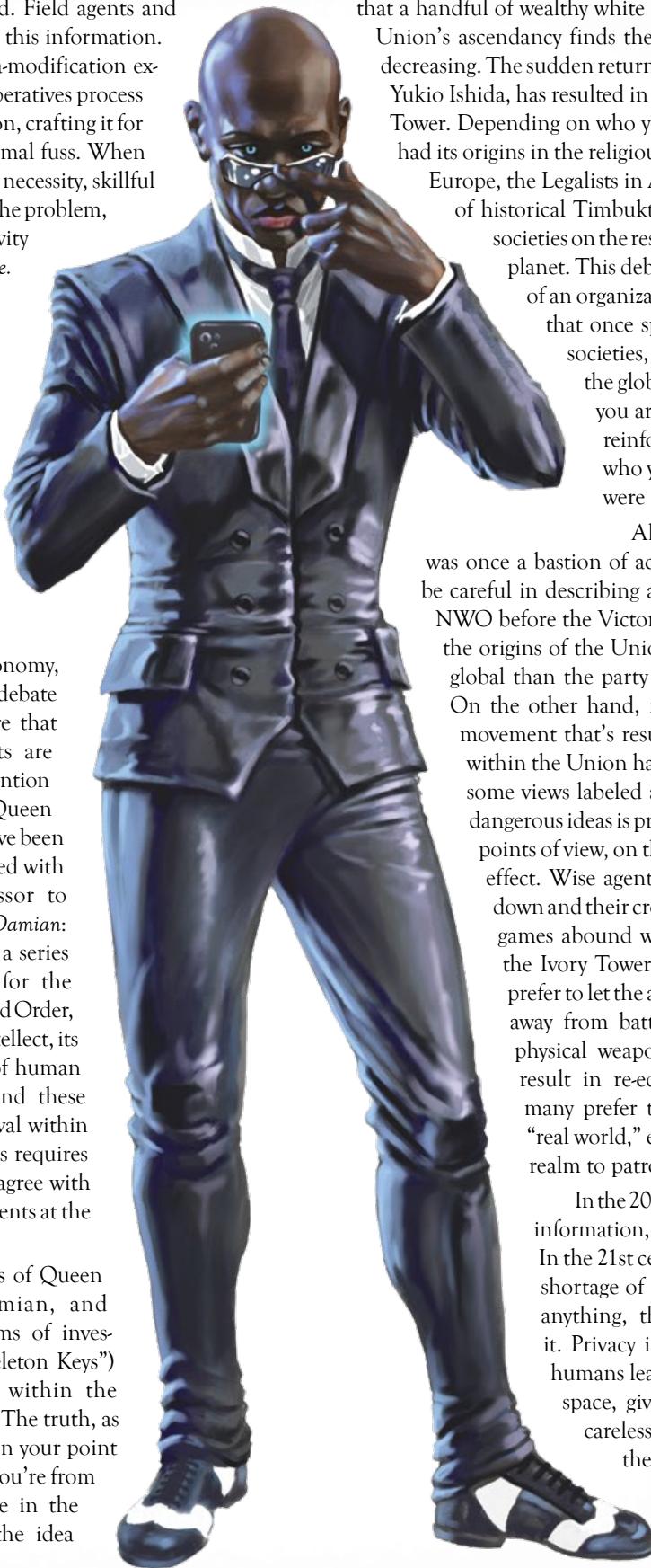
be scrutinized and analyzed. Field agents and allied citizens follow up on this information. Remote intel analysts, data-modification experts, and media-control operatives process impressions and information, crafting it for maximum effect with minimal fuss. When force becomes a regrettable necessity, skillful agents sweep in, neutralize the problem, and deny all disruptive activity with a terse *Nothing to see here.*

Move along.

State of the Convention

The Masses first heard the concept of the New World Order in the 1970s, as introduced by conspiracy theorist Robert Welch. Because the Ivory Tower once offered a surprising degree of intellectual autonomy, the NWO has had rigorous debate over its own origins before that point. Today, most agents are trained to say that the Convention began during the reign of Queen Victoria. For decades, they've been instructed that she conspired with an elderly British professor to establish the *Precepts of Damian*: What we would know call a series of "mission statements" for the Technocracy. The New World Order, however, is known for its intellect, its doctrine, and its mastery of human consciousness; thus, beyond these basic historical facts, survival within this Convention sometimes requires an agent to articulate and agree with multiple conflicting statements at the same time.

Events before the days of Queen Victoria, Professor Damian, and Inspector Rathbone's teams of investigators (the so-called "Skeleton Keys") are still highly debated within the Convention's Ivory Tower. The truth, as always, depends not only on your point of view, but also on where you're from and who you are. Anyone in the 21st century supporting the idea



that a handful of wealthy white men are responsible for the Union's ascendancy finds their number of allies steadily decreasing. The sudden return of Iteration X Comptroller, Yukio Ishida, has resulted in a shift in power in the Ivory Tower. Depending on who you ask, the NWO may have had its origins in the religious Cabal of Pure Thought in Europe, the Legalists in Ancient China, the scholars of historical Timbuktu, or any number of secret societies on the rest of (and vast majority of) the planet. This debate is complicated by stories of an organization called the Craftmasons that once specialized in creating secret societies, both real and false, around the globe. If you want to define who you are in the present, one way to reinforce it is by clearly articulating who your forebears and ancestors were in the past.

Although the Ivory Tower was once a bastion of academic freedom, one must be careful in describing any definitive origins to the NWO before the Victorian Age. On the one hand, the origins of the Union are far more diverse and global than the party line spouted in the 1990s. On the other hand, it's somewhat ironic that a movement that's resulted in increasing diversity within the Union has also led to the silencing of some views labeled archaic or obsolete. Erasing dangerous ideas is progressive; silencing contrary points of view, on the other hand, has a chilling effect. Wise agents learn to keep their heads down and their crosshairs on the enemy. Mind games abound within the hallowed halls of the Ivory Tower, and some field operatives prefer to let the academics have their debates away from battlefields that rely on more physical weaponry. When Tower politics result in re-education and reformation, many prefer the relative freedom of the "real world," even though it's a dangerous realm to patrol.

In the 20th century, the NWO wanted information, information, information.... In the 21st century, they got it; there's no shortage of information now. In fact, if anything, there's too damn much of it. Privacy is an illusion, as billions of humans leave digital trails across cyberspace, giving away their secrets with careless keystrokes as they believe in the illusion of "privacy settings."

Surveillance is often where you least expect it, and

with a little Enlightened Science, it's virtually anywhere you need it to be. Countless cell phones track the movements of their owners, confounding all attempts to limit GPS chips. Vast server farms hoard data, whether anyone's watching out for "privacy" or not. The solution to this absurd situation, for agents of the NWO, no longer involves attempting to enforce conformity and control. The genie is out of the bottle, and the greatest challenge of our new millennium now lays in managing the chaos. As a matter of tradition, this Convention is still called the New World Order, but to be honest, there's very little "order" left in this world. Some veteran survivors now call themselves "Agents of the New World." Meanwhile, as the rest of humanity's world changes, the Union must adjust its tactics and ideology to liberate it.

Methodologies

Once, this convention employed a three-prong approach with associated support groups. The difference between field agents and support staff, however, has become more pronounced over the last 10 or 15 years. Most Technocrats are familiar with three Methodologies working in the field: the *Operatives*, the *Ivory Tower*, and the *Watchers*. Behind the scenes, however, operations are considerably more complex, with three additional "support Methodologies": *The Enlightened Shock Corps*, *The Feed*, and *Q Division*.

The Operatives

This Convention's reputation among their other four associates remains slightly skewed because one Methodology is more commonly encountered than any other: the Operatives. To a degree, however, that confusion is intentional: By dressing the majority of the Convention's visible agents in near-identical black suits, the NWO creates an ominously unified impression. The unsettling formality and uniform appearance of the Order's Black Suit rank also provides a subtle air of intimidation — an effect that is, like so many NWO protocols, absolutely intentional and disconcertingly effective.

Fifty years ago, the Operative Methodology was a system for training Technocracy superspies. If it wasn't necessary to disavow all knowledge of their actions, the greatest of these agents would have become legendary within the Union. Fast cars, nice suits, brilliant gadgets, subtle seduction — the life of a Union superspy was an ideal that many field agents aspired to attain. As the Ascension War of the late 20th century intensified, however, their image lost a great deal of flash. The late 90s became the era of the Gray Men: agents trained to infiltrate, observe and, if necessary, abduct and recruit. Using elaborately orchestrated Mind procedures, the latest generation of Gray Suits has learned to pride themselves on being adaptable and, if necessary, non-descript, arcane, or unseen.

To many outsiders, the Operatives *are* the Technocracy. Unless someone's unfortunate enough to get a visit from biocrafted horrors, BCD monster-hunters, or cybernetic killing machines, the Black Suit Operatives are the only obvious Technocratic agents

The Collegium of Gender Studies

Initially formed in the late 1900s as a placating gesture from the Ivory Tower, the Collegium of Gender Studies has become one of the more influential voices in Technocratic politics. The decision to create this organization proved more prescient than many old-school Gray Suits had imagined it might be when the Collegium first appeared. As conversations and disputes about gender identity (and related issues like economic class, ethnic heritage, human reproduction, bodily autonomy, sexual assault, and so forth) accelerated among the Masses, in large part due to social media and greater contact between previously separated people, the CGS has moved from being a box for the Order's most radical voices to becoming the Collegium best-equipped to understand the current social-political situation. Meanwhile, several of the CGS's initiatives — most notably the shift from the traditional Men in Black to the Black Suits — have proved amazingly successful. The expanded capabilities of a gender-and-ethnicity-neutral field ops corps, the greater efficiency of equally respected personnel, and the wealth of experiences and perspectives that an integrated staff bring to a truly *New World Order* have all paid off handsomely for this Convention. Although certain traditionalists (not all of them masculine) balk at the Collegium's "demasculinizing effect" on the Convention and its Technocracy, the data solidly supports the CGS, its suggestions, and the benefits they bring to the 21st century Union.

a person would be likely to meet. Again, this effect is absolutely intentional; by becoming "the face of the Technocracy," the Operatives position themselves at the forefront of the Union while providing both cover for the Technocracy's more subtle operations and contrast with its more brutal tactics — a sort of Good Cop/Bad Cop game that likewise enhances Operatives tactics by giving them more prominence within Consensus. The Man in Black has become a modern archetype in his own right, and although the reality behind that figure is far more complex, that archetypal figure throws considerable weight behind the Operatives in particular and the NWO as a whole.

By current protocol, all Enlightened members of the NWO, regardless of gender, begin their careers dressed in formal yet flexible black attire. Many extraordinary citizens wear this uniform as well, and the clone-construct Black Suits and other NWO constructs blend into the ranks by wearing it, too. This protocol deepens the impression of a near-infinite army of intimidating Black Suit Operatives — an impression that affects outsiders, fellow Technocrats, and Reality Deviants alike. As with any uniform, the black suits likewise reinforce a collective identity among the people wearing them. For although the life

and training of an office-bound Intelligence Analyst differs radically from those of a Black Suit field agent on the Front Lines, the wardrobe's bond provides a sense of connection, camaraderie, and shared purpose in a perilous world.

The Ivory Tower

The Tower Methodology exists to make any front or construct into a refuge. Throughout most of the 20th century, it was best known for its *Collegia*: a collection of academic institutions designed to gather knowledge on nearly any academic specialty. Contrary to any Big Brother image, the Collegium of History, in particular, continues to be known for its rigorous debate and relative academic freedom. (Note the word "relative.") The Tower recruited many of its finest Enlightened minds from academia, but over the last few decades it has also recruited, trained, and educated citizens and agents to fill nearly every aspect of its day-to-day operations.

That's all well and good behind the scenes, but a Tower agent in field operations is far less common than a team from the Operative Methodology. Field agents learning the Tower's Methodology become experts at specialization in various knowledges, thanks to a system known as *sleep teaching*. Need a nuclear physicist, a scholar of Transylvanian vampire legends, or a polyglot physicist? Tower agents can download expert levels of knowledge, even though they'll forget what they've crammed after a mission or two. That's not as sexy as stealthing into an enemy facility to impersonate a double agent, but if you're going up against hyperintelligent Reality Deviants, it never hurts to have a big brain on the team.

The Ivory Tower remains the most extensive Methodology working behind the scenes. While this Convention's *sympathizers* (see below) eventually learn to work deep undercover in Union fronts, inside Horizon Constructs, and out in the field, the Tower itself prefers to stay removed from the Front Lines. Some have suggested that this distance has increased the Schism that exists between agents fighting on the Front Lines of reality, and the theoreticians interpreting, planning, and managing those Front Lines missions. It's best not to say that too loudly, though, because the Tower is still known for enforcing correct ideology and conformity within the most heavily defended strongholds of the Technocracy. Agents proving themselves worthy of the inner Degrees of Separation are given greater autonomy and independence, but unmutual acts, failure, and outright insurrection result in a trip back to the Tower.

In recent years, a shift in power has reduced the amount of intellectual freedom within this Convention. Although the party line may vary slightly from one Construct to the next, progressive elements within the Union are working to liberate many agents from old-fashioned, archaic, or what was once called "politically incorrect" ideals. Sleepers have their own course of political evolution (within reason, of course), but parallel to that, change within the Union must also follow its own distinct, and sometimes controversial, forms. For this new order within the New World Order, *justice* is their watchword, diversity their admirable goal, and an allowable degree of well-defined individual freedom is their

mandate. Within the Tower, the Grand Old Men now seem more distant than ever — not forgotten, but curiously removed. Like guests at Alice's tea party, high-ranking officials within the Tower are changing seats and positions. Whether this is a sign of brighter times or misdirection for a deeper conspiracy remains to be seen.

The Watchers

Who watches the watchmen? Watchers do, of course. Who watches *them*? In theory, other Watchers; if this seems hopelessly recursive, that's because it often is. Although the Watchers Methodology officially concentrates its energies on media among the Masses, its purview for surveillance often extends to the other Conventions, the rest of the NWO, and its fellow Watchers, too.

Though the Operatives represent the largest number of obvious NWO agents, the Watchers and their associated sympathizers may comprise the largest number of Technocratic operatives, period. A good many of those agents, however, remain outside the information loop. While this Methodology has many Enlightened and T1 extraordinary citizens on its payroll, the Watchers' true numbers include hundreds of thousands of unEnlightened T0 sympathizers across the world. These citizens, of course, don't wear the traditional black suits, and most do not have the faintest idea for whom or what they really work. However, many of them are aware that they're working for *someone* big. After all, you can't process the sort of data these people collect, analyze, and kick up the chain of command and yet remain completely ignorant about the sort of job you're really doing. At all levels, Watcher operatives keep a wary, often electronic, eye on the world at large and on certain parties in that world (like Reality Deviants) in particular. Watchers see things, and many of those things are pretty goddamned strange.

Two prongs of this Methodology — *Field Observers* and *Field Reporters* — maintain pervasive and often covert surveillance on the Union, Reality Deviants, and the Masses in general. The *Lensmen*, meanwhile, process that data, coordinate the other two divisions, and monitor outside parties who might be spying on the Union itself (which someone always is doing). Unlike personnel from the other Methodologies, these operatives do *not* wear the traditional black suits, after they've finished their initial training, unless they're part of a field-ops mission group. This Methodology works best when they work unseen, and so the usual rules of fashion do not apply to them.

Although they essentially constitute Methodologies in their own right, the following NWO associations exist between the lines of the three "traditional" Methodologies, and their missions and personnel cross over into those three primary Methodologies despite their distinct and official group identities:

ESC: The Enlightened Shock Corps

Sometimes, even the most extreme operatives need to call in the Big Guns. Initially a shock-and-awe project under the auspices of White Suit, James Michael Smith, the ESC — and yes, certain operatives do refer to the Corps as *Escape* thanks to that acronym — are the NWO's personal battering ram. When

the operative phrase is “Fuck subtlety,” a Shock team arrives to rain hell down on whichever poor bastards happen to have drawn the short straw in that mission’s objective.

Smith’s pet murder machines, the implacable Atlas units, proved too dangerous and unreliable to be trusted, and so the White Tower – in a rare display of cooperation with the Syndicate – pulled the plug on ESC, and, according to rumor, on Smith as well. The need for a heavy-duty strike force, though, led to the project’s reactivation in 2018, under new leadership and featuring significantly more controllable operatives.

Originally comprised of between one and five Atlas units (see **Gods & Monsters**, pp. 80-82), ESC teams now feature between 10 and 20 Alanson hardsuit operatives (**Mage 20**, pp. 656-657), two to 10 HIT Mark X units, three to nine Black Dagger agents (described below and on p.191), and between two and six six-agent Black Suit field operative teams in fire team, support, and cleanup roles. Truly absurd threats might warrant an even larger response, with additional support from Iteration X steelskins, Progenitor Cyber-Tooth Tigers, and a team or two of VE BCD monster hunters. Such teams are *never* dispatched, however, into heavily populated areas unless a cross-dimensional incursion brings in some kaiju-like monstrosity. In all other cases, ESC operations are restricted to areas far away from the Masses and their Statistically Inevitable Paradox Effects.

According to official records, Atlas Six and Atlas Twelve remain in service. They have not seen open deployment in the field for years, but if a significant threat erupts, they just might return to the Front Lines after all.

The Feed

The internet has grown beyond surveillance, control, or sanity. On both the “mundane” side and its metaphysical aspect as the Digital Web, this postmodern Frankenstein arose from the Technocracy’s own mistakes. Whether or not the legend of a martyred Alan Turing ripping open the fabric between worlds is true (the NWO, of course, insists that story is nonsense, but then, they *would*, wouldn’t they?), the 21st century internet is a hydra with several billion heads. No one could possibly control such a beast. Not even the Technocracy...

...but the Feed tries to ride it anyway.

Formed in the early 2000s (initially as a subset of the Lensmen Watchers) in response to the vortex of social media, online commerce, and internet subversion, the Feed combines elements of the Operatives, Ivory Tower, and Watchers Methodologies in a new and ever-changing form. Working hand-in-glove with the Panopticon (see p. 124), the Feed employs scanning algorithms, and thousands of paid and unpaid unEnlightened citizen assets in an effort to spot, contain, turn, and possibly eliminate internet-based threats. To that end, the Feed’s *Trend Analysts* pore over data-mined information and use its findings to manage Feed operations; their *Deep Diver* field agents attempt to highlight emerging memes, crazes, and

Supplemental Data: Basilisk and the Trolls

As detailed in **The Book of the Fallen**, and noted elsewhere in this book, a Nephantic sect called the Heralds of Basilisk have propagated a meme so virulent that it’s essentially a voracious internet demon-god. Although Basilisk is a relatively minor entity at the moment, its virtual nature and ever-growing power constitute a potential Extinction Level Threat to the Digital Web, and possibly to the physical world, as well. Currently, the Feed has compiled rumors and sightings of Basilisk, with a few reported encounters that did not end well for the agents in question. One of Basilisk’s most chilling aspects involves its origins as a meme given sentience and power through the astral energy involved in believing in Basilisk. If the Feed is documenting the creature, certain operatives argue, and presenting it as a notable threat to human existence, isn’t Basilisk then getting power from the Feed itself? How does one fight an elusive incarnate idea? Even for the New World Order, that question doesn’t have a clear answer yet.

One thing the Feed does have clearly in its sights is a growing network of internet trolls. Apparently recruited from among the Masses, these professional shitposters appear to have a common sponsor hidden behind screens of corporate misdirection. The Feed and IDDI have spotted the pattern running between these apparently unconnected trolls, and although their ultimate source hasn’t yet become clear, the activities of these trolls cause cascading effects among the Masses. IDDI strike teams have taken out a few of these trolls, but all evidence links them to purely mundane employers — corporations, political factions, terrorist-group fronts, and a handful of governments — not to any Awakened faction. Feed Analysts, though, insist there’s something *more* going on behind the trolls — a metaphysical hand guiding a deeper, darker game; a hand that, according to small, disturbing bits of evidence, might reach back to the Technocracy itself.

For more information about Basilisk and the networked trolls, see **The Book of the Fallen**, (pp. 82-85).

potential crisis; and their *Handlers* insinuate themselves into Information Age culture in both the mundane and the Digital Web levels. The associated *Internet Defense Deployment Initiative* (IDDI) integrates the Feed into that cross-Convention group, taking the fight to the Front Lines within the Digital Web itself. It’s an impressive effort, and not without its occasional successes. Still, when you’re talking about the most fluid and extensive human technology since fire and language, the Feed is essentially drinking from a fire hose of endless trivia and occasional bone-numbing despair.

Q Division

At first glance, the gadget-happy boys and girls at Q Division may be seen as relics of the Cold War and the glory days of the Ascension Conflict. However, no field agent would be foolish enough to turn down the high-tech gear these brilliant artisans create. Most field op agents feel disappointed if they aren't able to requisition neat new Devices from this division before the start of a mission. Despite the old-school aura of this quasi-Methodology (or, more likely, because of it), Q Division remains among the Technocracy's most popular divisions.

For a short time, around the turn of the millennium, it seemed as though Q Division, like HIT Marks, might become a casualty of a quieter century. That situation changed, however, as the global War on Terror became the hottest business opportunity since WWII. In the resulting scramble for serious hardware, Q Division set up an Earthside front called K-Tat *Expeditionary Materials* and began selling Consensus-ready war-gear to belligerents on all sides. Between the income, eager test-subjects, and an opportunity to work their innovations into the Consensus, K-Tat has been a boon to Q Division and great source of deadly tech. Best of all, the K-Tat tested gear has the added incentive of wiping out some truly abhorrent individuals (a few handfuls of RDs among them) at the cost of minor collateral damage and a few Devices that clearly weren't quite field-safe yet.

(If the Dimensional Anomaly occurred in your chronicle that event cost Q Division its most secure laboratories, its safest testing facilities, its largest gear depots, and its most brilliant personnel. If the Anomaly never occurred, those resources remain open for business, though their funding may have suffered somewhat until the War on Terror began in earnest and opened up new markets and testing grounds for Q Division hardware and research.)

These days, Q Division has regained, perhaps even exceeded, its previous status. Thanks to the K-Tat marketplace and the growing acceptance of hypertech among the Masses, their gear has become a bit more subtle in function and form. As a result, much of that gear can be used these days by extraordinary citizens — sometimes even by totally ordinary ones. Although Q Division's most absurd experiments still suffer from equipment failure and the occasional designer lost to Statistical Inevitability, the Division is more popular than ever before.

Organization

There's strength in numbers; and when those numbers get rounded out by thousands of sympathizers, clones and Enlightened operatives dressed in near-identical black suits, those numbers and that strength seem impossibly imposing. Add to that impression the many operatives, sympathizers and Managers that don't wear black suits, and this Convention appears to be — and quite possibly is — the largest group in the Technocratic Union.

That group depends upon an organization that's loose in certain ways and hierarchical in others. Psychodynamic

disciplines (in game terms, Mind Sphere Procedures), secret codes, silent hand-signs, obtuse jargon, and subtle social cues only a fellow operative would understand all reinforce the uncanny sense of collective identity the New World Order shares. Although there's plenty of private dissent and disagreement within this Convention, outsiders (fellow Technocrats included) face an unnerving *sameness* when dealing with NWO operatives, and that sense of formal yet ruthless capability is among the strongest weapons in this Convention's arsenal.

Sympathizers

For the last few decades, the number of unEnlightened citizens in this Convention has outnumbered the number of Enlightened agents. Some Ivory Tower academics claim that this disparity is meant to reflect a vision for the world: using Social Conditioning, sleep-teaching, and other forms of indoctrination, the Convention can grow exponentially without remaining dependent on the number of Enlightened agents it recruits. These ordinary citizens are called "sympathizers" within the ranks, as a reminder to all agents that those people are not "human resources," proles or cannon fodder, but are, instead, kindred spirits collaborating freely with the Order's aims.

A notable percentage of these sympathizers graduate to the T1 rank of extraordinary citizens: people aware enough of the Big Picture to become active and willing agents of the Technocratic Union. A smaller percentage of those citizens — sometimes called *exceptional citizens* — get augmented with additional technology, such as cybernetics, advanced hypertech, or cloned replication. The thinking goes that by remaking such citizens on both a physical and psychological level, the world can be likewise remade into one in which the people governed and protected by the NWO are optimal for the introduction of whatever technology the Technocracy wishes. By remaking the hearts, minds and bodies of the people, they feel, you can make the world, in a word, *sympathetic*.

When other Technocrats talk about the NWO, they often talk about its Enlightened agents, but it's easy to overlook the importance of the Convention's low-light support staff. For a start, many of those citizens have been trained to take care of the day-to-day operation of fronts (among the Masses) and Constructs (slightly outside the everyday world). While the Syndicate excels at training executives, managers, and high earners, the New World has a labor pool of loyal citizens ready to perform unskilled, skilled, and semi-skilled labor. Mechanics, secretaries, assistants, grunt security, janitorial staff — anywhere a job does not require an Enlightened agent, the sympathizers are ready to do their part. Other Conventions have the option of training their own unEnlightened personnel too, but budgeting concerns make it easier to acquire that support staff directly from the NWO.

In the 1990s, many of these citizens were known as *Servants of the Ivory Tower*, but their use has been so widespread to make them ubiquitous in many Union operations. Socially Conditioned citizens now serve many masters — but since they receive their



training from the NWO, it should come as no surprise that their loyalty to that Convention supersedes any other assignment or allegiance. It's worth noting that some of the Tower's sympathizers are also managed as cross-Convention (or CC) personnel. Fortunately for the NWO, the ideological indoctrination and Social Processing they employ focuses on rendering those sympathizers loyal, obedient, and ideologically sound.

Sympathizers can also be trained to conveniently "overlook" a certain degree of blatantly Enlightened Science. Over time, these operatives become accustomed to living "slightly ahead of the present," adapting to everything from impossibly huge plasma guns and robotic companions to starships and outer space outposts. While Enlightened agents get the glory in field operations, New World sympathizers are the unsung heroes of the Union.

The Black Suits

They're everywhere. That's how it seems, anyway. Neat, black dress clothes; cool and professional demeanor; more often than not a shiny pair of sunglasses that reveals nothing except a reflection of the person looking into them; the Technocracy's greatest weapon is not HIT Marks, not cyborgs, not robots or other killing machines. No, it's the unnervingly brisk Black Suit agent whose mastery of psychological warfare is second to none.

As noted above, the Black Suit uniform is standard issue dress to all T1 rank NWO operatives. Many T0 personnel within this Convention wear them, too. Those operatives might not be agents of the Operatives Methodology — many of them are not — but the uniform dress code at that rank assures that all NWO personnel feel like they're part of the Convention's greater mission even when they work behind the scenes. Fresh initiates train in these suits, or in equally uniform black training gear (gym clothes, dojo uniforms, and so forth), and have their hair cut short or — in certain Constructs — shaved completely for the duration of their training. Regardless of gender (assuming the agent even *has* a "gender" in the generally understood sense), this uniform establishes the collective identity upon which the Black Suit agents depend. In order to reach into the minds of other people, an initiate must first learn to reach beyond her own sense of individual self. After an agent's initial training individual traits are allowed to flourish (within limits), but that unified identity is essential at the early stages of each NWO agent's career. A certain degree of Social Processing and mundane team-building exercises are part of this process too, of course, but the archetypal black clothing establishes the Convention's image in the minds of its operatives, rivals, and foes.

Any Superstitionist having had the ambiguous pleasure of killing a Black Suit field agent knows that those agents disintegrate into eerie pools of goo that quickly disappear. This theatrical touch of biotech has been a tradition for Black Suit field agents since the early 20th century, but it's not usually injected into Black Suits working and training away from the field. All T1 rank NWO agents — Enlightened and otherwise — go through a “black suit stage” before graduating to their respective Methodologies. Agents of the Operative Methodology often remain Black Suits until they rise in rank and leave the field — if they ever do so, anyway. Low-light construct-bound trainees don't possess the “soulless aura” effect, either, and those trainees have not yet mastered the psychic disciplines that make field agent Black Suits so effective. That said, the intense physical and psychological training required in the field are universal constants for NWO initiates, and so even when they graduate to other areas, these agents possess a distinctive confidence, physical capability, and the laconic persona that defines this Convention to its allies and enemies alike.

Cloned Black Suit agents are born with those enhancements already intact. Although they train alongside human-born recruits (you can't implant muscle-memory or first-hand experience, though Iteration X and the Progenitors keep trying to anyway), cloned agents remain hairless and laconic throughout their lives. Ideally, the characteristics of clones are supposed to “rub off” on the human-born trainees, and the humanity of those trainees is supposed to leave impressions on the clones, as well. The unsettling “otherness” of Black Suit agents may come from the social affects the clones and human-born agents have on one another, but the NWO's psychological acumen is probably intentional. Grown according to genetic blueprints from especially effective human-born field agents, cloned Black Suits are often recognized by fellow Black Suits as agents of a certain “strain” based upon certain distinct DNA characteristics: facial features, bone structure, skin and/or eye color, and so forth. Although it's officially unmutual to prefer to discriminate against fellow agents for such things, many agents do so anyway.

Once deployed into the field, Black Suits of all types traditionally begin with support roles: crowd-control, cleanup, evidence collecting and disposal, and so forth. By this time, a Black Suit agent has been thoroughly trained, but lacks field experience. Through a combination of hands-on labor, field-based training, and observation of experienced agents at work, green agents acquire the disconcerting capability that outsiders associate with Black Suits as a whole.

Unless they move to different Methodologies (and often even after they do), T1 and T2 NWO agents continue to wear the Operative Methodology's black suit, or some variation of that black garb: black sweaters, slacks, dresses, hoodies, trenchcoats, military or police uniforms, and so forth. Unless assigned to spy missions or other covert identities, many NWO operatives maintain their preference for black clothing until they achieve a T3 or T4 (Gray) or T5 (White) rank. Although few black-clad

operatives ever join the Black Suit field-agent elite, that early impression of solidarity very seldom fades.

Upper Management

Most NWO operatives remain at Tier 3 or lower throughout their lifelong careers. Displaying rare cunning, acumen, and leadership qualities, however, may see an operative promoted to the Gray Suit and White Suit ranks. As with the Black Suit protocol, these ranks are distinguished by uniformly gray or white clothing — suits, dresses, armor, and so forth — unless they venture out into the Front Lines or embark on covert missions. Although many old-fashioned agents still use the traditional designation “Men in Gray/White,” a growing number of female and nonbinary agents reach the T4 status. Tier 5, however, appears to remain largely, if not exclusively, masculine — at least for now.

Aside from a number of Gray Suit field and Construct supervisors, most of Upper Management remains distant from the rank-and-file, and unseen by the vast majority of personnel. If Horizon Constructs remain in service then most Gray Suits, and nearly all of the White Suits, occupy those remote headquarters; if not, their offices remain a closely guarded and heavily defended secret. For most NWO personnel, Upper Management is more a legend than a daily fact of life. An agent below T4 that *does* see a Man in White personally has either done something very good or very, *very* bad.

PsychOps

“Very, *very* bad” doesn't get much worse than NWO PsychOps: The agents tasked with Processing Reality Deviants and maintaining order, orthodoxy, and discipline within the Technocratic ranks. Trained in all manner of psychological, physical and metaphysical inquiry, persuasion, conversion, and torment, PsychOps specialists staff the dreaded Room 101 and its lesser equivalents: interrogation rooms, training facilities, Social Processing chambers, and other places no sane person wants to be. Although disguised, PsychOps are rumored to move amongst the rank-and-file personnel, and perhaps even go on field missions under deep cover; these icy operatives typically remain ensconced and isolated in the depths of certain Technocratic Constructs — usually the ones farthest from outside assault. Even Black Suit field agents find them to be disturbing company. Although they typically wear black garb themselves, PsychOps dress for the occasion: sometimes white (to better show the blood), sometimes bright red, and at times when this might seem the most unnerving approach for their victim, nothing at all.

No one below the Gray Suit rank seems to know whether PsychOps are natural-born humans, clones, or constructs of some other kind. A few agents speculate that they might be nothing more than holograms or psychic projections, though this seems unlikely, and their utter mastery of human psychology suggests they aren't robots. In general, PsychOps seem cold to an inhuman degree; surely, they would *have* to be in order to do what they do. Yet such agents seem, at times, to be as

warm and compassionate as a best friend in a time of need, and although that impression is *obviously* a trick, it is — as with all other PsychOps tactics — impressively convincing and ultimately treacherous.

Advancement

Although this Convention favors a collective mentality over an individualistic one, the NWO also prizes — in fact, demands — hierarchy. Of all the Technocratic groups, this Convention most clearly epitomizes the SAMETO philosophy, leavening the collective ideal with the necessities of rank. In a way (certain agents say when the subject comes up) the Convention's intimate familiarity with human consciousness provides a perfect reason for their insistence upon control. "If you knew," they say, "what we know about what goes on in other people's heads, you'd know how important it is to have someone smarter and saner than the common man to be in charge of everything." The Masses, to be blunt, are too stupid to be trusted with their world.

The plainest face this Convention shows to the rest of the world (and to most of their fellow Technocrats, too) is the familiar Black /Gray /White Suit hierarchy. Meanwhile, the Convention's less-obvious operatives move through the worlds of academia, media, infotech, law enforcement, and the Masses in general; their expertise disguised by well-honed people skills, advanced psychological techniques, disguises and credentials, networks of assets, and the pervasive application of unseen Psychodynamics (Mind Sphere) Procedures.

In all venues, advancement through the Tiers involves a tricky balance of conformity and individuality; agents conforming too much rarely leave the Black Suit ranks, while those proving too unorthodox are Processed, demoted, or simply left to die on the Front Lines — "for a good cause," of course.

Convention Focus

Where other Conventions focus upon external hypertech, the NWO focuses its Enlightened Science through the most powerful instrument of all: human consciousness. Not that they *don't* employ all manner of sweet gadgets — cool cars, big guns, cybertech, and so on; they absolutely *do*, and Q Division makes certain they have plenty of tech to go around. The core of this Convention's Procedures, though, involves discipline of the mind and body, and the effects such discipline has when reshaping Consensus among other people.

Paradigms

This world, as humans experience it, is one of *Divine Order and Earthly Chaos*. Although this Convention hosts the largest number of religion-oriented Technocrats, the "divinity" in question probably isn't supernatural — it's a metaphor for the sublime Order that, through human imperfections, often falls into chaos. Given the NWO's origins among the Gabrielite Cabal of Pure Thought, it's not surprising that many Black Suits

and Ivory Tower academics retain a semblance of religious faith. Whatever personal and spiritual beliefs an individual NWO operative might hold, however, all members of this group view themselves as agents of that sublime Order. All other paradigms within this group default to that belief. Thus, *Might is Right* for in *A World of Gods and Monsters* only dedicated strength and discipline can triumph.

Tech Holds All Answers in such a world, of course. Despite the sense of comfort and purpose religion might provide, history has shown that superstition is a dead end in terms of human growth and progress. Technology, on the other hand, is reliable, and so technology is the ultimate source of power and survival. Although many of the more existential Watchers and Feed ops assert that we exist within *A Holographic Reality* in which *Everything is Data*, the methods to unlock and control that data reside within technology, not within mere faith.

Practices and Instruments

The essence of this Convention's approach to Enlightened Science can be boiled down to a simple phrase: *Use the least to get the most*. Discipline, for these Technocrats, involves restraint. Let the Clockwork Convention use cybernetic muscles to punch through walls; NWO field ops, whenever possible, get *around* those walls instead — typically without people even noticing they were there at all.

The Convention's most effective Procedures get focused most often through psychological tools and tactics: fashion (those damn black suits and mirrorshades!), eye contact (paradoxically by making the subject stare *himself* in the eyes while hiding the eyes of the agent), social domination (of course!), voice and vocalizations and True Names ("Mister Anderson..."), languages (many operatives speak at least three, and some speak dozens of them), group rites (the uncannily coordinated Black Suit field-op team), internet activity, and similarly persuasive instruments. Because they come through intimidating but not unearthly sorts of social contact, NWO Mind Procedures are often exceptionally subtle. When presented with displays of authority or ideology, many people suddenly submit or change their opinions. When a subject breaks down after a lengthy conversation or interrogation, it's sometimes hard to tell whether his interrogators were using Psychodynamics Procedures or just exceptionally relentless psychology. High-ranking agents employ subtle Procedures with no obvious focus instruments, but even low-light operatives need little more than the *illusion* of authority, propped up by the display of a badge, some paperwork, or an officious suit.

The most radical Procedures are usually performed within a secure and/or Horizon Construct, where Paradox risks are minimized. The most extreme Procedures involve *mindscaping*: A process wherein the target, isolated within an artificial reality, is tested, tortured, or simply left alone until her defenses crumble. Uploading or downloading massive amounts of information from the human brain also requires highly advanced technology

that's rarely seen outside a Construct. While a certain degree of Social Conditioning can be performed in the field under the right conditions, it's usually safest to keep a subject under heavy guard away from her allies. Discerning whether a lengthy psychological procedure is subtle or blatant really depends on the observer, after all. If there are no Sleeper witnesses to an abduction or interrogation, the only ones around to document the transformation are loyal believers in the Union.

Whether through trickery, apathy or carelessness, many Sleepers reflexively click or sign away their privacy. Vast amounts of information trails behind them in a metaphorical "digital shadow." Big Brother doesn't need to actively pursue you; instead, dozens of Little Brothers (often devised by mundane corporations) are eager to learn all about you. Thanks to the Data Sphere and the gleeful openness of 21st century society, anyone with the right expertise and gear can access absurd amounts of personal information, including up-to-the-moment awareness of a surveillance subject's location. The VDAS feed (see *Mage 20*, pp. 655-656) lets field agents access such data in the field, which in turn allows those agents to predict potential actions (in game terms, perform Time Sphere Effects), act on personal data (the Mind Sphere), spot and exploit flaws (Entropy, Life or Mind), and otherwise know more about the target than the target herself knows.

Data Procedures and the associated surveillance gear allow an agent to gather information from any location near electronic recording and/or transmission technology. Cell phones, body cams, drones, LoJacks Closed-Circuit TV cameras, baby monitors, Echoes and Alexas... the list goes on. Sure, a person *can* escape such pervasive supervision, but it takes some doing to

get beyond the reach of that technology, and most people these days don't even want to try. Thus, when an NWO operative wants to locate someone, it's easy to do so.

And then, of course, there is Q Division and all its wonderful toys.

Thanks to movies and TV shows, all sorts of outlandish gear is perfectly coincidental throughout most of the industrialized world: jetpacks, drones, microtech, concealed armor, First Aid miracles, explosive gear, impossibly effective computers, peel-away disguises, cars and other vehicles with absurd modifications all fit snugly into the Consensus so long as the agent using them remains in an essentially tech-friendly reality zone. Even the outer limits of "Hollywood reality" — power-armor suits, mutant strength or healing powers, "cloaking gear" that renders the wearer invisible, and so forth — may remain "coincidental" as far as most media-savvy modern witnesses are concerned. As a result, NWO field agents employ a wide range of "spyware" hypertech, gear that employs Enlightened Science that fits well within the range of "realistic" modern media.

Because martial arts *are* technology — extremely efficient disciplines of physical might, mental discipline, and clever applications of physics — all modern NWO agents receive extensive training in various arts. Field agents are *especially* well-trained, and because martial arts are so significant to a modern agent's training, most current NWO field operatives are at least superficially conversant with martial arts as a focus practice, and probably know at least a handful of moves from the martial arts sections of *Mage 20*'s combat section and *How Do You DO That?* In the World of Darkness, after all, subtle mind-games can get you far — but only so far!



PROGENITORS

Enlightenment Through Evolution of Biological Machines



The flesh is weak, and humanity frail. No one knows this better than a Progenitor. To enhance humanity, to truly make it live up to its potential, you must defy that weakness and discard frailty. Eventually, the humans of the past will be a hazy memory to the immortal humans who have lifetimes to perfect their situation.

On the outside, Progenitors appear as weird scientists creating freakish monsters through genetic engineering and chemical enhancement; and to an extent, they *are*. When you get below that surface, however, you find a corps of brilliant biohackers, taking the flawed yet orderly code that forms the

genetic makeup of all living things, and then reprogramming it to better suit their needs. However, they choose to hack the living organism — through pharmaceutical methods, body splicing, or genic engineering — Progenitor motivation comes down to one ultimate goal: To overcome the frailty of flesh and usher in a new and better Genesis.

Typical Operative

A typical Progenitor is a person of intense curiosity, relentless drive, and either profound compassion or unnerving callousness. Unlike clattering machines, filthy money, and chattering monkey-minds, a Progenitor's subjects present a fascinating canvas for innovation and discovery. Among all her Technocrat colleagues, this operative displays perhaps the most human qualities: passion, desire, inquiry, and imagination. Although her dedication to those messy lifeforms marks her tolerance for imperfection, a Progenitor knows that her science lets her trump "God" at his own game.

State of the Convention

Although born as the healer-Convention known as the *Hippocratic Circle* (or *Cosians*, for short), the Progenitors slid gradually into the realm of eugenics, scientific necromancy, and other forbidden mysteries. By the 20th century, many of them worked as mad scientists, sequestered away from oversight or conscience in distant laboratories filled with biotech horrors. During that time, viewing humanity as anything more than yet another specimen to tinker with was hard. People and other animals became test subjects for radical new medicines and chemicals. They viewed all organisms as simply inefficient forms waiting to be molded and modeled by the superior Progenitors; and making new species was nothing to these scientists. Progenitors created entire new species in Construct spaces, and then experimented on those creations with little care to the life they had created and the implications of their activities.

Supplemental Data: Creating and Modifying Lifeforms

An important in-game note: Yes, sufficient applications of the Life Sphere can create new lifeforms in minutes, perhaps even seconds; those lifeforms, however, aren't likely to be viable for very long (in game terms, their Duration expires), they definitely have flaws of some kind, and they are — under Technocratic standards — Reality Deviants by default. For all its uncanny applications, Progenitor hypertech is a kind of science in the eyes of those employing it. After all, it's not like these operatives are using some sort of magic! That would be absurd...

For details about creating and modifying lifeforms, see the appropriate entries in **How Do You DO That?** (pp. 18-25)

And then, with little to no warning, they stopped.

"Stopped" is likely the wrong word. Rather, the Progenitors changed their perspective on humanity – from that of ants in a farm to play with to a precious species they should help and protect. Outside of the Convention, that change seems nearly imperceptible. Other than a few decommissioned research Constructs and a greater focus on field work, the philosophical shift was not obvious.

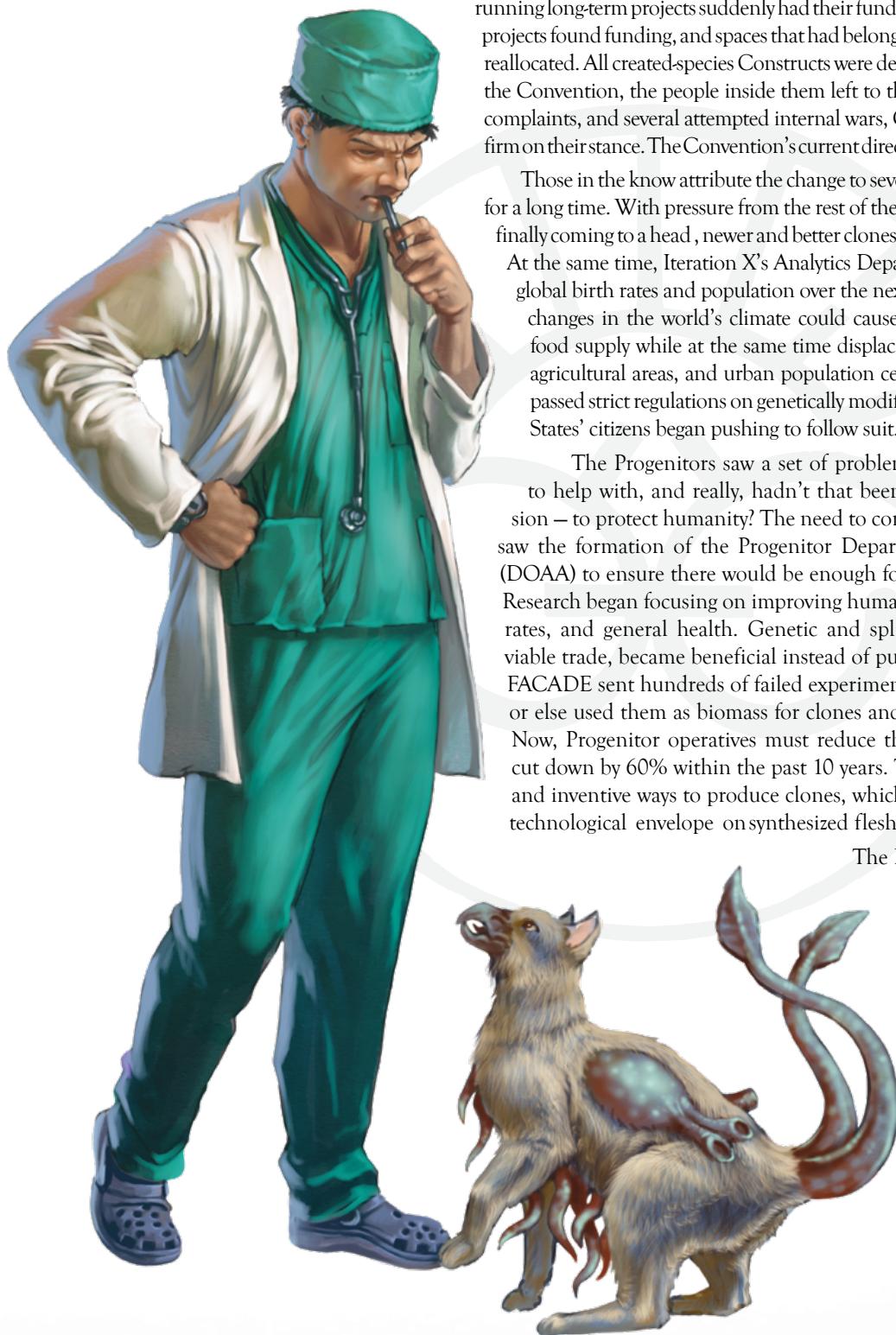
Internally, however, the shift wreaked havoc on the Convention. The shift seemed to come down from Grants and Requisitions, and it was a swift move. Primary Investigators running long-term projects suddenly had their funding cut off completely. Instead, new projects found funding, and spaces that had belonged to even Research Directors were reallocated. All created-species Constructs were decommissioned and closed off from the Convention, the people inside them left to their own devices. Despite protests, complaints, and several attempted internal wars, Grants and Requisitions remained firm on their stance. The Convention's current direction needed to change, and quickly.

Those in the know attribute the change to several factors that have been building for a long time. With pressure from the rest of the Union for Progenitors in the field finally coming to a head, newer and better clones became the topic of heated debate.

At the same time, Iteration X's Analytics Department predicted a fast decline in global birth rates and population over the next 50 years. Additionally, the rapid changes in the world's climate could cause a drastic reduction in the world food supply while at the same time displacing large populations from coasts, agricultural areas, and urban population centers. Then the European Union passed strict regulations on genetically modified organisms in food; and United States' citizens began pushing to follow suit.

The Progenitors saw a set of problems they were uniquely equipped to help with, and really, hadn't that been the Convention's original mission – to protect humanity? The need to combat the global food-supply issue saw the formation of the Progenitor Department of Advanced Agriculture (DOAA) to ensure there would be enough food for a large world population. Research began focusing on improving humanity's survivability, reproduction rates, and general health. Genetic and splicing modification, while still a viable trade, became beneficial instead of purely theoretical. Before the shift, FACADE sent hundreds of failed experiments to Iteration X for HIT Marks, or else used them as biomass for clones and bizarre transplant experiments. Now, Progenitor operatives must reduce their failure rate with such waste cut down by 60% within the past 10 years. This change, in turn, forced new and inventive ways to produce clones, which, also in turn, has increased the technological envelope on synthesized flesh in recent years.

The Progenitors fail to mention their sordid past of creating entire sentient species to use as slave labor, lab subjects, and horrific "attack dogs." New recruits don't even know that such experiments occurred. Anyone applying for a grant to create a human analogue in the Department of Cloning, generally receives denial with a strongly worded letter about why such funding will never be awarded.



Methodologies

With changes in the Convention, the Methodologies have had to shift their responsibilities around. The original FACADE Engineers, Genegineers, and Pharmacopoeists all still exist, but now those old-school groups have been joined by Applied Sciences and a fifth, cross-disciplinary, faction, Damage Control.

Applied Sciences

Applied Sciences takes all the theory from research performed by the other Methodologies and tosses it out the window. They don't care how or why something works the way it does — they care only that it *does* work, and then they put it to use. In a Convention famous for its cloning work, the Progenitors had a severe lack of people willing to take what they already knew and put it to practical use. That's where Applied Sciences comes in. They iterate improvements on known accomplishments, inventing new techniques, processes, and equipment that then helps the rest of the Convention fulfill their more basic science pursuits.

With the growing urgency of climate-based disasters, Applied Sciences has taken a special interest in agricultural innovations, rapid-adaption evolution, and pollution-eating organisms. As pandemics erupt worldwide (a situation exacerbated by anti-vaccination movements and other pseudoscience trends), Applied Science field agents track, capture, and analyze new pathogens — a disturbing number of which bear the mark of RD origins. These cases and their data are, of course, referred immediately to Damage Control. If anyone in Applied Sciences is keeping such data for their own purposes, Grants and Requisitions would certainly know about such errors — wouldn't they?

The FACADE Engineers

The infamous *Forced Adaptation and Clone Alteration Developmental Eugenicists* (FACADE Engineers) continue to be the workhorse of the Progenitors, creating and modifying clones, "lesser" Black Suits, and other biotech entities for use throughout the Union. FACADE trades clones for all sorts of favors amongst the Conventions, which gives their operatives access to technological advances from Iteration X, security screening and intelligence from the NWO, funding and marketing from the Syndicate, and alien biomaterials from the Void Engineers.

While creating and modifying clones is a priority for FACADE, they also create constructs from various biological components. While these constructs are often used in grafts, transplants, research, and other biotech applications, FACADE's technologies have moved forward enough — and, more importantly, have gained enough traction within the Consensus — that a simple injection can cause an animal to grow a new replacement organ or body part in a matter of days, and sometimes, within the protected confines of a Progenitor laboratory, within an hour or two.

Supplemental Data: Zombie Plagues and Other Oddities

There's a source for these plagues, all right — an especially nasty Fallen sect known (to the very few people who recognize their existence) as *Exies* or *Obliviates*. Dedicated to inducing an Extinction-Level Event — or better still, several ELEs at once — these Nephantic fanatics employ archetypal symbolism to facilitate global catastrophes. Each time, their efforts have been stopped... for now. Damage Control may have a hand in preventing these grotesque ELEs; if the Technocracy is under Nephantic control, however, certain Exies might be Progenitors themselves.

For more data regarding the Exie sect, see **The Book of the Fallen** (pp. 79-82).

The Genegineers

As their name suggests, Genegineers work on creating genetically modified organisms from scratch. While FACADE may be the center for cloning, Genegineers utilize strategies of gene splicing, transgenic methods, and targeted breeding to create hybrid animals and people. Sure, FACADE can grow a human clone within a month or so — a fully formed husk waiting for implanted orders or a neurological upload; Genegineers, however, can design a new person or animal from the ground up. This is where Progenitor biohacking excels. Want a super soldier that can withstand volcanic heat, Antarctic cold, see clearly in near darkness, regenerate most organs if damaged, and yet weigh in at 150lbs or less? The Genegineers can make that to order and grow it up in their lab, within a year or so, into fully adult humanoid form. Want a series of animals with the strength of insects and the intelligence of dogs? No problem — just give the Genegineers a few months and they'll have one ready for you.

The Pharmacopoeists

Everything physical involves chemistry. Some people understand that fact better than others do, and the Pharmacopoeists believe they understand it best of all. While the other Methodologies involve tinkering with biological toys, these Progenitors harken back to the Convention's roots — literally. Drugs, potions, poisons and cures... it's all part of a Pharmacopoeist's job. While FACADE and the Genegineers certainly bring in much-needed funds, the financial rewards for Pharmacopoeist innovations dwarf the other Progenitor Methodologies put together — a benefit that gives this group and its members a decided edge where internal politics are concerned.

Whereas many other Progenitors stick to their labs and research, Pharmacopoeists start out in the field, and occasionally



remain there. Some work as researchers, plant-gathers, virologists, and sample-chasing explorers; others work at hospitals and pharmaceutical companies; and still others work the streets, dealing psychoactive substances and then monitoring their effects on the people using them. All those fields provide useful data, and quite a few provide money, too. There's a well-established bond between Pharmacopoeists and Syndicate ops, and that bond extends into both sides of the law.

While this Convention's mainstay involves drugs in various capacities, Pharmacopoeists have started to investigate ingested chemicals that create epigenetic changes among the Masses. Pharmacopoeist drugs without side effects continue to benefit the Union, too, giving its soldiers an edge in field work, and its office and factory laborers enough lift to endure countless hours of numbing drudgery. With the current trend of the United States rejecting science, however, and the worldwide fear of genetically modified organisms, the Progenitors have had a hard time pushing certain advancements out to the Masses. The Pharmacopoeists, therefore, found a way to chemically induce changes that will eventually spread to children... and then to their children... and so on... and they pack these innovations into dietary supplements and diet aids in free-market countries. As it turns out, people who turn up their noses at "Big Pharma" formulae pay good money (and lots of it) for "natural cures" and "homeopathic remedies"—especially when Progenitor MODEs hawk those products on websites, YouTube channels, and TV

infomercials aimed at the anti-authoritarian set. Few things are more amusing, to people with an ironic sense of humor, than New Age mavens and survivalist militiamen rebelling against The Man by buying drugs from the Technocracy.

Damage Control

Damage Control was created as a cross-Methodology group to deal with emergency situations. If an unknown disease breaks out, or if mysterious deaths pile up due to a strange biological agent, or if alien biological contamination rears its warty green head then Damage Control is on the scene to deal with it. And if those issues arise from the Progenitors' own experiments or constructs? Well then, all the better that the Progenitors have someone tasked to be first on the scene!

While Damage Control ostensibly deals with any kind of strange biological issues threatening humanity, the formation of the Methodology came about because too many clones, constructed creatures, or infectious agents had been making it into the general population, and few Technocratic agents wanted to go out into the field and deal with it. Operatives joining Damage Control often began in one of the other Methodologies and either prove themselves to be excellent problem solvers, want more from their service than basic research, or simply crave the excitement of the Front Lines. Members of Damage Control no longer follow their previous Methodologies, but still retain the training they receive there. Members of this group

use that expertise to understand, analyze, and contain any issues that might arise among the Masses. Internal experience within other Methodologies gives Damage Control operatives the necessary understanding to deal with virus outbreaks or rogue constructs, and connections with their previous groups provides the necessary connections to find things out and get things done.

One of Damage Control's most pressing duties in the current age involves responding to war zones, famines, and plagues. In the Cosian days, such "mercy missions" were the Convention's pride and joy; today's DC operatives take pride in resurrecting that honorable tradition. Speaking of resurrection, though... one of the more unnerving epidemics the Progenitors have noted is a distinct uptick in "zombie plagues": either literal manifestations of post-mortem mobility and violence, or an equally unnerving (if more rationally explicable) surge of contaminations that turn normal humans into neigh-unstoppable cannibalistic mobs. Are these plagues the result of a poisoned Consensus reacting to zombie apocalypse memes, biotech weapons, flawed experiments, or something worse? Damage Control expect that it is, indeed, the "something worse" option, but have yet to pinpoint the origin of such plagues — though their data suggests that the source might hide within the Progenitors' own ranks...

Organization

In contrast to the collective-minded Iterators, the Progenitor Convention prizes personal initiative and individual accomplishments. Even so, it takes a dedicated and persistent scientist to wade through the obstacle course this Convention provides its membership. As detailed earlier under "TISFL: A Technocratic Life" (p. 113), Technocratic supervisors can make life difficult for their underlings—and in few Conventions other than the Syndicate do the higher-ups subject their subordinates to as much passive-aggressive abuse as Progenitor supervisors do.

Progenitor facilities organize themselves into various departments, similar to the way an academic institution separates departments based on their primary areas of study. Some departments model the academic approach, with each department controlled by a Research Director as the department head, several Primary Investigators and Research Associates underneath them, and Students and Technicians beneath them all. Some departments, however, follow a more common commercial laboratory structure, with a single Research Director overseeing Research Associates, Primary Investigators, Students, and Technical staff alike. Finally, some departments are dedicated to field work; these groups often have a Director overseeing small teams comprised of a mix of agents of varying but lesser ranks.

DOAA: The Department of Advanced Agriculture

The Department of Advanced Agriculture's primary goal involves creating viable and sustainable food sources that can feed

20 billion people within the next 10 years. This department came about around the same time Applied Sciences branched off from other Methodologies in the recent past. Both Pharmacopoeists and Genegineers work within this department, attempting to address the problem with a two-pronged method. Genegineers work to discover which genes code best for nutrient load and survivability in both crops and food animals, increasing reproductive rates without increasing the carbon footprint. At the same time, Pharmacopoeists search for high-efficiency/low-impact pesticides, chemicals that increase nutrient absorption, and formulas to reduce the nitrogen waste from fertilization techniques; Applied Sciences, on the other hand, works with crossbreeding crops and animals to get the desired results. DOAA ops are also the ones with boots on the ground in crisis zones and agricultural research development regions, planting seedlings in farms to help spread new strains into the overall population.

With the general fear surrounding GMO foods in the Americas and most of Western Europe, the DOAA moved its division headquarters to India in 2005. Now, though, regulations that limit GMO crop imports and growth in India have been forcing the DOAA to seek other places to study — mainly in North Africa and China. Most of the Department of Advanced Agriculture's work is research-based, and DOAA facilities tend to follow a very academic structure. At the Division's head sits a team of three Research Directors assigning directives to everyone else. The department has research stations across the world, as they attempt to work in secret, and each station is headed up by a Primary Investigator. Each PI, in turn, often works with teams of five to 10 Research Associates, Students, and Technicians; unEnlightened staff performs most of the grunt-level lab work.

There is, of course, a dirty little secret underneath this Division's altruism: While it's true that the DOAA intends to provide food for coming generations of humanity, it also intends to make a healthy profit doing so. The Division's field teams deliberately sow modified seeds in uncultivated areas; when those seeds sprout, a new invasive species takes hold. That species has a patented design, and farmers wishing to grow that crop — or have their crops mixed with the patented species — must pay the DOAA for the use of those crops. It turns out that the Masses' paranoia surrounding GMO crops is not entirely unfounded after all...

DOC: The Department of Cloning

Known for its humorously fitting acronym, the Department of Cloning provides the true research arm of the Progenitors. While this department *does* handle all clone creation for the rest of the Union, that's just a small portion of what they do. Situated within various different Constructs for this express purpose, the DOC handles all new experimental biotech procedures, creations, biomods, constructs, and clones. All three of the experimental Methodologies have labs within the Department of Cloning. In other Conventions, this department

might be considered research and development, but because every other department among the Progenitors is also responsible for research on some level, the department took on the name of the first set of successful experiments initiated by the FACADE Engineers who founded this department.

These days, the DOC employs both Enlightened and unEnlightened members as lab technicians, researchers, and support staff. Despite its name, the department's various labs research biotech in general, not just cloning. DOC labs are where Genegineers come up with new transgenic models, create new life, perform stem-cell research, and create genetic splinters. FACADE does the most practical clone work, attempting to generate newer, longer-lasting, higher-quality clone bodies, organs, biomods, and replacement parts, as well as grafting techniques and animal-based bioconstructs. Pharmacopoeists create and test new chemicals (often using clone bodies as test subjects), research existing plant life for chemical components or reactions, and create gene therapies alongside Genegineers.

Each month, the Department of Cloning hosts a joint conference wherein each lab gets to show off the most current results of its ongoing projects. Reps from the other Progenitor departments are invited to attend this conference, though the only regular attendees usually come from the Departments of Education and Grants and Requisitions.

DOE: The Department of Education

The Department of Education works to both keep everyone within the Convention up-to-date on the latest Convention's breakthroughs and discoveries, but they also work to introduce advancements to the Masses. To this end, DOE spends a great deal of time turning highly technical scientific research papers into something the Masses will understand. These dedicated scientists also work alongside the NWO on several Imperatives designed to ease fears among the Masses regarding science and its accomplishments. Damage Control plays a primary role in this endeavor, but low-Tier members of both the Genegineers and the Pharmacopoeists help draft documents to release to the Masses on a regular basis. As a primarily a low-status and dreadfully dull post, the DOE—although headed by a Research Director—is almost entirely staffed by unEnlightened T0 and T1 operatives with a few T1 Students to oversee them. For action-oriented operatives, few fates are worse than a reassignment to a Department of Education post.

DOGm: The Department of Genetic Mapping

The Department of Genetic Mapping used to focus primarily on guiding the Human Genome Project; when that project concluded in 2003, they branched out. The department now has two arms—a research group and a field group. The research arm is dedicated to taking the information from the Human Genome Project and, instead of mapping what the genetic sequences are, mapping exactly what each one sequence

does. The group in charge of field work goes out to find animals on the endangered-species list, and then collects their DNA for sequencing, mapping, and potential reconstruction. They also collect whatever genetic material they can from extinct animals, working to see if they can bring such animals back, as was done with the venerable Cyber-Tooth Tiger. Members of each Methodology are involved in both aspects of this department, though Damage Control is often required only with the field teams.

The Department of Genetic Mapping is structured in the traditional academic way. The field teams are often comprised of Students and Technicians or Research Associates who want to get their hands dirty.

DOGAR: The Department of Grants and Requisitions

The Department of Grants and Requisitions spends a great deal of its time gaining resources and funds for the Convention, and doling out grants to the various research groups within the Convention. The department seeks funding for Progenitor experiments from the rest of the Union on a regular basis, and also consolidates funding from other areas of the Progenitor convention. They also negotiate with governments among the Masses for things like research space, lightening of regulatory practices, land rights, and so on. Legal affairs, too, are a priority for this department just in case a Progenitor finds himself in trouble with either the Masses (a rare situation, given the Technocracy's influence within global law enforcement) or with the Traditions (which generally requires intervention from members of Damage Control).

The second major function of G&R involves disbursing funds to the various Progenitor projects. Funding is often reserved for proven methods or tried-and-true research paths. Up-and-coming Primary Investigators often compete with each other every year to secure the funds earmarked for new projects. The recent Department of Neuronal Transmission research groups have won grants several years in a row, making some of the other departments upset about what appears to be favoritism from G&R.

Most of the G&R requisitions staff is unEnlightened. When it comes to determining who gets grants, however, a team of Enlightened peers review the grant proposal. Many members of this group come from all the Methodologies, though Applied Science types rarely bother to get involved in the grants-disbursement side of things, as they find most theoretical work to be rather boring.

DONT: The Department of Neuronal Transmission

The Department of Neuronal Transmission deals with the conscious mind. Here, groups work to understand consciousness and mental imprinting, with the goal of mapping consciousness into data, or into a form of energy that allows the

consciousness to travel without a body. This final and ultimate form of transhumanism allows a person to transcend the flesh and hop between bodies on a whim, or to exist inside what FACADE Engineers call “The Hub”: a place where consciousnesses can sustain themselves indefinitely.

Neuronal Transmission is a small department, with a staff almost entirely composed of Enlightened operatives. A few unEnlightened staffers work in the labs situated among the Masses, working to map brainwaves or performing dream-studies on volunteer subjects. Currently, the department spends a great deal of time collecting and collating data from both Enlightened and unEnlightened subjects. This data comprises anything from MRI images of the brain, brainwaves mapped during various states of awareness, and brain-maps performed while the subject is dreaming. DONT sometimes works closely with members from Iteration X to model the data in mathematical configurations. The department also experiments with mapping key attributes of brainwave functionality, sleep patterns, and brain images onto fresh “unimprinted” clones. To date the experiments yield only poor facsimiles of the subject in question, but that doesn’t keep DONT scientists from pursuing further research in that field.

Advancement

Progenitors like to pull their new recruits from universities and research labs. Often, they offer unEnlightened grads jobs within various facilities, bringing them into the T0 level without the recruits knowing for whom and what they truly work. These unEnlightened members do the majority of the grunt work in the labs – from running assays to handling animals. Everyone who manages to move up from the grunt work stage becomes a T1 Technician, and any gaining Enlightenment gets upgraded to T1 Research Scientist. While Progenitor training isn’t as intense or invasive as, say, the initiations of Iteration X, most operatives gain Enlightenment through exposure to extreme ideas and experiences. Sometimes, that exposure is chemically induced, while at other times the greater understanding that comes from working in a Progenitor lab is enough. Most Progenitors won’t talk about how many Enlightened members come from the former group; they’re not, Reason forbid, some gang of stupid tripping hippies!

Technicians and Research Scientists have the ability to eventually advance to the T3 Student rank. Though it’s rare, some unEnlightened yet exceptional personnel make it to Student, though they never advance above that rank. Outside of the laboratory setting, and between the ranks, you can find T2 Street Ops and Recruiters. Both ranks exist somewhat higher than Technician, and somewhat below Student. Students do plenty of field work, but Street Ops and Recruiters handle most of the Convention’s heavy lifting.

Students make up the majority of the Progenitors’ ranks; these are mostly Enlightened members who have proven themselves capable and loyal to their Convention, and having

completed several successful research projects or field missions. To rise above Student, a Progenitor must defend a thesis in front of a T4 Primary Investigator. If successful, she becomes a Research Associate within that Primary Investigator’s lab. From there, she can begin to seek out grant money and hopefully secure her own lab as a Primary Investigator. The only real difference between a Research Associate and a Primary Investigator is funding, but as long as a Research Associate works in someone else’s lab, she must follow orders and cannot work on her own projects – or at least, she cannot do so *openly*. Many do so anyway.

Research Directors head departments. Primary Investigators rise to this rank when they have either enough funding to start giving funds to other Primary Investigators, or if they come up with a unique branch of research that warrants its own department. Councilors are peers to Research Directors, but they do not head departments. A Primary Investigator may become a Councilor and leave the laboratory life behind.

Convention Focus

Progenitors create, alter, study and destroy lifeforms. That’s what this Convention does. Although Progenitor scientists pursue those ends through different means, the heart of the group can be found within its name – a name that, like the Ouroboros serpent of the group’s alchemical origins, circles around to bite its own tail as it “brings new things forward” by moving “forward to new things.”

Paradigms

For those believing that *Might is Right* is an evolutionary decree: you either evolve or you die trying. This paradigm, in the hands of Progenitors, helps explain the group’s infamous lack of moral or ethical scruples. This paradigm, they assert, is what it takes to become the best, to make humanity the best it can be, and if you aren’t on board with that... well, your biomass won’t be wasted. True Enlightenment, these Progenitors believe, comes from ascending to your own kind of godhood. This concept appeals to Progenitors who seek immortality through science, viewing the ability to eventually purge all weakness from one’s self as a simple milestone, not an unreachable ideal.

Certain Progenitors view their directive differently. They accept the Gaia theory from *Creation is Innately Divine and Alive*. The Earth, from this perspective, is a collective organism that’s sentient enough to attempt to commune with – or in the case of humanity, destroy – the life that exists on it. In this paradigm, the Progenitor believes that people live in a symbiotic (or parasitical) relationship with the world. Humans feed from the Earth, taking its nutrients and sometimes giving back, and the Earth attempts to employ immune devices to remove harmful humans. Much like any other immune response, however, this reflex devastates the good alongside the bad. Understanding how the relationship works, then, is true Enlightenment. Once she knows what an immune response looks like, or what the

relationship is, she can change either the Earth or the human organism to trick the system. Ultimate understanding comes not only from accepting your place in the world but also from knowing how to manipulate the world to better accept you.

Progenitors also adapt various other paradigms to suit their needs. Some view that *Tech Holds All Answers*, knowing that their triumph over the flesh comes more from technology than from mere will alone. The more technology advances to allow for chemical analysis, gene therapy, and construct creation, the closer they come to truly understanding the world. Newer technologies and techniques simply allow a Progenitor to better comprehend the systems she works within. A few Progenitors, meanwhile, subscribe to the paradigms *Everything is an Illusion* and/or *Data*, citing their ability to hack their own or others bodies as proof that everything is mutable, and nothing is truly real. These operatives don't strive to understand the world around them, but instead to shape the illusion into their own image. Enlightenment, then, isn't just about acceptance, but about their absolute control over the illusion.

Practices and Instruments

As noted earlier, Progenitors are scientists—*mad* scientists, by most estimations, but scientists, nonetheless. Their practices, therefore, are applications of science—most specifically *biotech*, *cybernetics*, *medicine-work*, *reality hacking*, and generous amounts of *weird science*. Although that practice requires time-intensive activities and lab spaces (both of which the Progenitors have in abundance), and it has a ghastly ratio of failure-to-success rates, the bulk of the Convention's operatives prefer a weird science

approach, reveling in discovery over function. Also, because “the doctor is always right,” a fair amount of *dominion* comes into play in this Convention, too. After all, if your control over strange creatures slips, the results can be rather... messy.

A few of the more adventurous Progenitors use a particularly brutal approach to *animalism*, either by commanding animals through their technology, uplifting animals, or modifying human beings toward a more animalistic state. A few Progenitors also use *craftwork* to retrofit living organisms. FACADE specifically employs craftwork when making grafts or creating clones.

Some Progenitors, especially those working in Applied Sciences, use medicine work as their primary practice. While they *do* focus on the healing arts, they do so in a way that gets results. Plenty of Pharmacopoeists favor a chemical approach to that practice, too, crafting new drugs and healing medicines.

Regardless of the paradigms and practices involved, Progenitor Enlightened Science inevitably employs an array of medical instruments: scalpels, sutures, drugs and brews of various kinds, vessels for various liquid and solid components, labs and gear, medical procedures, cybernetic implants, nano-tech, herbs and plants (processed, of course!), brain-computer interface, bones and remains, blood and fluids, and, of course, a focus on extreme body modification. Social domination (often incorporating fashion, eye contact, money, and the Convention's ruthless approach to HR and management) plays a subtle yet pervasive role in the Progenitor world. Without an assurance of control, few of these Technocrats could even *think* of getting away with the uncanny things they do.



SYNDICATE

Enlightenment Through Commerce, Desire, and Exchange



The purpose of wealth is to acquire more power.

The purpose of power is to acquire greater wealth. *Why? Because they're the same thing.* The ability to reshape reality according to one's whims with greater and more far-reaching efficiency than any Enlightened

procedure. Taken together, wealth and power are all that matters. Anyone that tries to convince you otherwise is a loser with neither — just another sheep for shearing, or a lamb for the slaughter. That's what makes the 1% of the 1%, the people so rich that they don't appear on any lists of the world's wealthiest people because they're the true masters of the trillions that the world's governments only believe themselves to own. That's the Syndicate.

Love? True friendship? Hope? Salvation? People like to say that such things can't be bought; when you come right down to it, though, they *can* — because *everything* can be bought — and whatever can be bought can, by definition, be sold. Across the length and breadth of the universe, there's nothing that can't ultimately be commodified.

It all comes together to form the essence of the Bottom Line, the driving ethos of the Syndicate: everything is for sale, one way or another. We're all just haggling over price.

Typical Operative

The archetypal Syndicate rep is an individual of distinction — rich, classy, charismatic, and accomplished. He works hard, knows what you want, and understands how to provide it for you while making a profit in the bargain. Social acumen is the stock-and-trade of his Convention, and he runs circles around most rivals while making them love him for it. Desire, he knows, is the ultimate coin of the realm. In a sense, the Syndicate rep really is “money,” minting reality by defining

its most desirable terms. Whether or not he knows — or even cares — just how deeply desire can corrupt him depends upon his personal ethics. Sadly, that quality within this group has always been (dare we say it?) poor.

State of the Convention

In recent years, the Syndicate has, arguably, become the most openly powerful Convention in the Technocratic Union (as opposed to the position it long occupied as “merely” the power behind the New World Order’s throne), only to discover itself enmeshed in the inexplicable paradox that nigh-absolute power over the affairs of the world has not yielded a commensurate degree of control. Indeed, lately, events feel like they’re spiraling more and more into chaos, and no amount of savvy market manipulation or careful management of the Masses is making things more orderly. It’s a conundrum that has the Vice Presidents of Operations scrambling for a viable solution.

Some of the Convention’s agents worry that this chaos is evidence supporting those old rumors about Nephantic infiltration at the Syndicate’s highest levels (or maybe just at the most crucial parts of its middle management; none of the scuttlebutt agrees), while others believe that it’s just the intractability of a disorganized humanity, rebelling against the much-needed order created by a truly globalized financial system. A small and as-yet none too vocal minority, however, believes that it might be a sign of a necessary overhaul in the Syndicate’s entire approach to the free market, lest the Bottom Line slip through their fingers when they’re so close to finally realizing it.

When the free market is where your bread is buttered, you quickly learn that there is no distinction between style and substance. What’s popular is powerful. What people

want is all that really matters. Control what they desire to buy and become — how they want to look, and who they want to idolize, emulate, and fuck — and you literally rule their minds and their souls. Far more so than any other Convention of the Technocracy, the Syndicate accepts that what its operatives do is magick. They call it science, sure — economics, marketing, and the like — but they also understand that such phraseology is a distinction without a difference, even dubbing their Associates “Magic Men” with a barely ironic wink. Their sorcery is that of a fiction so powerful it became universal truth: The value that people assign to the things they long to have, and to the people who have it or who do not.

In truth, style is a powerful gatekeeper. It's a stark dividing line between the haves and the have-nots; plumage in which the powerful can strut to demonstrate their superiority over others. The Syndicate exists so far beyond that line that the have-nots can't even see them, and the most affluent of the haves can only barely discern the outline of them on the edge of the horizon, harnessing Hypereconomic principles to create the demand that they then supply, and always reaping the benefits of its own efforts. There's a kind of fairness to that. Those doing the most work to define the world's wants deserve the best the world has to offer. A sense of *noblesse oblige* about the whole thing exists among at least a significant portion of the Convention: People just are better off with good stuff, and the only way to know good from bad in a world that exists above bare subsistence is cost. Cost is what makes the Masses aspire to supersede their limitations, so that they can be better (which is to say, richer) than they were, yesterday. Cost tells people what they can attain if they have the wits and the will to seize those things.

Methodologies

Right from its reorganization out of the High Guild, the Syndicate understood the value of diversification, and it implemented various Methodologies — *Disbursements*, *Enforcers*, *Financiers*, and *Media Control* — to cast the widest possible effective net for gathering and controlling Primal Energy and the wealth with which it's inextricably entangled. All

other considerations were (and continue to be, to this day) secondary — and a distant second, at that — to the all-important task of managing the assets generated by Ventures, regardless of the means a given Methodology uses to go about doing so.

There is, on the darker side of the ledger, an additional Methodology known to those who've heard of it as the *Special Projects Division*. No one talks much about SPD if they know what's good for them...

Disbursements

The gilded despots of the Technocracy, Disbursements come from the Methodology that holds the purse-strings for the entire Union. Expanding and refurbishing a Construct or commissioning a new Deep Universe vessel? Not without Disbursements' blessing, you're not, and Disbursements lords this power over the rest of the Technocracy with expert precision, doling out enough Primal Energy (and the mundane wealth with which it is intertwined) to maintain its lofty position, while still reminding everyone else of where the buck truly stops.

It might just be the Technocracy's most internally despised Methodology.

The truth of the matter is a bit less glamorous and grandiose, however. Disbursements knows, down to the last weird hypertech weapon, gram of Primum, and unit of Primal Energy, the full extent of the Union's resources, and everyone else is always crying poor-mouth. Even if Disbursements wanted to meet all the other Conventions' demands (which, to be fair, it doesn't), there simply isn't enough to go around. There's a cold, hard boundary between infinite wealth and merely nigh-infinite wealth, and so certain requests need to be prioritized over others. Almost none of these compromises make anyone else in any of the other Conventions happy, but they can't really be expected to understand the delicate balancing act that is doling out the appropriate measures of the distilled concept of monetary value.

Enforcers

The face of the Syndicate with which the Technocracy's enemies tend to be most directly familiar, the Enforcers embody the “dirty side of the dollar (yuan, ruble, yen, rupee; whatever).” The so-called *Hollow Men* — a dated, gendered



term that's nevertheless managed to stick around – of the Enforcers are the ones most frequently tasked with prosecuting the Convention's agenda in the trenches of the Ascension War. Most often, this means working with and through criminal interests to facilitate the greatest possible return on investment in situations in which adherence to the law is an impediment to profit.

The Enforcers understand that there's really no such thing as a "black market"; rather, there are markets that prevailing social mores accept, and ones that they don't. Both, however, are as necessary as they are inevitable, and every unit of currency that has ever existed has passed through criminal enterprises just as readily as through "legitimate" ones. What the law denounces today was yesterday's respectable business, and it could just as easily be tomorrow's, but someone needs to be the one operating in the shadows, raking in the bloodstained bills and circulating them back into the world, crisp and clean and free of sin. If some people get tortured and murdered in the process...? Well, that's just the ugly truth of how comprehensive economics *actually* works.

Most any time an Awakened person outside the Technocratic Union interacts directly with a member of the Syndicate (typically, though not always, in a violent confrontation), they are dealing with an Enforcer. Other Methodologies' personnel simply don't have the time or the inclination to do so, and they almost invariably have the resources and the clout necessary to foist that unpleasant responsibility off onto other Technocrats. This leads outsiders to the erroneous conclusion that Syndicate Technocrats are just a bunch of jumped-up gangsters overshadowed by the bigger threat of HIT Marks and cyborgs; and that impression, of course, suits the Syndicate's needs perfectly.

Financiers

These are the people savvy outsiders tend to most readily consider when thinking about the Syndicate; the ones who, since the days of the High Guild, have carefully molded and expanded upon the most pervasive shared belief system in human history: money. It's the Financiers who cultivated a truly global economy, gradually insinuating threads of mutual fiscal interdependency into all the nations of the world. Now, even the biggest, fattest spiders on the international stage are just as tangled up in this web as the flies upon whom they prey, and the Financiers pat themselves on their collective back for it.

More than perhaps anyone else in the world, Financiers understand that money is a lie. It just happens to be an all-encompassing lie upon which everyone, everywhere, relies. It's a deception so powerful that it generates its own reality, in the form of Primal Utility, and affects all other aspects of the modern Consensus. In a sense, the Financiers are the beating heart at the center of the Syndicate, tasked with forever expanding the reach and power of the market, until that glorious day when all people, everywhere, acknowledge, accept, and celebrate

the Bottom Line, and Reality itself can finally be assigned a dollar value.

Media Control

Forever butting heads with the New World Order, Media Control applies a somewhat subtler and slightly less obviously oppressive hand to the task of shaping the Consensus through the modern equivalent of *panem et circenses*. The Masses are easier to direct when someone holds a tight rein on what they like, what they want, and what they believe, and that's where Media Control comes in. Striking a careful balance between the practices of Dominion and the Art of Desire, this Methodology uses a carrot-and-stick approach to guide the unEnlightened whenever possible, and to goad them when necessary.

Recent developments throughout the world, however, have created disagreement within Media Control as to the best course to follow. Some favor the "easy money" of steadily rising authoritarianism as a tool to most effectively hold the Masses in check (simultaneously enabling other Conventions to implement ever fiercer and more blatant crackdowns on RDs). Others believe that a more optimistic approach is warranted. This latter faction points to a history of heavy-handed methods of control resulting in seemingly inevitable fiscal meltdowns as proof that some other way is necessary.

At present, the would-be tyrants hold most of the cards, but the drive to renew Media Control's mission is slowly picking up steam. The Methodology has spent so long merely placating the Masses, however, that no one can quite yet agree on the most constructive means to truly inspire them.

Organization

To outsiders, the Syndicate presents a (mostly) unified front. Anything else would be a tacit admission of exploitable weakness, and no one in this Convention wants – or would accept – such vulnerability. Thus, perhaps the most brutal internal conflict within the Union plays out with nary a shot fired. At least, not shot where anyone else can hear it.

On one side stands a hard right-wing institution in the mold of the so-called "Dark Enlightenment" movement, dedicated to a sort of corporate feudalism, in which the CEO is the new king, absent any sort of "divine right" that would protect him from more cunning, ambitious, and amoral underlings: an eternal game of dog-eat-dog which destroys, or else utterly enslaves, the weak, leaving only the most ruthless "dogs" to divvy up the spoils. On the other side stands a newer and more idealistic mentality within the Syndicate, offering an optimistic vision of capitalism that, in many ways, harks back to a time in which the Convention's precursors spoke of magick without an at least semi-ironic wink.

The first faction is the face of the Syndicate with which almost everyone, both friend and foe, is familiar; the latter group is smaller and weaker, by far, but may have stumbled

upon the key to Mass Ascension — a concept that the Syndicate has long regarded with sneering disdain — that has eluded the Convention since its inception: *Infinite Shareholder Returns*.

Under this theory, every individual member of the Masses (and *only* the Masses) is, effectively, a shareholder in Reality, possessing a single share and unconsciously organizing into powerful and ever-shifting blocs with others to leverage metaphysical authority over the Consensus. These blocs are the many-tiered, overlapping, and protean paradigms that govern and ultimately comprise the Consensus. The idealists maintain that, since its foundation, the Syndicate has worked to align itself with the most powerful blocs that are not intrinsically hostile to its own goals (aside from, perhaps, the covert-yet-notorious SPD), because the flipside to the cumulative body of shareholders — and this is where the theory becomes the closest thing the Convention has to heresy — is the management that must ultimately answer to them: the Syndicate itself.

To the optimists, the chaos within the Consensus, right when the Syndicate is so close to a decisive victory, involves a building Market Correction that manifests as the dissatisfaction of underserved shareholder blocs for whom the benefits of capitalism are not properly providing adequate returns. Given enough time, these blocs of the Masses can, and *will*, bring the whole thing tumbling down in a crash that could devastate the current global economy beyond repair (effectively sinking the Syndicate). Thus, to address the needs and desires of those demographics — and thereby, to protect the Syndicate's preeminent place in the world — the Convention must realize Ventures and Adjustments designed to compound their own profitability on an endless upward curve, to meet the desires of *all* the people who, essentially, employ the Syndicate with incalculable personal assets for each. That is the essence of *Infinite Shareholder Returns*.

Although each Methodology organizes itself into a host of different but related Divisions, the core of Syndicate organization is simple: *Legal operations* on one side, *illegal operations* on the other, and several “gray zone” operations straddling the line between those categories. All Methodologies have a certain degree of each, and the money flows upward, leaving a little of it behind in the hands of the operatives most responsible for conducting a given operation. Although this Convention *does* employ a certain degree of office-politics hierarchy (detailed under “Advancement,” below), Syndicate operations reward individuals with the *chutzpah* and motivation to move laterally through the system rather than linearly. In this group, more than in any other Technocracy convention, the old saying is true: *Reality is whatever you can get away with*.

Legal Operations

While most Technocracy Conventions operate at a distance, or behind screens of misdirection, the Syndicate functions through an international network of corporations and the government institutions that nurture them. The lower

echelons of these groups occupy office space on the Front Lines, running especially efficient and profitable businesses and corporate clearinghouses. The Enforcer Methodology also maintains a pervasive influence in law enforcement bureaus, law offices, lawmaking bodies, and the “legal aid” foundations that appear to counter them but actually deal hand-in-hand with those agencies. Media Control operates through various media venues and marketing firms, the Financiers maintain a hold on market speculation and investment firms, and Disbursements places operatives within all of those offices, reporting back to the Head Office in that Methodology’s Assessment Division. All of these agencies technically operate within the law structures of the Masses, and though their activities may seem questionable ethically, those activities remain within the boundaries of established laws — boundaries that they continually expand and modify as necessary.

Illegal Operations

People pay well for the things they really want. If those things are illegal, they’ll pay even more. Since the days when the High Guild moved clandestine merchandise under the noses of churches and kings, the Syndicate has feathered its nest with illegal operations of all kinds. The Enforcers provide the most obvious examples of this side of the Convention’s trade in their Extralegal Division, but the Liquidation Division of the Financiers often operates in forbidden waters too — especially when the “assets” to be liquidated involve human merchandise. Media Control’s illegal operations include keeping their stars happy and “clean,” regardless of the price, while also marketing

Supplemental Data: Fencing

It may seem like a weird, worthless skill in a world of firearms and ICBMs, but fencing has remained something of a persistent cultural holdover in the Syndicate since the days of the High Guild. This intensely competitive sport encourages and rewards individual excellence in a fairly direct parallel to literal life-and-death conflict; fencing grew out of a need to be better and more efficient at killing than your enemy was, after all. It’s also a supremely disciplined pursuit — in all aspects of the self — which also appeals to the Syndicate’s perfectionist nature. Lastly, fencing is a sport of mathematics: lines, arcs, angles, timing, proper application of force, and risk and reward — all things that help Syndicate members to hone their minds and to ponder deeper implications of the nature of their all-important work.

For game details about fencing, see the entry “Expanded Combat Systems” in **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 102-111), and the Skill: *Fencing/Kenjutsu* (op. cit. p. 24).

goodies to a very specialized clientele. The Procurement Division for Disbursements moves whatever goods need moving, through whatever methods prove necessary to move them.

Although folks tend to think of operatives on this side of the Syndicate's business as a pack of sullen gangsters unfit to be considered true Technocrats, a surprising number of them move in the classiest circles imaginable. Wealth — as those who are truly wealthy can attest — moves beyond the law, and so the Syndicate's accomplished operatives often favor the upper reaches of the Convention's illegal business; partly because it pays better than law does, partly because the underworld possesses an undeniable sense of glamour, but mostly because it's simply more fun to fuck law up the ass when you've the power to get away with it.

Gray Zone Operations

The tangled frameworks of international law leave plenty of wiggle-room for enterprising parties. The Syndicate is nothing if not enterprising, and so the global trade in wetwork mercenaries, loophole specialists, weapons dealers, cryptocurrencies, off-the-grid businesses, dark money and the Dark Net all feature prominently in the Syndicate's profit ledgers. Enforcement's Extratransitional Division mercenaries and InSpector "phantoms" epitomize the clandestine nature of gray zone operations, but Disbursements and the Financers essentially exist in that zone as well — perennially unseen but inexorably influential. Media Control, of course, creates its own gray zone within and around the entertainment industry, though its Effects Division provides literal smokescreens as well as figurative ones.

The most obvious gray zone, though, is both everywhere and nowhere: the World Wide Web, its Dark Net shadowscape, and their metaphysical embodiment, the Digital Web. For although Iteration X may have carved this space out and formatted much of it back during the internet's Wild West heyday, and the New World Order still seeks to "grasp the smoke" by commanding something beyond control, it's the Syndicate who truly occupies and masters the internet in all its glory these days. Among the Masses, people still try to figure out how to capitalize on this vast marketplace. The Syndicate figured that problem out a long time ago: pull a tiny little bit from *all of it*, and then watch both your money and your influence grow exponentially, with no end in sight unless humanity itself disappears.

That last caveat provides perhaps the most compelling reason for the Syndicate to operate on the side of the angels: Enlightened self-interest. The end of humankind means the end to profit, the end to wealth, the end to everything this Convention and its people cherish. Thus, the Syndicate freely (if sometimes grudgingly) funds climate-change reversal efforts, World Health campaigns, and the *Failsafe Protocol Task Force*: a cross-Conventional Initiative of operatives tasked with stopping immediate threats to human existence. Apocalypse is a short-term business plan, after all, and the Bottom Line depends upon human survival.

Advancement

Initiative is the name of the Syndicate game. While the other Technocracy Conventions stress obedience (the Void Engineers), collective identity (Iteration X), hierarchy (the Progenitors), or all of the above (the NWO), the Syndicate prizes individual initiative, ambition, vision, and a ruthless dedication to getting ahead. Sure, the Syndicate retains a touch of hierarchy (you can't *all* be chiefs, chief!), but that hierarchy depends more upon personal initiative than on Enlightenment, age, experience, or other forms of social rank. It's tough — tougher than you could possibly believe — to become Top Cat of Tiger Mountain. But then, being tougher than the competition is what the Syndicate is all about.

The largest sector of this Convention's Human Resources pool comes from unEnlightened employees and assets whose work advances their bosses while keeping their own bank balances healthier than they might be otherwise. A time-tested Syndicate strategy involves locating potential candidates from among the Masses, squeezing them a bit financially, and then making them the proverbial "offer they can't refuse." Especially promising employees may be groomed for better things, tested and prodded and provided with opportunities to get ahead if they're ambitious enough to do what must be done to get there.

Ruthless but unEnlightened functionaries can become quite successful in the Syndicate — *incredibly* successful, if they play their cards right. The real talents, though, experience Enlightenment and become full-fledged Associates. That's where the *real* power begins. Whether they work the boardroom, the studio, the battlefield or the streets, these Associates begin to learn the Arts of Desire and Hypereconomics that make mere wealth and power look paltry by comparison.

Networking and backstabbing alike leads further toward the Executive Office and the *Manager* position. Starting off at Tier 3, a go-getter Syndicate Manager scores a leadership position with a bit of pull and a lot of room to move. Some stay put, some fall off the radar, and a handful move further and further up the ladder to a T4 *Chair* position. By that time, the operative has hundreds, possibly thousands, of employees, assets, and aspiring agents at her command. Those very few who make it all the way to the "penthouse" of the Syndicate pyramid become VPOs: *Vice Presidents of Operations* whose decisions shake the worlds of rich and poor citizens alike. Unlike many top-Tier Technocrats, these VPOs tend to remain Earthside, dictating operations from floating islands, vast estates, military compounds, and towers high above the Masses and their small, everyday concerns.

Convention Focus

Influence. At the heart of every Syndicate op's mojo is the ability to influence other people. Whether that influence involves a steady glare, a heady perfume, a daring dress or the barrel of a gun, the moneymakers of this Convention change the world by

changing minds. To master such Enlightened Arts, they fence, preen, study, run numbers, bust heads, break hearts, and put it all on the (Bottom) Line. While not as showy as a cyborg or as eerie as a Man in Black, the Money Men and Women pass for “normal” in ways that make their rivals and enemies underestimate the full extent of their power. Such misdirection, too, is a form of magick, and Syndicate ops are extraordinarily good at it.

Paradigms

Might is Right. That’s the core of all other paradigms among this Convention. The might in question could be cleverness, not violence, but the will to use whatever it takes to win remains a constant in each Enlightened Syndicate op. No one gets in that door without the absolute conviction that they have a right to be there.

Transcending Your Limits is another key to success in this group. Anyone who believes themselves constrained by... well, *anything*, don’t make it very far in such company. The Syndicate is all about rising above your limitations. So magic (by whatever name you call it and whatever spelling you use) is both a tool and a reward for seeing just how big you can truly be.

Various ops within this group believe that *Everything is Chaos, an Illusion, or a Mistake. Tech Holds All the Answers* in this world, though, so even if you do call what you do “magic,” a good Syndicate operative knows that it’s just a pretty name for tech. A radical few maintain that *Consciousness is the Only True Reality*, and that by believing powerfully enough in themselves, they can unlock the Great Secret that Enlightened consciousness provides. By doing so, operatives asserting this paradigm prove that they *Are NOT* (merely) Men! Rather, they are movers of men and shakers of men’s worlds, and that conviction makes them a damn sight better than some deluded Bozo in a Saville Row suit.

Because such convictions often lead to corruption, certain Syndicate ops embrace the Sadean paradigm that *Indulgence is Nature’s Only Law*, believe that *I’m a Predator and the World is My Prey*, or – at its most solipsistic extreme – assert that *I am All* and therefore nothing else exists. These paradigms tend toward the Nephantic end of the belief spectrum, and so those holding them tend to be the most ruthless of their kind.

Practices and Instruments

Although most Syndicate Associates are perfectly willing to use violence if need be (and so, pursue various *martial arts*,

most notably fencing, jiu-jitsu, Muay Thai, and krav maga), the core of this Convention’s practice involves *dominion*, the *Art of Desire* (in both its classical form and the modern *hyper-economics* approach), and an approach to *reality hacking* that employs computers, social institutions, meme-propagation, and personal charisma. Sure, certain Syndicate reps also employ *cybernetics*, *hypertech* weapons and gear, *KEKnomancy*, and perhaps even *yoga* – any edge is a good edge. Any Syndicate mover-and-shaker, though, adds at least a bit of *invigoration* to her practice, too. If she’s got friends among the Department of Metahuman Studies (or is a full member of that group), that pursuit of intense self-perfection might provide a few surprises when people try to mess with her.

(Deep in the shadows, a few Syndicate reps employ figurative or literal *cannibalism*, too. We don’t talk much about those people, but they’re there. When you get right down to it, the ultimate economic domination involves tearing out your enemy’s throat and making him into your next meal. Some Deviant, perhaps Fallen, operatives take that concept literally.)

Enforcer agents tend to use weapons by default, and many ops throughout the Convention wear armor that doesn’t look like armor: Matter-enhanced clothing, briefcases, and so forth that provide fashionable protection. Fashion, of course, is a huge element of a Syndicate agent’s bag of tricks; along with eye contact, commanding words, social domination, HR and management techniques, high-end vehicles, meditation, occasional drugs, and – of course – mass media. Rarely, however, does a Syndicate operative’s magick look like... well, *magic*. Subtlety, charm, misdirection, obfuscation, arrogance, likeability, and occasionally a bullet or a blade in the back, perhaps, but nothing as vulgar as a “spell” or other reality-warping Procedure. The Syndicate has a term for the Paradox: *Market Correction* – the inevitable snapback when you fuck around too much with the smooth flow of the Way Things Are. Yeah, the Syndicate plays hard, and well, and for keeps. What no Syndicate operative above the lowest ranks is, though, is *stupid*. While the HIT Marks fire and the Black Suits loom, the Syndicate’s Magic Man is at the other end of town, calling in a few favors from the local police as he skims your passwords, loots your bank account, and has a drink until the smoke clears. Good business is all about making the right impression, and especially when Reality Deviants are involved, the best impression is often no impression at all.

Void Engineers

Enlightenment Through Exploration and Revelation



Probably the strangest of all Technocratic Conventions, the Void Engineers argue that they do the best job at protecting humanity. Their stated goal – to protect humanity against monsters from beyond – is of profound importance to the Union. These operatives often sound like Doomsday conspiracy theorists, but they aren't *wrong*. Alien catastrophes *do* exist beyond the Gauntlet and Horizon, and if those horrors came through, and no one was in position to stop them, all humanity would be lost.

Typical Operative

It's hard to pin down the "typical" Void Engineer's description. She might a clipboards-and-jumpsuits techie, a theorem-spouting metaphysician, a sardonic space marine, computer-jockey dimension-hacker, a deep-sea delver, or a star-eyed ethernaut. One defining characteristic unites all Void Engineers, though: *courage*. It takes guts to leave familiar space behind.

State of the Convention

The Void Engineers, more than any other Technocratic Convention, are intrinsically bound up in the Dimensional Anomaly metaplot. Depending on the role that event did or did not play in your chronicle's history, the current state of the Convention could take one of several forms:

The Dimensional Anomaly Took Place and Still Continues

The VEs *did* take a lot of damage from the Dimensional Anomaly – not "merely" losses of personnel, equipment, bases and freedom, but also a significant loss of face. According to many sources, the Anomaly was triggered by one of their own:

The improbably named Xerxes Jones, now officially declared a renegade Void Engineer, who made a one-stop trip into the Shadowlands with stolen experimental property and a "spirit nuke" that set off a catastrophic chain reaction that cost the Technocracy untold amounts of money, trouble, and personnel. For that reason, the formerly loose-cannon Engineers have tightened ship, established stiff and sometimes draconian military rules, and regrouped to handle cross-dimensional threats to the Consensus space rather than continuing to explore Deep Umbral Space.

Even so, the Void Engineers have been, and remain, at the forefront of ventures beyond the Gauntlet. By the third decade of the 21st century, they have constructed and refined Dimensional Science technology that allows them to go where few other Awakened folk can go – not without cost, but with far less effect than the ravages suffered by other Awakened groups. This capacity allows them to explore further than almost any other mage society can manage, and it provides them a significant role within the current Technocratic ranks. A role that also alerted the Engineers to the existence of, and the peril posed by, Threat Null and its horrifying reflection of Technocratic excess.

Thanks to almost 20 years of working around the effects of the Anomaly, the Void Engineers now command a grudging but notable respect from their fellow Conventions. Any group that hopes to work beyond the Gauntlet or Horizon for long must come to the VEs for help.

Because the Convention has established and trained a sizable response force for cross-dimensional incursions, the Border Corps Division provides first-line military capabilities against any sort of Gauntlet-crossing alien weirdness. The Earth Frontier Division has spent decades monitoring and exploring the terrestrial Earth's mysteries, which makes that group the leading force in the Technocracy's current struggle with the effects of global climate change. Thus, while the Convention has suffered

horrendous losses, its current incarnation shares revitalized purpose and enjoys more respect (if not exactly affection) from its fellow Technocrats than it had prior to the millennial Event.

The Dimensional Anomaly Took Place but has Since Subsided

The Event shook the Void Engineers badly. In order to survive, they needed to regroup, redefine their mission, and forge new technologies to skirt the worst effects of the Dimensional Anomaly. As those effects have subsided, the VEs have emerged stronger and more focused than ever before. Although it cost them heavily, the Event provided a crucible for a Convention that was all too often figuratively as well as literally “lost in space.”

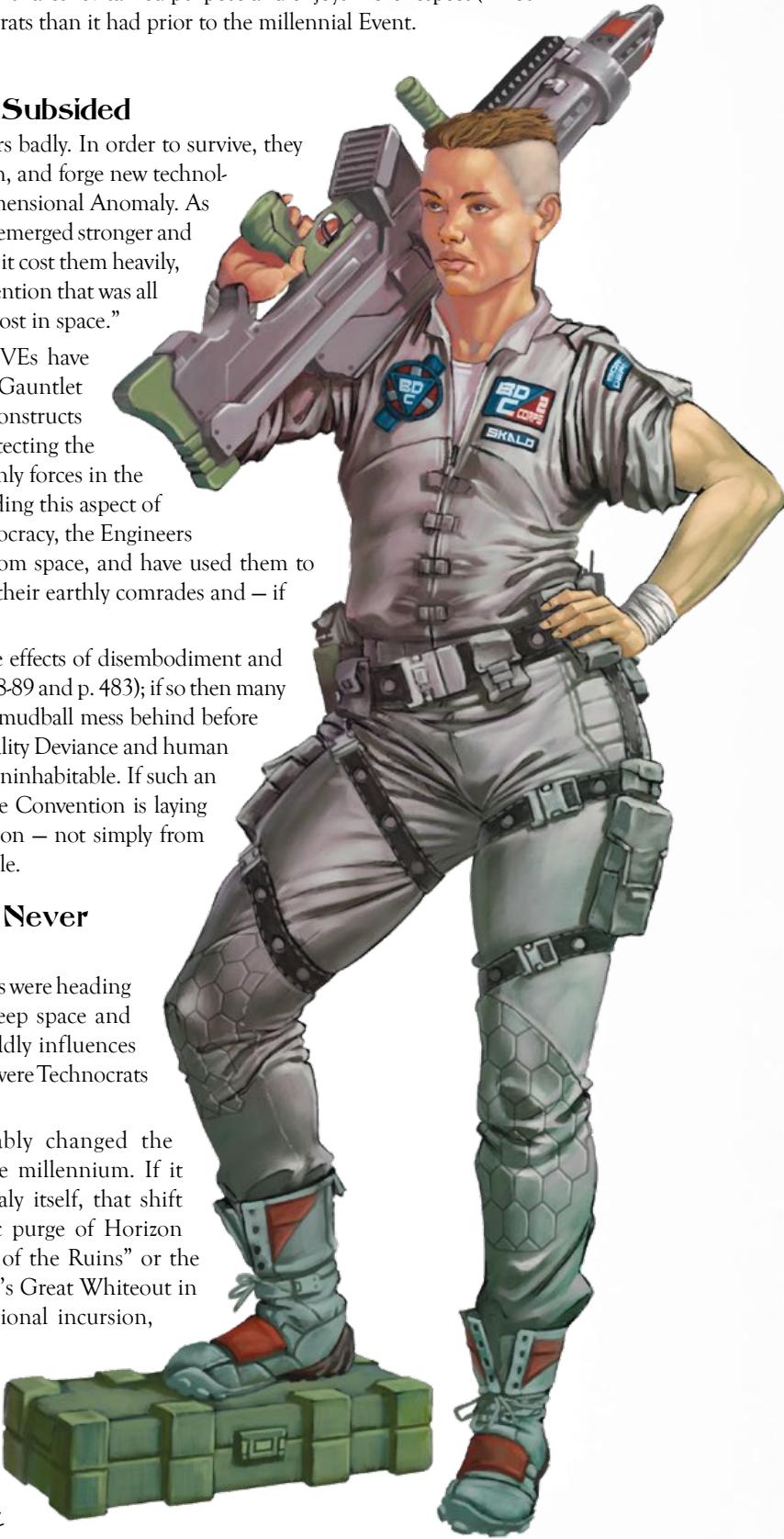
During the intervening years, the VEs have reestablished a presence beyond the Gauntlet and Horizon, with several Horizon Constructs and a fleet of ships exploring space, protecting the Earth, and occasionally engaging unearthly forces in the Deep Umbra. Although they’ve been hiding this aspect of their operations from most of the Technocracy, the Engineers gather considerable natural resources from space, and have used them to establish a growing independence from their earthly comrades and – if possible – from Earth itself.

Perhaps they’ve managed to beat the effects of disembodiment and disconnection (detailed in Mage 20, pp. 88-89 and p. 483); if so then many of the Void Engineers want to leave this mudball mess behind before some combination of climate change, Reality Deviance and human stupidity makes the whole damn planet uninhabitable. If such an option becomes clear, the majority of the Convention is laying the groundwork for a permanent defection – not simply from the Technocracy but from Earth as a whole.

The Dimensional Anomaly Never Happened

By the late 1900s, the Void Engineers were heading off the rails. Tempted by the lure of deep space and infiltrated to some degree by Otherworldly influences since the 1400s, the Convention’s people were Technocrats more by philosophy than by dedication.

Some upheaval, however, probably changed the Engineers’ direction by the turn of the millennium. If it had not been the Dimensional Anomaly itself, that shift may have come from the Technocratic purge of Horizon and the Crafts; from the vicious “War of the Ruins” or the hunt for Helekar; from the Digital Web’s Great Whiteout in the late 1990s; from a massive dimensional incursion, or the recognition of an impending one; from a breakup among Engineer leadership; from outside action by the other Conventions (like the Syndicate cutting funds or the NWO Socially Processing the earthbound personnel); from a Nephantic power-play or the aftermath of same; from growing technological



Future Fates: The Dimensional Anomaly

If you're using the Avatar Storm / Dimensional Anomaly metaplot, the Void Engineers have a much smaller membership and a far more limited focus. The Storm destroyed many Horizon Realms, annihilated many of the Convention's Void Craft, and sucked the VE headquarters, the Copernicus Research Center (AKA the Cop) into an apparent black hole. With roughly three-quarters of the Void Engineers lost, either to immediate death or to something far, far worse, the Convention has since rebuilt its ranks and returned to the Void, but both its surviving members and its newer operatives suffer from a massive case of collective PTSD.

Convention Book: Void Engineers posits that the Storm took place in 1999 and still continues today in a much-diminished capacity. As mentioned elsewhere, the **Mage 20** series allows for a full-Storm setting, a diminished-Storm setting, and a setting in which the Storm never occurred. All three options affect this Convention as a whole, but because the PDC bore the brunt of the Anomaly and its aftereffects, the Methodology will have a distinctly different tone in each of those options:

- **The Storm Rages On:** If people passing into the Otherworlds still get shredded by raging spirit-winds then the PDC remains largely Earthbound, a depressed and largely broken group that now tends the Gauntlet and works closely with the BCD. In extreme cases, the PDC operates mostly in the Digital Web and the time-streams, with its spacefaring members remaining within Conventional Space and using spacefaring hypertech that still fits into the Consensus' impressions about space travel. Certain rare operatives called *Quantum Voyagers*, travel beyond the Gauntlet without harm while taking protected comrades with them; for details, see the entries for the Merit: *Quantum Voyager* in **Convention Book: Void Engineers** (p. 61) and the **Mage 20** rulebook (p. 643).
- **The Diminished Anomaly:** The worst of the Storm has passed but many dangers remain. The PDC has pushed back out into the Void and controls over a dozen new Horizon Constructs and a growing fleet of Voidcraft. Even so, high-Enlightenment personnel still suffer the effects of the Anomaly unless they're protected by a Quantum Voyager. As a result, the Methodology favors unenlightened extraordinary citizens as PDC personnel, because those people aren't harmed by the Storm's effects. **Convention Book: Void Engineers** presumes this situation, and that book reflects the current state of the PDC in general and the Void Engineers as a whole.
- **Nothing Happened:** If the Dimensional Anomaly never occurred then the PDC has ventured into other galaxies, set up shop there, and now commands dozens of bases and several hundred Voidcraft. The Convention numbers over 20,000 people strong; most of whom belong to the PDC and many of whom have never been to Earth at all. Although the majority of those Void Engineers are extraordinary citizens, the number of enlightened Technocrats is still extremely high. This version of the Convention is largely disconnected from Earthly adventures; instead, they wage Umbral wars with Marauders, Tradition Ethernauts, and the unearthly forces of the Nephantic Ashraah (see **The Book of the Fallen**, p. 54). In **Technocracy: Void Engineers**, these VEs were regarded as more than a bit insane — possibly verging on corruption — and essentially on their way out of the Technocracy entirely.

Each option holds its own dramatic possibilities. For details about systems and settings for such adventures, see the aforementioned **Void Engineers** sourcebooks; the **Mage 20** rulebook (pp. 86-115 and pp. 474-485); **Tales of Magick: Dark Adventures** (pp. 26-27 and pp. 60-67); **The Book of Secrets** (pp. 279-282); **The Infinite Tapestry** (pp. 9-31 and pp. 107-132); and **Beyond the Barriers: The Book of Worlds** (pp. 102-107, pp. 110-120, and pp. 137-157, and pp. 176-181).

innovations among the Masses; from the post-9/11 fascination with religious Apocalypse; from the appearance of the Red Star and the related Week of Nightmares; or...

...or perhaps they never really did change, after all.

Depending on the Storyteller's desires, the "unchanged" Void Engineers might be:

- Nephandi-ridden traitors to the Union's cause, awaiting their moment to strike at the heart of the Technocracy.
- Distant Technocrats preparing for a perfect chance to jump ship entirely and leave both the Union and the Earth behind.
- Space-mad Marauders in all but name.

- A splinter-group that simply has not officially declared its independence.
- A Convention divided between dedicated Technocrats and distant cosmophiles.
- A wayward group who may, when crisis strikes, either rededicate themselves to the Technocracy or else split off entirely.

Although it's likely that Void Engineer operatives close to Earth have adopted the military structure and impulses detailed in **Convention Book: Void Engineers**, the VEs far from home may have retained the looser approach presented in **Technocracy: Void Engineers** and **Beyond the Barriers: The Book of Worlds**. If the entire

Supplemental Data: Tychoidian Cosmology

Void Engineers view the cosmos through an esoteric discipline they call *Tychoidian Cosmology*. Too complex and specialized to present in this book, that approach to the Otherworlds shapes the way they approach Enlightened Science, the terminology they use, and the role they play in the Technocratic ranks, the Ascension War, and Creation as a whole.

For details about Tychoidian Cosmology, see Chapter Three in **Convention Book: Void Engineers**.

Convention now runs a tighter ship, so to speak, then the Void Engineers now follow the protective military corps model further detailed below.

Methodologies

Within the past two decades, the Void Engineers have probably gone from a loosely organized group of militants and thrill-seekers to a structured Convention following basic military rank and order. The Methodologies the Convention employs are the *Border Corps Division* (BCD), the *Earth Frontier Division* (EFD), the *Neutralization Specialist Corps* (NSC), the *Pan-Dimensional Corps* (PDC), and *Research and Execution* (RAE), and although that basic structure has existed for quite a while, the protocols within each group have become more stringent and regimented since that transformation.

BCD: The Border Corps Division

The Border Corps Division monitors the Gauntlet and provides first responders whenever there might be an incursion. As the Technocratic answer to “ghostbusters” and “space marines,” these operatives are typically the Void Engineers an outsider is most likely to meet. Although the battle-hardened BCD Marine agents appear at first glance to be mere “grunts,” each VE operative is a trained scientist. Some just take a more hands-on approach to that field of study than others do. Even in the labs and offices, though, BCD personnel carry sidearms and employ unarmed combat techniques as well as advanced weaponry.

Like all other VE Methodologies, the BDC deploys extraordinary citizens amongst the Enlightened personnel. An agent’s ability to get things done outweighs their capacity for Procedures and Enlightened hypertech. Working closely with the NSC and the PDC (which makes for an occasionally confounding alphabet soup approach), the BCD patrols the Near Umbral reaches and the borders where dimensions overlap and sometimes break against one another. Hence, these operatives find themselves face-to-face with werewolves, shamans, possessors-spirits, and other malign entities who don’t

seem to know which world they’re supposed to remain in and which one they’re supposed to avoid. Border Corps, then, are a rough-and-ready bunch, experienced with the weirder side of Consensus without entirely leaving the Masses behind.

EFD: The Earth Frontier Division

Dedicated to charting the unknown spaces on the mortal side of the Gauntlet, the EFD has shifted gears in recent years from mere exploration to active protection. Given their emphasis on the ocean and its remote depths, this Convention has a front-row seat at the effects of pollution and climate change. A lot of the Technocracy’s current state of alarm regarding global climate change comes from the data gathered by the EFD – data that is far more than simply “inconvenient” to the Union’s agenda. There’s no point in saving the world, after all, if it’s rendered uninhabitable within a generation or two, and although the Earth Frontier lost some very good people to upper-level displeasure and Social Processing, there’s no longer any doubt among the Technocratic ranks that the altered climate and shifting geomass poses a greater threat than any group of half-assed Reality Deviants.

(If the Technocracy truly is infected with Nephandi, of course, this Convention might either be first on their extermination list or – in a worst-case scenario – it serves as their instrument of global destruction. Rather than combating climate change, the EFD is accelerating it while also concealing the extent of the damage and funding climate-change deniers to paralyze efforts among the Masses to evaluate and address the issue.)

Once regarded as slackers by their fellow Technocrats, the EFD has earned a new level of prestige in recent years. Why? Because the Convention has designed, constructed, and maintained a new series of Earthbound Constructs in remote locations – mostly underwater, like Station Yemaja, or underground, like Station Gaia Prime. Most (though not all) of these Constructs are open to all Conventions; if the Dimensional Anomaly has destroyed the majority of the Union’s off-world Constructs, the EFD has built many of their replacements. Especially for Syndicate Masters (whose veritable Bond Villain bases come largely from the EFD’s goodwill), these “Squids,” “Groundhogs,” “Scruffies,” and “Weedwhackers” enjoy a favored status in the 21st-century Technocracy. The denizens of deep woods or water can be every bit as strange as alien entities – and may, in fact, be alien entities – so the EFD has its share of close-quarters combat experts, too.

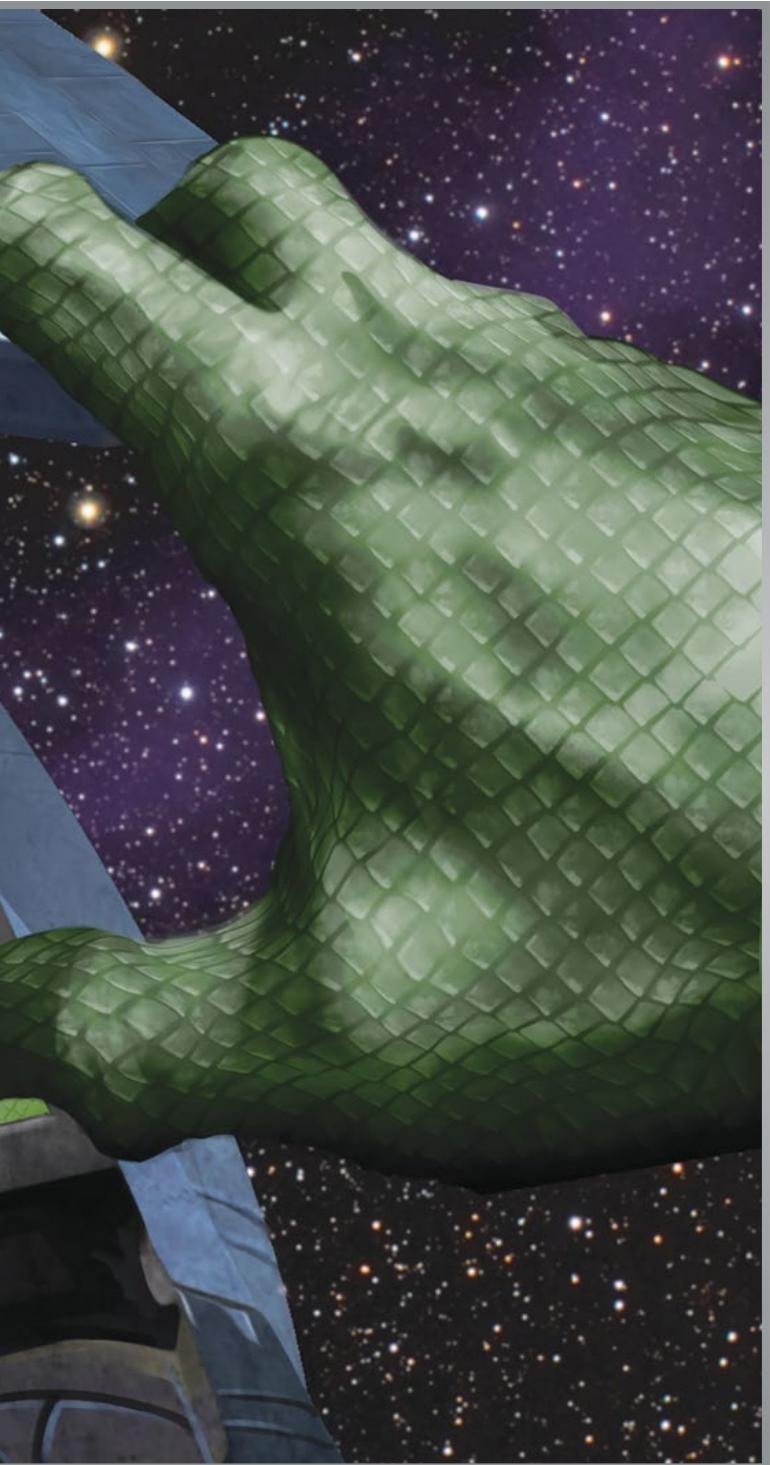
NSC: The Neutralization Specialist Corps

While other Engineers work in far-off places, the Neutralization Specialist Corps works among the Masses, seeking out and neutralizing whatever threats manage to slip past the BCD. Where the BCD constitutes a brute-force wall that blocks threats from entering Consensus space, the NSC provides a fine scalpel that extracts those threats without disrupting the Sleeping Masses. Their work with Black Suit field agents makes the NSC “ghostbusters” unpopular with many other Engineers, especially because so many of the Spectral



Neutralization Specialists favor the same dark garb, laconic manner, and violent tendencies as those favored by the infamous Men in Black. This said, NSC field agents are very good at their jobs; whether they're investigating haunted houses, dimensional breaches, alien sightings, cryptid manifestations, or other disruptions of the everyday world, Neutralization Specialists do a tough job for us all.

Because Technocracy agents so often face off with Things Man Was Not Meant to Know, the NSC also has a secondary purpose: Providing mental health treatment for their fellow Technocrats. Called the *Descartes Institute of Mental Health*, this medical division works within normal hospitals and Void Engineer Constructs to restore sanity to damaged operatives, install mental defenses against insidious psychic influences and raw psychic trauma; and



(unbeknownst to the NWO) safeguard against and/or undo Social Processing for Void Engineer operatives. This last procedure indicates the disdain many VEs hold for the Order's PsychOps and the oppressive hold of Control and the Inner Circle. Although they may have adopted a more militaristic approach in recent years, and work hand-in-glove with earthbound Black Suits, the Void Engineers prefer to make their own decisions based upon their

own loyalties, not to have those decisions and loyalties implanted into them by a dubious third party with decidedly sinister goals.

PDC: The Pan-Dimensional Corps

When people think of the Void Engineers, they generally think of the PDC; so named because they explore the "alternate dimensions" of the so-called Umbra. Pan-Dimensional Corps operatives build and crew spaceships deep into the Void, while closer to home, PDC agents also monitor the integrity of the Gauntlet and Horizon, spotting incursions and invaders and taking them down whenever possible. Generally, these VEs are the Technocracy's space explorers; employing Dimensional Science technologies and Procedures, these operatives embody the Convention's highest idea: *courage*.

Of all VE Methodologies, the PDC holds the most venerable pedigree. The Skyriggers that ventured into the heavens during the late medieval period provided the origins for this Convention, and the PDC maintains that heritage with distinction. It's the PDC who established off-world Constructs, who ventured to the Moon and far beyond it, who built a gargantuan pinnacle of Technocratic engineering deep in space, and who manned the barriers when Otherworldly invaders came to call. Although badly shaken by the Dimensional Anomaly (if that Event occurred in your chronicle), the PDC has regrouped, assumed a military stance, and returned to the Void.

That return (or, if the Anomaly never occurred, that continued exploration) has exposed PDC personnel to strange perils and mind-breaking strains. Attrition rates are high, and even survivors of Void encounters never see their earthly home again. In the days before the Anomaly, Ethernauts and Void Engineers could travel so deep into the cosmos that they'd never return; in the era of disembodiment and disconnection, those adventurers might become so detached from earthly existence that they become like aliens themselves. Even if they *do* return, the things they have experienced remain unexplainable to people without those shared experiences. Thus, PDC Engineers tend to seem "spacey" to everyone except their fellow cosmonauts. Like veterans of war, their experiences have changed them in ways no one else could possibly comprehend.

Most PDC operatives belong to the *Fleet Operations Command* (FOC) – the Void Marines who deal with Otherworldly threats head-on. The *Void Construction Corps* (VCC) constructs and maintains the crafts and gear necessary for such explorations, and the *Intelligence Directorate* (IC) monitors cross-dimensional space, looking for disturbances, incursions, potential opportunities and long-lost comrades. Two smaller divisions exist within this Methodology, too: the *Cybernauts* immersed within the Digital Web, and the nigh-suicidal *Chrononauts* exploring temporal disruptions and alternate timelines. This first group has grown much larger since the 1990s, and many of its members either leave their physical selves behind while their digital selves maintain a virtual existence, or else project themselves holistically into Netspace and endure the many attendant risks. The second group is essentially mad, seldom returning from their jaunts across time and space.

Future Fates: Organizational Breakdown

As mentioned earlier, if you use the Avatar Storm/Dimensional Anomaly metaplot, the Void Engineers have a vastly different organizational structure and many of the following task forces might not be around or may act in a different way. The information presented assumes the Dimensional Anomaly never happened as that allows for the most information and task groups, but these groups change focus. If the Storm is happening or even diminished, the organization holds little room for casual exploration or setting up shop in a Horizon Realm. Everyone has a more military focus; Alpha Fleet's exploration turns from deep Umbral exploration to near Umbral salvage; Search and Rescue focuses just as much on the Void as on Earth; The Shipyard is gone, and possibly replaced by a similar research and fabrication initiative on Earth.

R&E: Research & Execution

Someone needs to build the gear, design the weapons, and construct the Constructs, so to speak. That's R&E, the VE corps dedicated to the hard and typically unsung work of supplying hardware for their Convention. While Q Division gets the Bond-gadget glory, R&E relies on brilliant minds and elbow grease to make the impossible possible.

Three of the Methodology's four divisions enjoy acclaim among their fellow VEs, who understand just how vital their work is to the lives of every Void Engineer. The "Shipwrights" of the Vessel Construction Corps, the "Scotties" of the Field Engineering Corps, and the "Lab Rats" of the Advanced Research Division. The first group builds those Voidships and Constructs, the second keeps them operating, and the third designs, adapts, experiments with and perfects new iterations of that gear. A fourth division, however, isn't nearly as favored: The Fleet Intelligence Service, AKA the "Spooks," collects data from the Convention's various ships and outposts, analyzes that intel, and reports it back to the Convention's leadership. The degree to which these black-clad agents also report in about the *people* within the Void Engineers is a matter of intense and often unfriendly speculation. Regardless, that data helps the VEs stay on top of an intensely precarious position. Given the threats surrounding the Void Engineers, a bit of vigilance is to be expected, if not always welcomed.

Organization

The Void Engineers organize themselves similarly to military styles, most notably Naval/Marines organization, though they still consider themselves mostly a civilian run operation. The organization is hierarchical, but anything beyond a Task Unit is not always followed. The following levels give a rough breakdown of the hierarchy involved, but nothing in the Void Engineers is strict, and often smaller groups break chain of command to get work accomplished faster without having to wait for orders from on top.

Most notable within Void Engineer structure is that unEnlightened members fill all sorts of roles within the organization. While they won't necessarily be in charge of the entire organization, you'll easily find them in leadership roles for small groups, especially when it comes to basic research or field units.

The *task element* is the smallest operational unit in the Void Engineers; either a squad of individuals, often Cadets and Marines, led by an Enforcer, or Technicians led by a Scientist. A task element is a single ship, captained by an Explorer or Enforcer, or a small lab run by a Scientist. These individual units handle small tasks, such as supply missions, scouting missions, intelligence gathering, project design, part fabrication, and cross-Convention Imperative work. Squads and task elements are almost always a part of a task unit, which is the main operational unit for the Convention. Task units encompass several groups, and are led by high-ranking Explorers, Enforcers, or Scientists who give the individual groups objectives and coordinate larger missions that need all units to perform.

In general, squads and task elements are comprised of single Methodology groups. BCD squads have little to no use for any other Methodology, though sometimes EFD groups request NSC members for special tasks. Most groups have at least a single RAE member to ensure the group has up-to-date technology or at least someone at their disposal to put together something on the spot during a mission. Task units instead often contain mixed groups. PDC ships often have BCD Marines along with them to work as troops in case of a fight, and they may also have a squad of RAE scientists to populate an onboard laboratory.

Anything above task unit is a specialized force organized of multiple task units working together for a specific task. These get various terms, such as *task group*, *task force*, or *fleet* depending on which Methodologies are involved. The projects generally have a defined amount of time the units work together and a finite stated purpose. Though for the Alpha Fleet, the timeline is indefinite as the stated purpose is the nebulous, explore.

Alpha Fleet

The Alpha Fleet is probably the largest joint task unit project within the Void Engineers. The Alpha Fleet was put together as a first contact group within the Deep Umbra. After meeting the first group of sentient creatures that were not immediately hostile, the group was organized to take point on exploration. Their main mission is to explore the Deep Umbra, which is something all task units involved had already been doing for years. The fleet was organized though to have a single chain of command that all units report to, and to codify protocols.

Alpha Fleet is primarily concerned with first contact with alien species. Protocols maintain that first contact should always happen with caution. Alpha Fleet determines first whether the species is sapient or not. Non-sapient entities are always considered hostile and ranked based on the threat they may pose to Earth. Low-level threats are lower priority for clean-up crews to deal with, taking care of the biggest threats first. Sapient entities are evaluated for hostility, which is again ranked from non-hostile to very hostile. Hostile sapient entities are ranked highest on the threat level.

Alpha Fleet is not responsible for dealing with entities posing a threat, though individual task units may take time (if not tasked to an important mission) to deal with threats on their own. Non-Alpha Fleet task units often follow in Alpha Fleet's wake dealing with threats after receiving the fleet's assessment report.

The fleet is comprised of PDC ships and staffed with everything from Technicians and Marines to Explorers and Scientists. They employ BDC Marines, NAE Technicians and Scientists, and NSC therapists to help prevent mental breakdown from long exposure to the Deep Umbra. The fleet is overseen by an advisory committee at the highest rank. They determine where the fleet goes next and deal with any internal disputes that might arise between task units. Everyone follows a strictly hierarchical chain of command from the advisory committee to high ranking unit leaders, to squad leaders to lowly Technicians and Marines. UnEnlightened members remain outside the command structure of Alpha Fleet, as the Enlightened members find dealing with Umbral entities can be mind breaking.

The Shipyard

The Shipyard is in a near Horizon Realm. This task group is made up of several units of RAE members who design new technology for the Convention. Set up like a space station, the Shipyard houses all manner of technology – both terrestrial and alien – used in the crafting of weapons, gear, and vessels designed for deep Umbral travel, often just called spaceships. The Shipyard is technically just one large spaceship itself, with over one-hundred levels of research labs, fabrication, design, and assembly plants.

The Shipyard is the home base for all other PDC ships, and also houses BDC and RAE command. The Shipyard also manufactures tools and small crafts for EFD use in extreme temperature areas. The Shipyard is under the command of a single high-ranking Scientist, Dr. Jabari English, who answers only to the highest ranked members of the Convention. The place is filled with Enlightened and unEnlightened engineers, technicians, craftspeople, marines, and scientists. Some Wanderers spend their entire lives in the Shipyard.

Alien Artifacts

The Alien Artifacts task group is responsible for collection, investigation, and utilization of alien technology. This is one of the few task groups made up of every single Methodology in the Convention. In the field, agents experiencing any contact with Umbral entities may encounter alien technology. Therefore, members of this task group are generally individuals throughout the Convention assigned to various squads and task elements.

They report to a committee designed to analyze and categorize alien artifacts and their likely usefulness. Each member is trained to recognize alien tech and handle it properly.

Alien Artifacts has a tech lab within the Shipyard, but also has a permanent group in Japan. The Scientists in this group work to reverse engineer alien technology and adapt it for human use, or at least use in terrestrial environments, rather than the strange environments found in the Deep Umbra.

Most of the Alien Artifacts groups are made up of Enlightened Scientists, though lower level Technicians, Marines, and Corps often make up the field agents. The committee that oversees the group is made up of high ranked Scientists and Enforcers, all of which are Enlightened.

Oversight Committee

The Void Engineer's Oversight Committee is more than just a group of high-ranking officials making decisions. The task force includes squads from every Methodology to ensure a working knowledge of all issues and situations the Wanderers might get into. The Oversight Committee approves new task groups, deals with requisitions, deals with various governmental representatives in the Earth nations in which they operate, and ensure each and every agent is capable of continuing work.

The committee's hierarchy starts at the highest rank of the Convention, who takes a deep interest in the committee's function. Below them are high ranking Scientists, each commanding a different task unit who works oversight on individual Methodologies and other task groups.

Requisitions both works with the rest of the Technocratic Union for gaining monetary resources, and also requisitions gear, sites, and personnel. They are in charge of recruiting new members and ensuring members have the proper training they need for each Methodology. Oversight, which is the catchall for everything else, approves new task forces, which is merely a formality as the Convention's highest ranking members are always involved in new projects, and none of them would deny the others. Oversight also ensures that the Void Engineers have a good reputation. This goes for what they present to the rest of the Union and what they show the Masses. Any technical flubs, or large issues with Umbral entities in the world, are cleaned up by Oversight, usually by requesting outside assistance from the NWO.

The last thing Oversight does is ensure Void Engineers are fit to work. They are nominally responsible for the NSC's *Descartes Institute of Mental Health* and must sign off on an agent's health before they can return to the field.

Search and Rescue/Extraction

This task force is manned almost entirely by EFD agents. They sometimes work with NSC and PDC depending on what the mission is, but these Technicians and Marines are deployed whenever members of the Convention are lost or in desperate straits. Having trained in some of the least forgiving environments on earth and learning how to deal with exposure, dehydration,

starvation, radiation sickness, and multiple other issues that arise from remote exploration, they are ideal for getting people out of tight spots.

When a Wanderer loses contact with the Convention, though is not presumed dead, they are labeled lost. Search and Rescue is called in to locate and bring the person home. Sometimes the mission is highly dangerous; a member of PDC may have been labeled lost in a hostile Realm in the Deep Umbra after a fight with a high-threat entity; or an NSC Enforcer may have been lost during an investigation, with no leads as to their current whereabouts. The EFD agents work with other Methodologies to do their jobs, but for the most part the units are headed up by EFD Enforcers or Explorers.

Advancement

After recruitment, Void Engineers are sorted into Methodologies based on their skill sets. Though they prefer to recruit unEnlightened members, the Void Engineers are one of the few Conventions in the Technocratic Union who recruit Enlightened mages from other Conventions. Something about the desire to delve into the Void to protect humanity appeals to mages who have already seen too much. Recruits start as T1 *Technicians*, or *Marines* depending on their Methodology, the unEnlightened are brought in as T0 *Cadets* and earn their rank through hard work. While the Convention tries to recruit members who might Enlighten, anyone with the right skillset is welcome. Once a member, it doesn't really matter if you're Enlightened or not to advance in rank at least until you reach the highest levels.

Advancement comes as a reward for hard study, commendable action, proven loyalty, or quick thinking. Technicians and Marines can choose a path of study and become T2 *Students* who follow a T3 or T4 leader to learn the necessary skills to perform the job. Those wanting a hands-on approach can become T3 and T4 *Explorers* or *Enforcers* depending on whether they want to protect or explore. Those preferring to stay back home (or on a ship), can advance to T3 and T4 *Scientists* and *Investigators*. Usually advancement comes from a series of lessons, tests, and rigorous scientific study, but sometimes the shit hits the fan and you're the only one left standing, which makes you a prime candidate for advancement. Anyone with the right mindset and a will to hone specific skills may advance to Scientist. Scientist is one of the few Rank titles to which unEnlightened members rarely rise.

As agents increase in command between T3 and T4, their titles do not change, they just gain more responsibility, which often comes with more respect. While the organization structure is hierarchical, advancement is more chaotic than it would seem. The line between Explorer and Researcher is often blurred out in the Void, and sometimes you have to take command of a unit far above your rank, and sometimes you fall in line behind another command when your unit is gone. Nothing is set in stone, and there's little in the way of formal recognition of rank.

The highest ranks of the Void Engineers are more of a task force than a direct leader or even group of leaders. Members

with the highest rank in the Void Engineers make up one of two groups, depending on the metaplot you're using. If you are setting your game before the Avatar Storm, the group is called the Dimensional Sciences Evaluation, Administration, and Training Committee (DSEATC). All independent groups ultimately report to the DSEATC, who oversee all task groups, forces, and major operations. If the Avatar Storm has happened or is happening, the leaders are the Existential Threats Directors (ETD). While they still serve as a governing body, they take a greater directional hand in the everyday workings of the Void Engineers. Instead of exploring and visiting new realms, the Wanderers are attempting to recover as best they can, and determining what and who poses the biggest threat is imperative to the Convention's survival.

Convention Focus

The Void Engineers spend a great deal of time in, around, or thinking about the Void. As such their Enlightened Sciences tend towards the strange and the showy. They blend alien technologies with their own hypertech making functional weird science. Their Procedures then also revolve around the Void, having adapted and dissected aliens and their tech as a way to understand their surroundings better and manipulate them when they can.

Paradigms

In keeping with the rest of the Technocratic Union, many Void Engineers subscribe to the belief that *Tech Holds All Answers* – and what better way to understand the world than by finding and utilizing technology beyond that of real Earth? Many Wanderers find themselves drawn to the concept of hypertech, and within it they find order and rightness. Technology is not just a tool to explore and understand the world; technology is the inherent basis of the world. It doesn't just hold the answers; it is the question, the answer, and the rebuttal. Everything is technology for a Void Engineer if you know how to peel back the layers to see the machine working. This explains how easily Void Engineers integrate alien technologies into their own, as they view it as just one more piece to a very limited puzzle.

Void Engineers don't need proof that gods and monsters exist, they see them nearly every day. They don't suspect they *know* that they live in *A World of Gods and Monsters*. Most entities they find are hostile. They want to take over the world, they want to consume Reality, and they must be stopped. They wield magic as the only bulwark against these monsters, and they take their powers to ensure that they can continue their work. And yes, they become the monsters themselves, and they understand that this is the price they have to pay to keep humanity safe from the machinations of these more powerful beings. Few Wanderers would consider themselves gods in this situation. Most know that they are the monsters, but they fight against other monsters, and use their power to subjugate those not weaker by birth or design, but by contest. Let the monsters crash against the shores of the Void Engineers so that the Masses can remain safe in their homes.

Other Void Engineers have come to the belief that *Everything is Chaos*; usually the ones having spent any time in the deep

universe. After seeing the mind-bending realities that exist out there, they conclude that none of it matters. There is no order or structure to anything when just on the other side of the Gauntlet maddening realities lies. The separation between the illusion of an ordered and sensical world with the chaos beyond can only mean that that order is a lie. It might be a collective lie that billions of people tell each other on the regular, but the Wanderers have seen the truth; and so, they uphold the lie, they make it safer to be inside it, imposing their will on the world to ensure that at least in their own minds, the world makes sense.

Practices and Instruments

The most prominent practice amongst Void Engineers is *hypertech*. Most are so focused on advancing their technology to deal with Umbral threats, that hypertech is viewed as the only true practice. That isn't true among all Void Engineers, as plenty find that other technologically based practices work just as well, such as *cybernetics*, *craftwork*, and *reality hacking*. Many Wanderers have a hard time making a distinction between things like hypertech and say cybernetics and use a practice that is a blend of the two. They integrate their own biomechanical components into ship-wide systems or jack their ships directly into their brains. These Void Engineers use their computer systems, nanotechnology, alienware, and ship systems as their instruments. Often these are standardized for everyone in a unit to use, though especially outside the PDC, Wanderers use specialized instruments to suit their needs.

Some Void Engineers find that the blending of mechanical and biological is a better fit for them than purely technological work. These focus solely on cybernetics as their practice, using surgery

tools, alien biotech, and their implants as instruments for their trade. They, too, probably use hypertech within their own workings, but more often than not they blend cybernetics with weird science as they implant strange alien technology to get strange results.

As the blending of practices takes place more often, other Void Engineers turn to weird science as a result. All the cybernetic and hypertech that sits around them becomes boring, and so they start to tinker. This is especially true for agents working with alien technology, hacking it to be compatible with their own and finding that the bounds of what is possible is limited only by their imagination. Even then, sometimes alien tech is too strange and fantastic to comprehend, and yet these agents find something they can use each and every time. These engineers use anything from Realm maps, computers, their laboratories, strange tools, and weapons as their instruments.

A few Void Engineers engage in other practices, such as craftwork, reality hacking, and even *martial arts*. Research and Execution agents find that the processes of building and crafting is far more useful than tinkering with high-level technology and make craftwork their chosen practice. They use basic tools and sometimes repetitive motion as their instruments, where BDC and EFD Marines like to use martial arts, using their weapons as instruments, or specific training routines.

Reality hacking is popular among PDCagents. They generally use cosmic reality hacking as they explore the Umbra and change it to their liking. Often Wanderers use their weapons as instruments, though some use their spaceships or other technological gadgets. Mostly they use personalized instruments to make their changes.





Unit 5: Q Division

Technology... is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other.
— C.P. Snow

I always get nervous the night before an exam.

You would think that after the shit I have seen, a blank Scantron card and a number 2 pencil would barely register, let alone frighten me. You'd think that the recruitment process, removal from my oldlife, 18-hour training days, and the paste they try to pass off as food here would bother me, but they don't. It's all part of the process. I don't mind.

You'd think that the big bad world out there, filled with monsters, and mayhem, and Reality Deviants all trying to tear existence to shreds to serve their perverse masters would make me douse my drawers. It doesn't. I get to be a hero to humanity. I get to help people. I get to save people. I realize I might...hell, I probably will die in the process. But that's okay. If I go down fighting some tentacled horror from beyond the realm of reason then at least I get to die a hero. I'm okay with that.

But this goddamn placement test I have to take in the morning is scaring the shit out of me. It's a big one. Pass, and I will have my pick of assignments. Fail, and its six more months of barracks living, six more months of basic training, and six more months of wondering if I am good enough to serve the Technocratic Union.

So, yes. I have test anxiety. I always have. I probably always will.

Exam is at 0700. Nine hours from now. I hope that's enough time for this Sleepteacher to help me learn Applied Programming 301, because I damn sure didn't have time to study this week.

Technocratic Focus



In their quest to foster a better, safer and more predictable world, the Technocracy has embraced Enlightened Science. Most Technocrats dismiss the idea of magick as Reality Deviant nonsense, failing to see that the end result of Enlightened Science and Magick are the same – the manipulation of reality on a fundamental level.

As explained in *Mage 20*, Technocrats are tied to their tools and practices (or apparatuses and Procedures) to a far greater degree than mystic willworkers or technomancers subscribing to mystic philosophies, such as the Virtual Adepts or the Society of Ether. While other mages learn to harness the magick within and cast aside the need for

instruments, a Technocrat recognizes that their prowess with Enlightened Science merely permits them to apply advanced principles to achieve desired effects through interaction with technology. Without the appropriate apparatus, a Technocrat is no more able to execute Adjustments or Procedures than any member of the Masses.

As a result, many Technocrats, particularly those engaging in field work on the Front Lines, make it a point to master several apparatuses that do not necessarily require bulky or esoteric equipment. One need look no further than the suits and mirrorshades employed by Black Suits to see the impact of fashion as an apparatus, and operatives within the Syndicate can work mighty Procedures with little more than a bank card and a cell phone.

Adjustments



Adjustments, also referred to as subtle Procedures by some agents, are applications of Enlightened Science that do not typically strain the bounds of belief in technologically developed regions. The majority of the time, the Masses accept the results of an Adjustment as perfectly normal, rational, and reasonable. Adjustments are the preferred method of applying Enlightened Science outside of the safety of a Construct. The Adjustment below is routinely employed by field operatives.

The Master's Edge (•• Mind; possibly with • or •• Entropy added)

The power of body language, posture, and other non-verbal cues during face-to-face interactions cannot be overstated. Through the application of this Adjustment, an operative maximizes the impact of these factors to enhance social interaction. While this is commonly used to project a menacing or intimidating presence, the operative can easily apply the same principles to enhance virtually any social interaction.

System: Built on the foundation of basic Mind 2 principles, this Adjustment affects the target's mood, increasing susceptibility to the emotion the operative wishes to elicit. This is relatively standard Influence-Magick as described in *How Do You Do That?*, p. 116. The operative chooses what type of emotional state they wish to instill in their target, such as fear, calm, or even a sense of trust. The player then rolls

Enlightenment at a difficulty equal to the target's Willpower Trait, or 4, whichever is higher. The target rolls Willpower at difficulty 6 to resist this effect, with each success canceling one of the operative's successes. Any remaining successes reduce the difficulty (to no lower than -3) of the operative's Attribute + Ability rolls when incorporating the impacted emotion for the duration. If projecting fear, this reduces the difficulty of Manipulation + Intimidation rolls, whereas an operative projecting an aura of confidence would enjoy reduced difficulties to Charisma + Etiquette rolls to impress a target.

By incorporating Entropy 1 into the effect, the operative gains insight into the target's nonverbal responses to the procedure, allowing for minute adjustments to undermine the target's resistance. This allows the operative to increase the difficulty of the target's Willpower roll to resist this procedure by 1 per success, to a maximum of +3.

If the operative incorporates Entropy 2 into the Adjustment, random and subtle changes in the environment occur that enhance the targeted mood. This allows the operative to divide successes gained from the Enlightenment roll between impacting the difficulties regarding the effect as detailed above and increasing the difficulty of Willpower rolls and Attribute + Ability checks made by the target to resist all social Attribute + Ability checks made by the operative for the duration of the effect. Each success spent by the Technocrat in this fashion increases the difficulty of the target's affected rolls by +1 to a maximum of +3.

Technocratic Focus Elements

For additional focus elements that characters from the Technocratic Union might use, see the entries listed below. For easy reference, each element entry features the book detailing the paradigm, practice or instrument in question.

M20 = **Mage 20th Anniversary Edition**

BoS = **The Book of Secrets**

Common Technocratic Paradigms

A World of Gods and Monsters.....	M20
All the World's a Stage	BoS
Ancient Wisdom is the Key	BoS
Embrace the Threshold	BoS
Everything is Chaos	M20
Everything is Data	M20
Everything's an Illusion, Prison or Mistake.....	M20
Might is Right.....	M20
One-Way Trip to Oblivion.....	M20
Transcend Your Limits.....	BoS
We are Meant to be Wild.....	BoS
We Are NOT Men!.....	BoS

Common Technocratic Practices

Art of Desire / Hypereconomics	M20
Cybernetics	M20
Dominion	M20
Hypertech	M20
Martial Arts	M20
Psionics	BoS
Reality Hacking	M20
Weird Science.....	M20
Yoga	M20

Common Technocratic Instruments

Armor.....	M20
Artwork.....	M20
Blood and Fluids	M20
Body Modification.....	BoS
Bodywork	M20

Bones and Remains	M20
Books and Periodicals.....	M20
Brews and Concoctions.....	M20
Computer Gear.....	M20
Cups and Vessels.....	M20
Cybernetic Implants.....	BoS
Dances and Movement.....	M20
Devices and Machines.....	M20
Drugs and Poisons	M20
Elements	M20
Energy	M20
Eye Contact	M20
Fashion.....	M20
Food and Drink	M20
Formulae and Math	M20
Group Rites	M20
Internet Activity.....	BoS
Labs and Gear	M20
Languages	M20
Management and HR	M20
Mass Media	M20
Meditation	M20
Money and Wealth	M20
Music	M20
Ordeals and Exertions	M20
Social Domination	M20
Symbols	M20
Thought-Forms	M20
Tricks and Illusions	M20
True Names	M20
Voice and Vocalizations	M20
Weapons	M20
Writings, Inscriptions and Runes	M20

Procedures



Blatant Procedures, or simply, “Procedures” involve the application of Enlightened principles beyond what the Masses have been conditioned to accept. The use of Procedures is officially frowned upon outside the safety and security of a Construct. Most supervisors and Symposiums maintain a level of flexibility in their regulation of Procedures, especially in areas where the Ascension Conflict is particularly aggressive, or Reality Deviants routinely endanger the Masses.

Still, even in the most dangerous regions of the Front Lines, an operative is expected to utilize solo judgment and appropriate decorum. Agents failing to show the appropriate discretion when applying Procedures should expect consequences including demotion, reassignment, and reprogramming. Operatives failing to respond to such measures ultimately find themselves relegated to Degree Absolute.

All Triggers Locked •• Forces / •• Matter

When you absolutely, positively *must* kill every mother-fucker in the room, accept no substitutes. This wildly vulgar Procedure – a measure of last resort – allows a Black Suit or

cyborg to snatch from a distance the guns of every person in the immediate vicinity, snap them back to the agent’s hands, merge them all together into a single line of firearms, lock their triggers, and fire them all simultaneously until the guns run out of ammunition. There’s no way to aim the resulting hail of bullets but so long as the agent doesn’t care about collateral damage, there’s not much chance of escaping the carnage, either.

System: Inspired by S. Shankar’s enthralling Indian film *Enthiran* (“Robot”), this Procedure uses Forces 2 to grab all the guns, Matter 2 to fuse them, and a combination of both to turn a bunch of different guns into a single one-use autofire weapon.

For simplicity’s sake, assume that this attack demands at least six successes at a base difficulty of 7, and requires three turns of concentration to activate: one turn to grab the guns, one turn to fuse them into a single line of weapons, and one to open fire. The attack fills the surrounding area with gunfire for three turns, inflicting seven dice of lethal damage to everyone within that area, per turn, unless they’re under sufficient cover to block bullets. Treat the attack area as a half-circle explosion with a Blast Area (see *Mage* 20, pp. 437-438 and p. 455) of 15. Major and minor characters may try to soak the damage or dodge the blast, but bystanders and cannon fodder are simply mowed down.

Okay, But Where Are the Guns?

The information in this chapter is organized according to Wonder Type, then alphabetically by dot rating. For Storytellers and Players looking to find a particular piece of equipment, the following lists may be helpful.

Armor

Chemicals, Gases, and Poisons

Clothing

Computers and Information Technology

Surveillance

Utility

Vehicles

Weapons

The Black Suit p. 178, Second Skin p. 177

CLN-20 Fun House Gas p. 173, MP-34 Multipurpose Pacification Gas p. 176, Variable Atmospheric Pharmacological Emitter (the VAPE) p. 184

The Black Suit p. 178, G-186 Octopus Suit p. 182, Parkour Slippers p. 178

DEI p. 186, ES-Phone p. 180, Pre-Designed Proficiency Packages p. 175, Operative Database p. 177, Sleepteacher p. 185, Species and Mineral Database p. 183

Autonomous Investigatory Sampler p. 180, Field Material Analyzer p. 181, HIPSDTer p. 174, Pocket Drone p. 177, Spray Cams p. 173

Automated Repair p. 186, Bonding Facilitation Fluid p. 173, Clear Cut p. 174, Helping Hand p. 178, Mimetic Mask p. 182, The Neuro-Optical Transmitter p. 182, PP-2 Omni-Badge p. 179, Primal Energy Extractor p. 187, TMBL-WD p. 175, Universal Key p. 183, Universal Neutralizer Device p. 179, Zipper Ties p. 176

Dimensional Backdoor p. 184, SMC (Spectre Motor Corporation) Vehicle p. 183

Cognitive Attenuation Transmitter p. 187, LIAM p. 175, LL/AP-15 p. 178, Mightier Pen p. 175, NIMBY-50 p. 184, PAWS Taser p. 182, Variable Atmospheric Pharmacological Emitter (the VAPE) p. 184

Technocratic Gear



The Technocracy excels at the creation and dissemination of equipment. Apart from the various apparatuses employed by the Conventions, the basic mundane tech made available through the resources of the Syndicate, and the innumerable pet projects of individual Technocrats, the Union is constantly developing, refining, and deploying cutting edge technology to agents and operatives. This section is a mere sample of the technology available to loyal and productive members of the Union.

Gadgets

Many components of the Technocratic toolkit are mass produced, single-use items that employ Enlightened Science to achieve a specific, predictable Effect. All but the most esoteric Gadgets can be utilized by properly trained Extraordinary Citizens.

•• CLN-20 “Fun House Gas”

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 2 pts. per grenade

With a similar density to standard atmosphere, Fun House can persist in an area for up to an hour causing intense and unpredictable optical refraction, making light in the affected area bounce erratically, similar to a kaleidoscope. Like most gasses, the particles of CLN-20 shift constantly, making the visual distortions unpredictable, preventing people from getting their bearings. Additional air movement from fans or running, for example, causes intense disorientation.

As a purely optical distortion, it affects all forms of vision that rely on light, including infrared and night vision. Agents deploying Fun House are strongly encouraged to use non-optical sensors, such as the C-SAM. LIAMs are similarly unaffected by CLN-20.

System: CLN-20 gas brings the visuals of 1970s LSD trip films to life, as eyes and all other optical sensors become entirely useless. The unpredictable visual distortions ruin depth and color perception, making it impossible to see thanks to a Forces 2 effect that refracts the light within 20 feet of the point of detonation.

Unless deliberately blown away from the target area or otherwise dissipated, CLN-20 gas remains in the area for 30-60 minutes. While incredibly disconcerting to virtually everything that enters the area of effect, the gas itself does no harm. The chance of falls and other accidents rises drastically within the gas' effect, though due to an Entropy 2 Adjustment incorporated into the gas.

•• Spray Cams

Enlightenment 2, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 4 pts.

Trash cams were once the cutting edge of surveillance technology, but today's technology allows agents to go even further than disguising cameras and audio equipment as garbage. Spray Cams pack millions of sensors into a device that looks and functions precisely the same as a conventional can of spray paint. With Spray Cams, entire walls can be coated in a photosensitive and acoustically absorptive nanite film, allowing an entire army of covert cameras to be placed on a single surface. Not only does this method ensure that disruption or damage does not compromise the surveillance cluster, it means that the images captured by the cluster can be composited to create three-dimensional videos, complete with positional sound.

System: Any agent with the access code can easily access the information recorded by the Spray Cams through a Data 2 Adjustment, forming a Rank 1 Data connection to the location of the Spray Cams. The cams themselves do the actual work, meaning the agent using them does not even need to be fluent in Data so long as they have an internet capable smartphone, tablet, or computer. Spray Cams last up to 3 months if the affected area is not greatly disturbed (such as being demolished or painted over).

••• Bonding Facilitation Fluid

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 3 pts. (Per 10 use tube)

Bonding Facilitation Fluid (BFF) permanently bonds two surfaces together on a structural level. Although effectively the opposite of Clear Cut, BFF is a much more intricate nanite system, as merely creating a superficial bond between the two surfaces rarely achieves permanent results. Indeed, many object combinations simply do not have enough strength at their surface to provide real support. This creates the very real possibility of a shear point, giving the combination a point of failure.

Instead, BFF searches deep within each of the objects to locate points of stability, such as metallic microstructures or wood grain. Once comparable points of strength are located on both objects, BFF merges them at a molecular level, sharing stress between both objects. This also means that the bond is generally a gradient of both materials that is a substantial thickness, preventing the objects from being separated once joined.

Do not fuck around with this stuff. Epoxying your fingers together is one thing, but BFF cares about structural integrity, not biological functionality. Flesh affected by BFF may become so mangled that it'd be easier to just cut the affected tissue out and grow a replacement.



System: A Matter 3/Life 3 Adjustment combines the patterns of any two objects or creatures together on a fundamental level, effectively gluing the targets together via technomagick. This is subtle, as to mundane observation the two objects (or creatures, or combination thereof) are simply glued together with an impressive adhesive. Separating things bonded with this Effect becomes impossible without using Matter, Life, or destroying the glued portion of one or both targets. One application of BFF binds up to 6 square inches (15 sq. cm) of surface area.

If BFF is applied to one target and not used to bind to another creature or object within a number of turns equal to the successes on the activation roll for the Gadget, the fluid loses its potency, becoming simple, mundane superglue.

• • • Clear Cut

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 4 pts.

At its most basic, Clear Cut is a filament with a tack on each end. The filament grows or contracts as needed to prevent any unwanted slack. Once the tacks are in place and the filament is arranged on a flat surface, Clear Cut gets to work, disassembling matter on a horizontal plane until it reaches a surface of a different composition. Essentially, Clear Cut vaporizes a line clear through whatever it's tacked to, without damaging anything else, unless the agent taps the tacks, giving it the go ahead to cut through the next layer.

Clear Cut is programmed with a variety of possible cut styles, including a U-shaped cut allowing the cut surface to be removed and then replaced seamlessly.

System: The operative tacks a filament to a surface such as a wall or floor and then activates the gadget. The filament uses a Matter 3 effect to transmute the targeted area into air, effectively burning through the material of the surface and dealing damage to the target according to the Base Damage or Duration chart (see Mage 20 p. 504). This uses an extended roll, dealing damage each turn at the cost of 1 point of Primal Energy. Once the Clear Cut either completes the programmed cut or runs out of Primal Energy, it becomes inert.

• • • HIPSTer

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 3 pts. (for a single use)

The Hidden in Plain Sight Tracker, or HIPSTer, is a malleable metal alloy that adheres to virtually any surface and flakes off when it experiences air resistance, such as that experienced by a vehicle in motion. The faster the vehicle travels, the more frequent the HIPSTer sheds, ensuring that the particle trail remains consistent, no matter what speed the target vehicle travels. Since the HIPSTer resembles a lump of metal, it can easily be placed over weld spots, making it all but impossible to spot. Additionally, the HIPSTer does not rely on electronic parts, making it invisible to RF scanners.

The flake trail created by the HIPSTer is difficult to see with the naked eye but can be easily spotted by shining an infrared light and observing the IR being reflected back in night vision devices.

The HIPSDTer version incorporates nanprocessors into each metallic flake released, allowing any agent trained in Data

to track the target's location as well as the path by which the target travels. These nanoprocessors are small enough, their signal in an advanced enough range, that this gadget remains invisible to RF scanners.

System: The agent must attach the gadget to the target vehicle. This creates a trail she can follow, provided she leverages the appropriate equipment.

- The agent utilizing a HIPSTER and appropriate equipment may make all Attribute + Ability checks used to track the target vehicle at a -2 difficulty.
- When using the HIPS-DTER, in addition to the mundane tracking benefits above, the agent may also utilize Data to track the vehicle, claiming a 3 success Data Connection (see Mage 20 p. 524)

• • • LIAM

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 2 pts. per grenade.

A grenade with an attitude problem, the LIAM has a specially programmed set of skills: It finds you, and it destroys you. Outfitted with sonar navigation systems and basic maneuvering thrusters, LIAMs fly to their target area and perform a seek-and-destroy operation.

Thanks to the combination of their thrusters and easily thrown shape, creative agents can engage targets behind cover, around corners, and up HVAC vents. A LIAM can even be programmed to detonate on command or after a specific amount of time, although this reduces the success rate as LIAMs have a finite amount of fuel.

System: LIAM's shape and size (roughly that of a baseball) make it easy to throw. Once in the air, thrusters kick in, ensuring that even if the target moves or the throw was bad, the grenade finds its mark.

Once armed and thrown, a LIAM flies toward the target relying on a Correspondence 2/Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure to track the target while generating propulsion. This permits the user to add the successes gained on the activation roll to the successes on a Dexterity + Athletics roll to hit their target. Upon detonation, the LIAM deals aggravated damage using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Adjustment. The Damage generated and the Blast Radius of the explosion is equal to the successes gained on the activation roll when arming the LIAM.

• • • Mightier Pen

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 3 pts.

After several iterations of design, redesign, success and embarrassment, Q Division has designed the perfect multi-use tool for agents seeking an innocuous weapon. This pen is designed with several functions, each of which, unfortunately

destroy the item in the process. However, for an easy to hide holdout weapon, the Mightier Pen cannot be beat.

For fashion forward operatives, a version of this gadget is also available in a watch format.

System: Until activated, this gadget is a simple pen that never seems to run out of ink and writes smoothly under virtually any circumstance. The watch version is a simple atomic watch.

A successful activation roll allows the agent to use one of the following Procedures. Doing so destroys the pen entirely.

- Set a timer for up to 30 seconds, after which time the pen explodes, detonating based on your activation roll using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure.
- Immediately release a non-lethal pulse of force, pushing everyone out of a ten-by-ten-foot area, centered on the pen using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure. The pulse does not affect the person holding the pen.
- Immediately fire a laser discharge using a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure. Aim the laser with a Dexterity + Energy Weapons roll.

• • • Pre-designed Proficiency Packages

Enlightenment 3-5, Primal Energy 5-25, Background Cost 3-12 pts. per use

While PPP can be permanently implanted, that runs counter to the point: their modularity. Instead, most PPP are external in nature, hidden in a variety of ways to fit the mission environment, requiring a volume roughly equal to a toothbrush. Popular camouflage options include sunglasses, dust masks, sports bands, and mobile phones. Some PPP are even accessible via an ES-Phone app. Once accessed and activated the agent may utilize the programmed expertise.

System: The user gains a brief boost to rolls involving up to three Ability scores, chosen when the PPP is activated. Through a Mind 3 Procedure the operative receives extra dice on the selected Abilities equal to the successes achieved on the gadget's activation roll. This brain boost persists for the duration listed on the Base Damage and Duration Chart (see Mage 20 p. 504).

• • • TMBL-WD

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 5 pts. per unit

Compact, TMBL-WDs are little more than fist-sized balloons with small motors and an advanced 3-D imaging system.

These 'fire and forget' infiltration aids allow you to punch in a few settings, throw one, and have a handy pre-programmed illusion at your disposal. You can program the TMBL-WD to

generate an independent holographic image up to the size of an average human capable of generating up to 70 decibels of sound. This illusion is short-lived but can serve as a powerful distraction.

System: With a Forces 3/Prime 2 Procedure, the user programs an illusory image into the TMBL-WD unit and releases it. This image is effectively an illusion subject to the systems detailed in **How Do You Do That?** p. 129-131. The TMBL-WD does not last very long, consuming one point of Primal Energy per minute, after which time, the illusion fails and the device self-destructs via implosion, leaving behind a useless lump of metal.

•••• MP-34 Multipurpose Pacification Gas

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 4 pts. per canister

Civilians of all sorts make fragmentation grenades a bad call in a lot of places. CS, a mild nerve agent commonly called “tear gas,” provides an option that’s less likely to cause collateral damage, but not everything out there gives a shit about tear gas. Q Division took the classic riot control agent and upgraded it with garlic oil, aerosolized silver, iron, capsicum, and some other goodies. If it breathes, has eyes, or skin, it’s calling in sick tomorrow. The gas settles and dissipates relatively quickly, but it also sticks to moist surfaces like eyes, mouths, other mucus membranes, and sweaty skin. This means that, while it’s safe to enter a gassed area soon after deployment, anything that got gassed is going to be sad until they make it to the showers.

System: Created in the lab via Matter Procedures, the most commonly distributed format MP grenades consist of a soft drink can-sized canister around a large crystal which releases a tremendously noxious gas when burned. Although not entirely colorless, MP gas does not provide any significant vision impairment besides making unprotected eyes spasm uselessly. Once dispersed, the gas remains airborne for no more than 60 seconds, although the ground and any moist surfaces have substantial MP residue, making rubbing your face against the ground a terrible idea.

Like all gas grenades, MP grenades have an open bottom through which a jet of flame and gas issues forth. The fire only burns for a turn or two but can be used as a weapon on its own by a desperate agent, dealing 4 dice of fire damage. Left alone, MP grenades produce a cloud of irritant approximately 10 yards in diameter. Anything with exposed skin suffers a -2 penalty to all dice pools. If the eyes are exposed, that penalty rises to -3. Anything breathing in the area takes 2 levels of bashing damage per turn. Anyone attempting to hold their breath must make a Stamina roll at difficulty 6 each turn as the gas damages all exposed mucus membranes.

•••• Zipper Ties

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 4 pts. per tie

Unenlightened citizens obviously don’t like being arrested. The moment zip ties close around someone’s wrists, the natural response is resentment or anger. Reality Deviants don’t care for that much either, but they tend to be far more adept at getting out of restraints. If you’re going to restrain a dangerous deviant, you’re going to need a better set of zip ties.

Zipper Ties use a little bit of Primal Energy and Primum lacing to offer countermeasures against any sort of deviant attempts to break free from the restraint.

System: These function as mundane zip ties, restraining the hands of whoever they are placed on and dealing 1 level of bashing damage per 15 minutes the subject struggles (to a maximum of 3 levels) as the zip ties dig into the wearer’s wrists. These ties also subject any magickal effect attempted by the unfortunate wearer to 4 dice of Primum Countermeasures (see **Mage 20** p. 659).

Theory and Application

Every mage, be they a mystic or Technocrat, utilizes the elements of their focus to access the Spheres and generate effects. For a mystic mage, the lines between an Instrument and a Wonder can occasionally blur. In fact, some mages may use a Wonder as a personal or unique instrument as detailed in **Mage 20** p. 587-588. This is also appropriate, and quite common among Technocrats. The Black Suit worn by an NWO operative simultaneously serves as a Trinket and a fashion apparatus for Enlightened Science.

Furthermore, to the Technocrat, Wonders ultimately function according to the principles of Enlightened Science. From a practical perspective, this means that according to everything the Technocrat believes, they can replicate the effects of a Device through individual application of the Spheres, provided reasonable materials and time are available. In practice, this means that many Technocrats can and do employ Adjustments and Procedures that are commonly found in Gadgets, Trinkets, and Devices using their own knowledge and ability in the field. Depending on the Effect, the Spheres, and the materials available, the Storyteller may allow a Technocrat to attempt to jury-rig an appropriate apparatus together using the Inventing, Modifying, and Improving Technology rules described in **Mage 20**, p. 463-464. The Storyteller may wish to treat the successes achieved on this check as a limit to the number of successes that can be achieved on the Technocrat’s Enlightenment roll to initiate the Effect. Failure on the Modification and Repair check means that the Technocrat cannot attempt the Effect, as he is unable to jury-rig a functional apparatus.

To remove Zipper Ties, the agent must cut them, rendering them effectively useless. Agents are expected to collect the discarded Zipper Ties for recycling. Primum is expensive, and littering is unmutual.

Trinkets

Q Division masterfully crafts these items using cutting edge manufacturing techniques. As such they provide reliable effects, even in the hands of the Masses.

• • Operative Database

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 6 pts.

Operative Database, or ODb, contains lightly redacted information on all operatives in a specific geographical area, including home and work contact information both for them and their immediate supervisor, as well as personnel file photographs and fingerprints, for ease of identifying field agents. This information is not limited to Convention personnel, and the database includes civilian agency operatives in the area, such as police, MI-6, and ASIS. Even minor civilian security agency personnel are included, enabling agents to better socially engineer their way into secured locations. Where applicable, it provides both actual names and aliases. Due to the incredibly sensitive nature of this information, each database only contains data on a specific area, equal to 100 square miles.

Data on civilians not involved in security services is freely available to Technocratic agents in good standing, without the need to purchase or requisition the ODb.

System: The agent utilizes the ODb with an activation roll to gain access to a Data 2 adjustment allowing her to utilize the information fed into the database as a Data connection (see *Mage 20* p. 524) to track the target and unearth other information about them.

The player may add successes from the activation roll to any Investigation roll made to gather information about the target as long as the Data connection to them remains.

• • + Pocket Drone

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 2+ pts. per drone

In the 21st century, any hobbyist can walk into an electronics store or toy store and get a cheap drone. If all you want to do is make a piece of plastic hover around your living room, that's easily accessible and affordable tech. Professional drones are far more expensive, extending battery life, durability, range, and camera resolution. Q Division and Iteration X are a few decades ahead on drone technology. Fortunately, once it's in the air, no one can tell the difference between a twenty-dollar toy and an incredibly subtle form of surveillance.

Standard-issue drones fit in a carefully lined case that fits in your pocket. More elaborate models can fold down into a backpack, along with all the equipment needed to operate the drone. Multiple armatures, each sporting a tiny propeller, form the crude skeleton of this device. Custom features flesh it out and give it life.

Systems: These drones are surprisingly reliant on mundane technology, but a few minor applications of Enlightened Science can customize a pocket drone and truly make it sing. You may add each of the following options to a base pocket drone by increasing the Background Point cost as indicated in the description.

- Data 2 Adjustments offer an “eye in the sky,” allowing agents and armatures to acquire and track targets remotely. This modification increases the effective range of the drone’s surveillance and guidance systems to global, though the drone’s maximum range and battery life are unaffected. Multiple drones allow multiple viewpoints on the same location or target. **Cost:** 4 pts.
- Forces 4 Adjustments allow a drone to deliver a shocking electrical charge, a short ballistic burst, or even a low-range EMP pulse. Granted, attacking someone does tend to give away a drone’s position, but a quick surprise attack can be a nice overture to a more concentrated assault. **Cost:** 8 pts.
- Mind 2 Adjustments decrease the possibility of visual detection. People overlook individual drones once they are sufficiently ubiquitous. **Cost:** 4 pts.

Additional custom Adjustments and Procedures are available upon request (and at Storyteller discretion).

• • Second Skin

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 4 pts.

The Second Skin is easier to slide on or slough off than a wetsuit. Some compare it to a superhero uniform, or at least, the kind of rubbery-latex dull black suit that has ridges, kneepads and elbow pads, groin and/or chest protection, and form-fitting anonymity. What you wear on your head is up to you, but the rest of your skin has basic protection from hostile environments in this world and others: heat, cold, electricity, acid, sonic disturbance, and so on. In other words, forces and matter that can be minimized by the Forces and Matter Procedures used to create this suit and protect you.

System: This suit confers an Armor Rating of 3, which also applies to fire, electrocution, and temperature extremes, adding 3 dice to any resistance roll to which the Armor Rating would not normally apply.

••• The Black Suit

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 6 pts.

This is the standard-issue black suit utilized by the NWO Operative Methodology. Although available to members of other Conventions, the vast majority of these suits are found among Black Suit Operatives.

System: Matter 3 Adjustments worked into the fabric of these suits provide an Armor Rating of 4 to the wearer with no Dexterity penalty. Beyond that, many Black Suit Operatives use the suit itself as an apparatus for Mind Effects.

••• Parkour Slippers

Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A, Background Cost 6 pts.

Spy movies have fallen in love with the sport of *parkour*, encouraging sexy spies to run from their Lamborghinis, climb up construction cranes, and leap from skyscraper to skyscraper, chasing after whomever just stole their cell phone, took their picture, or caught them sleeping with the supervillain's easily seduced girlfriend.

Of course, those are just movies. Real-life parkour is far more dangerous. Correspondence Adjustments increase your chances of getting from rooftop to construction crane unseen. If that's not enough, consider some better gear for your feet.

Q Division's latest line of parkour slippers are like form-fitting gloves for your hands and feet. Extra grip gives the agent an edge in high-altitude human-powered bipedal transport. Experience with Strength training and Athletics are still a must, but an agent has the cutting edge of technology to aid her.

System: Through the application of Matter 3 procedures this set of gloves and footwear greatly increases the grip and control an agent may exert when engaging in parkour. Wearing a full set of Parkour slippers on hands and feet reduces the difficulty of any Strength + Athletics roll made to perform jumping, climbing, running, and other feats of physical prowess at the Storyteller's discretion.

Devices

Technology designated as a Device operates under such advanced principles of Enlightened Science that its function is beyond the understanding of most Extraordinary Citizens. Some specialists among the rank and file can access the functions of these Devices, but doing so always incurs a level of heightened risk. In the name of safety, restricting access to these Devices to Enlightened operatives is highly recommended.

• LL/AP-15 "Finger Guns"

Enlightenment 2, Primal Energy 5, Background Cost 3 pts.

Disguised as ordinary rings, LL/AP-15s are discrete, self-charging, electroshock weapons. Finger Guns convert the user's motion into electrical energy, storing the energy in an onboard battery that makes up the bulk of the unit. Although it takes several minutes to build up a full charge, the virtual invisibility of Finger Guns allows them to be used in highly secure areas. Several firing configurations are available, such as discharging in the direction of a pointing finger or outward from a closed fist.

System: Easy to disguise and use, LL/AP-15 slips onto an agent's fingers, where they charge themselves in short order. Once in place, they are virtually impossible to differentiate from an ordinary ring, requiring 4 successes on a Perception + Technology roll to identify as out of place. Once triggered via implant, ES-Phone app, or voice activation ("pew" is a popular choice), the rings discharge an attack, which can be aimed via Dexterity + Energy Weapons. Damage is dealt via a Forces 2 Procedure, fueled by the stored kinetic energy within the rings.

•• Helping Hand

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 6 pts.

The Helping Hand is a self-powered, semi-autonomous levitation device. Because it functions much like an agent's natural hands, but without the constraints of being physically attached, the number of uses that an agent can find for it is virtually limitless. Control devices are available in numerous form factors, including implants, ties, necklaces, and an ES-Phone app.

Helping Hands have significant levitation power, with applications in climbing, lifting objects, and even carrying part of an agent's load. Their manual dexterity is also well above average for a human, allowing experienced Helping Hand operators to assist in soldering circuitry, or using a firearm. They do not, however, provide any tactile feedback to their operator, making them less helpful for delicate tasks.

In other words, if you try to pick a lock with a pair of Helping Hands, it's going to be a pain in the ass, because you won't be able to feel what you're doing. They're great for holding a tension bar in place while you work on the tumblers, though. Creative agents find lots of uses, such as having your Hand grab you by the belt to jump off most buildings safely, and having your Hand give you some upward force to make falling safer and climbing a hell of a lot easier.

System: A basic Forces 2 Procedure provides the user with telekinetic ability. Successes indicate the specific functions available through this Device, as detailed in **How Do You DO That?** p. 28.



•• PP-2 Omni-Badge

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 10, Background Cost 6 pts.

The Omni-Badge merges the classic elegance of a bifold badge holder with the latest in high resolution e-ink technology, allowing the screen of the badge to mimic the look and feel of virtually any badge or identification card.

System: The Omni-Badge allows an agent to present official looking credentials for any agency in the world by manipulating the appearance of the included badge and ID card through a simple Forces 2/Prime 2 illusion, while subtly reinforcing deference to the authority of the badge holder through a Mind 2 Adjustment. For more information on illusions and how to resist them, see *How Do You DO That?* p. 129.

•• Universal Neutralizer Device (UND)

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 20, Background Cost 6 pts.

Simple tactics are often the most effective. This underrated but astonishingly effective Device fires disruption fields that disable most forms of non-magickal machines; cars die, guns jam, computers crash. These bursts of disruptive energies can even affect magickal machines, although they stand a better chance than usual of functioning despite the attack. Best of all, the UND appears to be completely innocuous,

with effects that seem like run-of-the-mill bad luck. Thus, Extraordinary Citizens can easily use such gear, and often provide unseen support during engagements by disrupting the enemy's technology while high-ranking operatives handle the heavy lifting.

UNDs come in various sizes and shapes. The most common configuration, however, appears to be a slim black box that resembles a cell phone. The screen display allows the user to target the machine, and then shows whether that target has been successfully neutralized.

System: Upon activation, this Device sends out a simple, invisible energy pulse that initiates an Entropy 2/Forces 2/Matter 2 Adjustment. Entropy tilts probability in favor of the target technology's failure; Forces disrupts electronic and radio-wave functions; and Matter jams, warps or melts material components in subtle ways. Since those energies are invisible to perceptions (though discernible with Rank 1 Forces perceptions), and the neutralization effects seem perfectly normal, this Device and its Effects are subtle.

Each application of the UND expends a single charge, and it affects a single targeted piece of technology. The difficulty to disrupt that target is 5, and a single success is enough to disrupt most forms of mundane technology that are car-sized or smaller. Larger targets may require two or more successes, and targets larger than a small airplane rely upon too many systems for a single application of this Device to neutralize them.

Because the UND projects energy, not projectiles, its effective range is line-of-sight; that said, especially fast, small or distant targets, like aircraft or microtechnology, raise the difficulty depending on what it is.

Wonders of any kind get a soak roll to resist deactivation. The owner of the targeted Wonder rolls that Wonder's Arete/Enlightenment, and each success deducts one success from the UND's attack. If the Wonder neutralizes all the UND's successes, that Wonder remains unaffected. A UND does not, however, affect a Wonder that doesn't depend upon mechanical parts, electrical impulses, and so forth; a Trinary computer can be neutralized, but an enchanted wand cannot.

Normally, the UND's disruptive effects last for the normal Duration noted on the *Base Damage or Duration chart* (see *Mage 20*, p. 504). Three successes or more on a UND attack may permanently destroy a simple, non-magickal machine (gun, crossbow, etc.), while the same amount of successes could likewise destroy mundane technology that depends upon subtle electronic impulses and/or magnetically stored data.

• • • Autonomous Investigatory Sampler

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 6 pts.

Agents requiring faster investigatory operations or lacking adequate personnel to conduct thorough searches for interesting samples to feed into the FMA may be interested in the AIS ("ace"). Bolstering the effectiveness of field investigation, the AIS deploys a cloud of flying drones that search the surroundings for unusual material, scraping off samples, and storing them internally before returning to the AIS "hive" command and control unit.

In most cases, AIS packages are issued in "hives" of 1,000 drones, roughly the size of a large energy drink can, supporting the search of an area 100 yards in radius. Larger packages the size of a backpack can search 1,000 yards. Although significantly less efficient, a hive can deploy fewer drones in order to support covert search operations.

System: These drones come with a Dimensional Science 1/Life 1/Matter 1/Prime 1 Adjustment allowing them to detect items within (or outside of) parameters given when the routine is activated. While the drones collect and carry samples through mundane robotics, they do rely on a Forces 2 Procedure to assist in moving heavy objects as well as an Entropy 1/Time 2 Adjustment to maximize search efficiency.

Activation successes serve as free successes on any Investigate or Survival roll to find clues. Samples can be fed into a Field Material Analyzer (p. 181) to glean more detailed and useful information.

• • • ES-Phone

Enlightenment 3-6, Primal Energy 15-30, Background Cost 6+ pts.

The latest iteration of the Enlightened Smartphone allows for secure communication as well as access to several Union databases, processes, and applications that can be run from the phone.

System: The standard security processes of an ES-Phone rely on a Data 3, Entropy 2, Mind 1 Adjustment that offers highly effective encryption. The ability to access the Digital Web via Sensory Visitation or Astral Immersion comes standard on the ES phone thanks to a Data 2 Adjustment (see *Mage 20* pp. 466-467) and each ES-Phone comes with a standard VR band that allows users to strap the phone to their face, creating makeshift VR goggles.

The security routine consumes 1 Primal Energy per day. The ability to access the Digital Web functions within the same power usage routine and is effectively a free bonus. Each other Enlightened Application consumes 1 Primal Energy per use. You can recharge the ES-Phone through Prime procedures or by plugging the phone into a SPECM (see *Mage 20* p. 657, *Book of Secrets* p. 165).

You can install the following Enlightened Applications on your ES-Phone. The Background cost for each is listed in the Enlightened Application description.

- **City Eye (Background Cost 2 pts.)** Once you deploy enough surveillance assets to a given area, managing the influx of data becomes cumbersome. Thankfully, City Eye is here to alleviate the burden. By combining modern computer vision technology, City Eye can track targets from multiple angles and even predict the movement of targets that have left the system's visual range. City Eye is voice-command ready with support for hundreds of simultaneous users, allowing each to request information about separate targets. City Eye can also be set to alert users when it detects unusual activity in a set location or when a specified target changes activities or locations.

System: A Data 2/Mind 1 Adjustment allows the user to sift through numerous camera feeds including police cameras, private security cameras and mobile cameras not encrypted through Enlightened or Reality Deviant measures. This allows the user to effectively spy on virtually any public place within a city that holds an established Technocratic presence.

- **CSAM (Background Cost 2 pts.)** The CSAM tracks all entities within the agent's immediate vicinity usually by syncing the C-SAM app to the City Eye app, but the user can feed data manually via a Data 2 Adjustment. Once the C-SAM has the programmed environment, the app goes to work running constant complex equations to predict movement within the area.

System: A Data 1/Entropy 1/Time 2 Adjustment provides a bonus equal to the successes gained on the activation roll to all Athletics, Brawl, Firearms, and Energy Weapons rolls the agent makes for the remainder of the scene. Interestingly, the use of this Device impairs Martial Arts and therefore offers no bonus when used in tandem with that Ability. In order to take full advantage of this app, the agent must either feed the data into a VDAS-capable implant or strap their ES-Phone to their eyes with the VR Band.

- **K-Gram (Background Cost 1 pt.)** This app allows operatives to share real time images of tactical situations over VDAS through the onboard camera in the ES-Phone. Though that's its stated purpose, agents widely use a social feed with the app where they share gym selfies, pictures of their breakfast, inspirational quotes, and landscapes snapped during vacation time. The secure VDAS contains the entirety of the social feed and is considered by most Supervisors and Symposiums to be not only mutual, but a welcome team-building apparatus for the Union. The only negative side effect the NWO has attributed to the K-Gram social feed is an uptick in agents reporting the sensation of FOMO (Fear of Missing Operations).

System: This app turns the onboard ES-Phone Camera into a Kirlian camera, giving you access to a Dimensional Science 1 Adjustment. Through this Adjustment, the agent can see any sort of extradimensional entity within the camera's frame.

- **Manar (Background Cost 1 pt.)** Manar has been a staple in the NWO's surveillance arsenal for decades. In the past, Manar required field agents to drag a bulky unit around with them, typically in Spectre limos. In the 21st century, a more convenient, albeit more limited, version is available as an ES-Phone app. If you're Enlightened, or a sufficiently trained Exceptional Citizen, you can do an RD scan from the palm of your hand. Multiple operatives surrounding a building can triangulate to find a target's position, allowing more highly trained Black Suits to converge on that location. With a bit of tinkering with the settings, an agent can also track down other "impossible" phenomena, such Wondrous Devices, familiars, sanctums, Nodes, Paradox manifestations, and all the other trappings of a Reality Deviant's dangerous operations.

System: A Data 1/Dimensional Science 1/Prime 1 Adjustment allows the user of this app to detect all magickal activity within 100 feet unless that activity is somehow magickally shielded or obscured.

- **NOT: An App (Background Cost 3 pts.)** This app mimics the basic function of a Neuro-Optical Transmitter (see p. 182).

System: A Mind 3 Procedure allows for the removal of unwanted memories.

- **VDAS Mobile (Background Cost 3 pts)** This app grants the agent all the function of a VDAS (see Mage 20 p. 655) without the hassle of a separate interface or cyberware implant. Your phones screen displays everything you need.

• • • Field Material Analyzer

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 8 pts.

The dream of every scientist ever, the FMA can identify anything small enough to fit inside it. Is something too big to fit? Cut a piece off that thing; the FMA does the rest.

Using a trio of spectroscopy and spectrometric methods, the FMA analyzes material gathered in the field and produces results nearly instantly. By coupling acoustic resonance spectroscopy, nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometry, and mass spectrometry, the FMA cross-checks data ensuring that false results are a thing of the past. Even contaminated samples are no trouble for the FMA.

Agents need only insert the sample into the specimen tray and push the button. Anything fist-sized or smaller is crushed, vibrated, and scrutinized until it gives up its secrets. If non-destructive testing is desired, the mass spectrometry step is skipped. Not only can the FMA tell you what something is made from, it can even identify markers, such as DNA, mineral concentrations, Data connections, and extradimensional residue.

The entire assembly, including protective shock mounts, weighs a mere 100 pounds and can easily fit in the trunk of a car, instead of occupying an entire lab. While you can theoretically transport the FMA inside a backpack, due to the highly expensive and delicate instruments it contains, do this only as a last resort.

System: By placing the material sample (or piece of the material sample) within the FMA assembly and making an activation roll, the agent triggers one of three procedures.

- **Frequency Analysis:** By subjecting the sample to a Dimensional Science 1/Forces 1/Prime 1 Adjustment, the FMA analyses the presence of any energies, of this dimension or another, within the sample.

- **Mass Spectrometry:** Through an Entropy 1/Life 1/Matter 1 Adjustment, the full biological and material makeup of the sample is determined and mapped on a pattern level. Utilizing this Adjustment provides copious information at the cost of destroying the sample as it is broken, shaken, and torn to bits.

- **Quantum Analysis:** With a Data 1/Mind 1/Time 1 Adjustment, the sample is scoured for Data connections,

thought patterns or emotional resonance, and temporal anomalies.

All three Adjustments can be used on the same sample, as long as Mass Spectrometry is used last. Each Adjustment does require an expenditure of Primal Energy and a new activation roll.

••• G-186 Octopus Suit

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 6 pts.

Until activated, the Octopus Suit looks like a boring grey bodysuit. Once turned on, things get a lot more interesting. Not only does it mimic the colors of its surroundings, but it can expand with pinpoint precision, creating shapes and textures that perfectly blend in with its environment.

Employing its massive database of textures, the Octopus Suit creates simple optical illusions, which hamper the ability of observers to accurately determine distance. As a result, agents can covertly cover large amounts of ground even while being directly observed. Additionally, by extruding and retracting the edges of the structure, agents can move imperceptibly, allowing slow movement while in close proximity to observers. This same technology can eliminate the vibrations of the wearer's respiration and heartbeat, making it impossible for targets to hear or see agents breathing, even when adjacent.

System: By means of a Forces 2 Procedure, the suit confers limited invisibility; add the number of successes on the suit's activation roll to Dexterity when attempting to use Stealth or to dodge an attack. Sensors enable the wearer to locate invisible allies in the immediate vicinity through a Data 1/Life 1 Adjustment. Finally, the suit's nanotech is capable of minor self-repair via a Matter 2/Prime 2 Procedure, which maintains the suit's integrity and grants the wearer an Armor Rating of 2.

••• Mimetic Mask

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Cost: 6 pts.

This 3D-printed mask of synthetic flesh must be placed on a human, living or dead, for one minute as the mask's sensors read DNA and the material conforms to the shape of the target's face. Once the mask has the data, the agent may put on the mask, creating a perfect physical disguise. This disguise will hold up to virtually all scrutiny, but any form of facial injury is almost certain to reveal the artificial nature of the mask.

System: This mask uses a Life 1/Matter 1 Adjustment to read the target's Pattern as appropriate. A Life 3/Matter 3 Procedure reshapes the mask to perfectly match the appearance of the subject while living. This works as described under the Facial Reconstruction Enhancement (see *Mage 20* p. 661).

•••+ The Neuro-Optical Transmitter (a.k.a. "Flashy Thing")

**Enlightenment 3+, Primal Energy 15-30,
Background Cost 6-15 pts.**

According to urban legend, mysterious "men in black" appear whenever ordinary people witness inexplicable events, especially when they find so-called evidence of aliens from outer space. Admittedly, the response by actual historical Black Suits outside the city of Roswell was not their finest hour. Agents put a cover story in place and deployed a weather balloon. Fortunately, skepticism about the possibility of alien invasion was already quite high. The story first broadcast over a Roswell radio station, and a hundred other stations and networks since then, empower 21st-century Black Suits, ready to erase the memories of anyone—and if necessary, erase or clone stubborn witnesses — claiming to see things that obviously do not exist.

NOTs erase a person's memories of Reality Deviance and anomalies, replacing them with memories that are more in line with the consensus. For example, someone seeing a Cyber-tooth Tiger attack a Reality Deviant who fought back with blatant use of Forces would be "reprogrammed" to see a savage Rottweiler attacking a man using a taser or handgun to fight it off. This Device comes in a variety of models, including a pen-sized model with a flashing tip, a handheld unit the size of a small emergency flashlight, and in some modern amalgams, an experimental cell phone app (designed for Enlightened cell phones; see "ES-Phones" p. 180). Additional variations on the design include the LED spotNOT, which can affect dozens of targets at once, and the Vehicular Mounted NOTlight, which allows for mobile memory stabilization of several city blocks. No matter the size, the process for using a NOT is the same. Hold up the device, point it at the witness, push the button, and a flashing light erases the required neural patterns.

Most supervisors recommend limiting use of this Device, because sometimes the solution to a problem may be worse than the problem itself. The best way to prevent memories of inexplicable phenomena is to make sure they never occur in the first place. If that doesn't work, get the "flashy thing," and ensure that the Masses did not see anything they shouldn't.

System: The various versions of this Device each rely on a Mind 3 effect to alter the memories of a target or targets. Higher level versions of the Device may incorporate Mind 4 Procedures and additional conjunctival effects as described in the Uncanny Influence section of *How Do You DO That?* p. 114-136.

••• PAWS Taser

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 8 pts.

Werewolves and other transdimensional creatures exist in multiple states simultaneously, interacting with the physical

world, as well as one or more dimensions adjacent. Thanks to this synergistic interaction, these Reality Deviants are capable of remarkable physical feats, such as shrugging off bullet wounds and throwing cars. The Pandimensional Anomaly Waveform Shutdown is an anchor. By flooding the subject's body with electrical shocks at a rotating frequency, the PAWS taser creates interference in the RD's transdimensional signal, disrupting the carrier waves connecting it to the dimensional threshold. The dual-manifested entity on the receiving end of this weapon loses the advantages their connection to other worlds provides.

System: When things gets tense, agents hit the PAWS button, cutting therianthropes off from their source of power and reducing them to a more manageable form. This Device uses a Dimensional Science 3/Forces 3/Life 4/Prime 2 effect to force the target shapeshifter into their Homid form while subjecting the target to electrocution as described in *Mage 20* pp. 438-439. Surprisingly, the use of this device is typically a subtle Procedure, as most onlookers are too busy being panicked at the sight of a ravenous, fur-covered, eight-foot-tall death machine to process the PAWS as anything other than a powerful taser.

If used against a Materialized spirit, the spirit simply suffers Aggravated damage equal to the successes on the Device's activation roll.

•••+ SMC (Spectre Motor Corporation) Vehicle

Enlightenment 3+, Primal Energy 15+, Background Cost 6+ pts.

Over the years, different technicians and laboratories within Q Division have worked on a variety of vehicles for use on the Front Lines. Due to recent restructuring, these various technicians and labs have been brought together under the umbrella of the Spectre Motor Corporation. Whereas vehicles were once created as individual make and model, the new approach at SMC is to mass produce chassis that are reliable, high quality, capable of accepting SPECM power supplies, and can be further customized at the local level to suit a Symposium's needs.

System: The SMC Vehicle is presented as a suite of options that may be purchased with Background Points. Each vehicle comes with a chassis that provides the basic game statistics and includes Hardpoints that accept SMCU (Spectre Motor Corporation Upgrades). Each chassis on its own has an Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15 (via SPECM) and a Background Cost of 6.

The standard chassis available from SMC are:

- **The Micon Katana:** This is a Badass Hypercycle (see *Mage 20* p. 460) with 2 Hardpoints.
- **The Modular Amalgam Transport Vehicle (MAT-V):** This is an Armored Supervan (see *Mage 20* p. 460) with 6 Hardpoints.

• **The Spectre Mark IV:** This is a Bond Q Division Supercar (see *Mage 20* p. 460) with 4 Hardpoints.

• **The Symposium on Wheels (SoW):** This is an 18-Wheeler (see *Mage 20* p. 460) with 8 Hardpoints.

A wide variety of SMCU are available. You may add any weapon system, upgrade, or modification listed in the Notes section of the tables in *Mage 20* pp. 460-462 to an SMC Vehicle at the cost of one Hardpoint.

You can install any Enlightened Gadget, Trinket, Device, Invention, or Matrix into an SMC Vehicle at the expense of one Hardpoint per 5 points of Background Cost. This cost is rounded up per Hardpoint, so attaching a Background Cost 6 Gadget to a SMC Vehicle takes up 2 Hardpoints.

It should be noted that the Background Cost of any upgrade must be paid separately. Available Hardpoints on a vehicle do not grant any additional Background points to purchase.

••• Species and Mineral Database

Enlightenment 3, Primal Energy 15, Background Cost 6 pts.

The SAM-Db contains detailed, stratum-specific information about all minerals and species naturally occurring on Earth, as well as additional information about the location of common artificial compounds, such as paints and metal alloys. The SAM-Db provides strata data, making it possible to determine not just the approximate map coordinates of a given sample, but the depth at which it was extracted, potentially revealing underground locations.

Living organisms outside their natural habitats, such as those in arboretums and zoos are in the database; however, the SAM-Db cannot possibly include all members of all species. Exotic animals held in unregistered locations may not appear in the SAM-Db. Nevertheless, cross-referencing microbial and insect species present in a dirt sample generally pinpoints the origin point of a sample to within a few meters.

System: By utilizing the information acquired through the FMA, this Device uses a Data 3 Procedure to sift through space, tracing the sample fed into it via Data connections. This can easily triangulate the point of origin of most items on this side of the Gauntlet.

••• Universal Key

Enlightenment 3-4, Primal Energy 10-15, Background Cost 6-9 pts.

Designed to defeat most mundane locks, the Universal Key is a thin, flat rod packed with millions of nanites. Upon insertion into a keyhole, the nanites flood the device, investigating its structure and comparing it to a database of known devices. Once they identify the locking mechanism, the nanites assume the correct shape to defeat it. In the case of tumbler

locks, this means the Universal Key becomes indistinguishable from its master key.

With keypads, card readers, and other user authentication mechanisms, authentication is generally not performed at the lock, making it impossible for the nanites to ‘read’ the combinations out of the lock. Instead, they scour the lock for residual skin proteins and magnetic ‘echoes’ in order to provide a list of all attempted entries in the past 24 hours. At that point, operators have the option of feeding the lock any entry data from the set, triggering the lock’s maintenance mode, or simply having the nanites disassemble the locking mechanism. Depending on the security measures attached to the locking mechanism, this degree of tampering may trigger alarms or activate other security measures.

System: When accessing a tumbler lock, the Universal Key reshapes itself using a subtle Entropy 1/Matter 3 Adjustment to identify and adopt the shape of the appropriate key to trigger the tumblers and successfully open the lock. If accessing any locking mechanism more complicated than simple tumblers, the Device must utilize an Entropy 2/Forces 2/Matter 3/Time 2 Procedure to isolate and replicate the appropriate code to unlock the target mechanism. Depending on the workings of the lock being targeted, this effect could be a subtle Adjustment or a blatant Procedure. If all else fails, a simple Entropy 3 Adjustment destroys the mechanism.

• • • • Variable Atmospheric Pharmacological Emitter (the VAPE)

Enlightenment 4, Primal Energy 20,

Cost: 10 pts.

A product of Pharmacopoeist design, the VAPE appears no different than a commercial vape pen or mod. The Device serves this purpose when filled with standard e-liquid, but the true purpose of the VAPE is far more versatile. Using various Enlightened liquids, the operative can emit an array of gases that carry chemical or biological toxins. The vape tank is coated with a special reagent that protects the user from the effects of the gas, allowing the cloud to be brought into the mouth and breathed out without risking harm to the user. In an extreme emergency, the battery of the VAPE can be overloaded, turning the Device into a makeshift explosive.

System: The VAPE utilizes Life 2/Prime 2 to generate biological toxins with a toxin rating equal to the number of successes generated on the activation roll. As an alternate Effect the user may select Matter 2/Prime 2 to generate chemical toxins, which also provide a toxin rating equal to the number of successes generated on the activation roll (see Mage 20 p. 442 for information on Toxin Ratings). The toxins hang in the air for a single turn, affecting anyone within a few feet of the operative.

In the event of an emergency, the VAPE carries a panic button that utilizes a Forces 2/Prime 2 effect to overcharge the

battery, causing an explosion that deals Aggravated damage. If successfully activated, this effect mimics that of a Molotov cocktail (see Mage 20 p. 437-438.) This function causes the Device to destroy itself, so is rarely used outside the direst of circumstances.

• • • • Dimensional Backdoor

Enlightenment 5, Primal 25,
Background Cost 12 pts.

The Dimensional Backdoor isn’t the most portable piece of technology; a frame constructed of Primum alloy that fits around a standard doorway. A tube runs around the periphery of the aperture, which channels Primal Energy. The door, when activated, connects to an extradimensional “beachhead.” With this Device, you don’t actually need to be a Void Engineer to set up the door on the Earthbound side – you just need a little Enlightenment, security clearance (with a proper degree of loyalty), and authorization from a VE on the other side.

Some versions of a DB fit inside of a standard backpack. The tube is coiled into the biggest pocket; the pieces of the frame are lashed to the sides. Add in the tools you’ll need to set it up, and you’ll have just about enough space left over to fit in a tablet, a spare jumpsuit, and some snacks to munch on in another dimension.

Setting up the DB takes about ten minutes; taking it down requires less. This allows you to coordinate your actions with agents and operatives on The Other Side without a major investment of time and resources. It is a huge security risk, which is why VE’s aren’t casual about granting access to any old agent outside their Convention. It’s also incredibly blatant.

System: This Device uses a Correspondence 4/Spirit 5 Procedure to connect to a partner gateway anywhere in the Tellurian. If the partner gateway for the Dimensional Backdoor is not active, the Device fails to start. All dangers of stepping sideways and Umbral travel apply normally (see Mage 20 p. 474-485).

• • • • NIMBY-50

Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 25,
Background Cost 13 pts.

Resembling a large weathervane with a hose, the NIMBY-50 has transformed the battle with extradimensional entities by finding the path of least resistance and throwing the target down it. Exploiting the differences in energy harmonics between the weapon, the current dimensional environment, and the target, the NIMBY-50 creates a strong attraction between the target and an algorithmically generated dimension.

In most cases, this ejects the entity to a dimension that is foreign to both the weapon and its target. In other words, the weapon allows our agents to safely deal with virtually any threat without having to break through its armor. Instead of killing

the target entity, it's sent to a dimension that's guaranteed to not be Earth or the current environment, with one very important exception.

Specifically designed to be ineffective against targets from our dimension, it is somewhat safe to use on Earth against targets of unknown origin. If the target is from Earth, the NIMBY causes a minor translocation of the target, transporting them several miles away in a pseudorandom direction.

System: The operative using the NIMBY-50 fires at a target using Dexterity + Energy Weapons at difficulty 7. If the target is hit, and possesses a Gnosis score or a Pathos rating, they're immediately subjected to a Correspondence 4/Dimensional Science 4/Entropy 2 Procedure that sends the target to a random part of the Umbra. Even if the targets possess the ability to step sideways or otherwise traverse the Umbra, they are prevented from doing so for a number of turns equal to the net success of the activation roll for turning on the NIMBY.

A target who does not have a Gnosis score or Pathos rating is instead subjected to a Correspondence 4/Entropy 2 Procedure that teleports the target in a direction of the Storyteller's choosing.

••••• Sleepteacher

**Enlightenment 5, Primal Energy 25,
Background Cost 15 pts.**

One of the most valuable and versatile Devices in the Technocracy's repertoires is the Sleepteacher. First developed in the 1960s, Q Division has refined, revised, improved, and miniaturized this Device repeatedly in the intervening decades. The modern Sleepteacher is small, sleek, and effective. Sleepteachers see use throughout the Union, but even today they are most commonly found in the hands of the NWO.

System: A Sleepteacher comes preprogrammed with an array of Mind effects. The most commonly used effect is the Mind 3/Time 2 Sleepteaching Procedure for which the Device is named. This procedure allows the recipient to cram weeks of study into a single night's sleep by manipulating the unconscious mind while dilating time. Through this process a Technocrat or Extraordinary Citizen can purchase a new Ability or raise an existing Ability much faster than study or experimentation would normally permit. When the Sleepteaching process begins, the Technocrat programming the Sleepteacher must select an Ability and a Target Rating. The effect is then performed as a ritual (see *Mage 20* pp. 538-540) with each period of six or more hours under the influence of the Sleepteacher permitting one roll. Unlike most rituals, the Sleepteacher suffers no penalty for the ritual being interrupted and has no need for a check to pick up where the ritual left off as long as the target resumes connection to the Sleepteacher within 24 hours. Any longer and the previous time under the Sleepteacher's influence is wasted. The process must begin anew.

Room 101: Fact and Fiction

The legendary site of reeducation of wayward agents, Room 101 has many possible options for Storytellers.

A State of Mind: Room 101 is not a physical place, but a state that agents can be placed into via long-dormant implants. When an agent's superior believes the agent to be beyond the help of simple counseling, they trigger an agent's Room 101, instantly rendering the agent docile and receptive to further programming.

A Home Away from Home: Room 101 exists in virtually every Technocracy stronghold. Any installation, regardless of size, has a Room 101, even if it's only the size of a closet. Within the room is a suite of Devices used to transition quarrelsome agents into productive members of the Union once more.

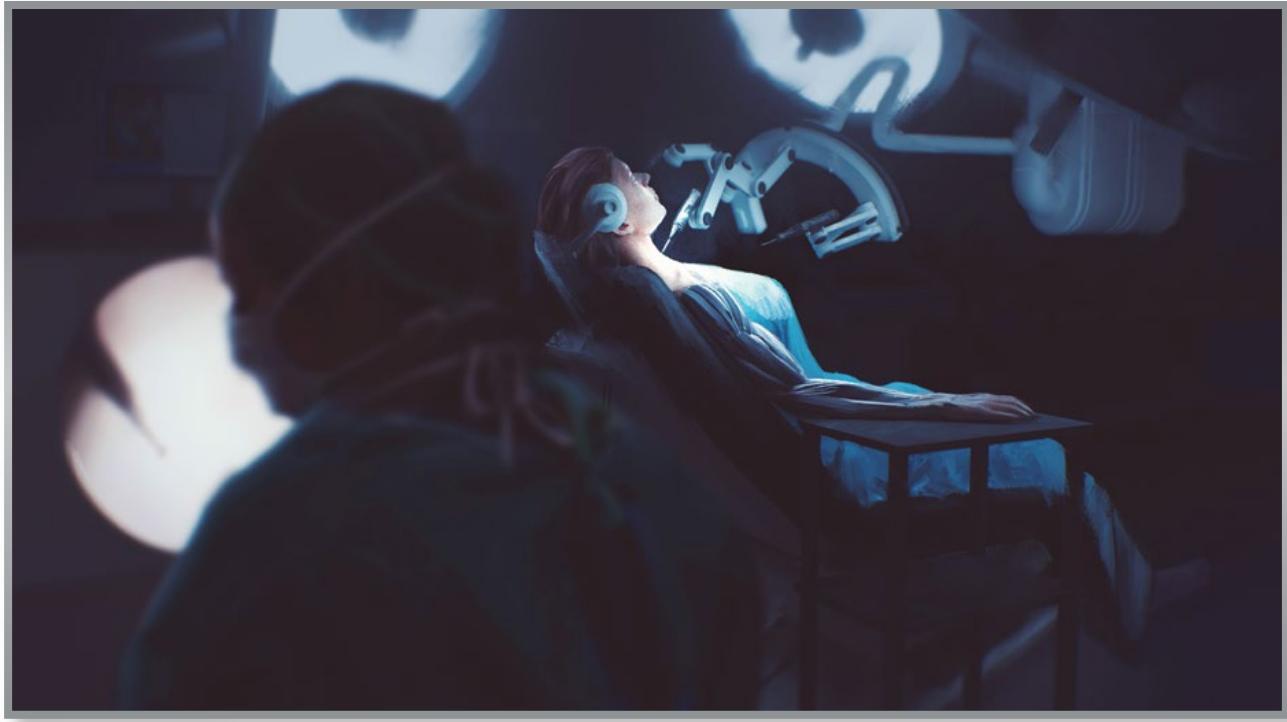
Wherever You Go, There You Are: There is only Room 101, but it is vast. Each installation has a portal to the Room, leading to a separate section of it. The entire Room is a massive panopticon, with countless wedge-shaped Adjustment rooms radiating from a single control room. Stout, seamless, soundproof walls segregate each room from its neighbors, while a floor to ceiling one-way mirror reminds residents of Room 101 that they are under observation.

You'll Know It When You Get There: Room 101 is a sprawling, seemingly endless labyrinth. The Room is full of obstacles and other agents undergoing Adjustment. Or are they? Anyone an agent meets in Room 101 might be a reeducation officer, guiding the agent to the psychological breakthrough they require to return to service as a healthy member of the Union.

Completing a Sleepteaching ritual requires a number of successes equal to the target's current rating in the chosen Ability score + 3. So, learning the first dot in a new Ability through Sleepteaching requires a minimum of 3 successes while learning the fifth dot requires 8. Once the base level of success is achieved to permit the improved learning, the ritual ends. Any surplus successes remaining from the final roll reduce the total experience point cost for purchasing the new Ability on a one-for-one basis. The recipient of the Sleepteaching then has a number of weeks equal to the successes to purchase the Ability score as if they had studied it. If the recipient fails to purchase the full rating for which the Sleepteaching was assigned by the end of this time period, any dots that remain unpurchased must be learned and purchased normally.

In addition to this basic function, a Sleepteacher can be used to achieve a number of other Procedures.

- With a Mind 3/Prime 2 effect, the Sleepteacher can be used to perform the Initial Processing phase of Social Conditioning as detailed in *Mage 20* p. 606.



- Using a Mind 4 effect, the Sleepteacher activates the Reinforcing the Programming phase of Social Conditioning as detailed in **Mage 20** p. 606.
- With a Mind 4 effect, the Sleepteacher alters a subject's memories, adding or removing details according to the user's will.

Enhancements

The contributions of Iteration X and the Progenitors to the Union's arsenal are vital to mission success both on the Front Lines and beyond. While Enhancements are often customized to meet the specific requirements of an agent's assigned long-term function, there are several designs that see relatively common use.

• • • DEI (Digital Enhancement Implant)

**Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy N/A,
Background Cost 6 pts.**

The DEI is the standard cybernetic implant used throughout Iteration X. These Enhancements are nearly ubiquitous across the Convention and confer several benefits. The latest version of the DEI is VDAS-capable, ES-Phone app ready, and PPP compatible.

System: Aside from the basic functionality of an Online Access enhancement (see **Mage 20** p. 659) the DEI allows the user to project to the Digital Web via Sensory Visitation or Astral Immersion without the need for external equipment thanks to a Data 2 Adjustment. The DEI also allows you to access and

interface with all ES-Phone apps, PPP modules, and any other digital packages that could reasonably be accessed. Finally, you can access all mundane internet and basic computer functions, as well as perform hacking, research, and other computer-based activities (see **Book of Secrets** pp. 116-127) without the need for equipment. The DEI handles it for you.

Inventions

Incredibly complex designs that require an agent to tap into their own Enlightenment to activate, Inventions are among the rarest and most potent items available to Technocrats. While some Inventions include secondary functions that anyone can access, only an Enlightened operative can activate the primary function of an Invention.

• • • Automated Repair

**Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy 10,
Background Cost 6 pts.**

Once programmed with the current molecular structure of an item, automated repair nanites perform structural maintenance on tools, eliminating wear and tear and keeping the tools operating at peak efficiency at all times. While capable of repairing nearly anything, it is most effective on simple tools, requiring more time to regenerate complex devices with moving or electrical components.

Precision tools such as micrometers are easily recalibrated ensuring measurements are always within specifications. Automated repair nanites easily handle damage even to combat equipment.

System: The automated repair performs repairs and maintenance on the specified object via Matter 2/Prime 2 Procedures. This Invention requires an Enlightened user, and is accompanied by a bassy hum and an obvious white glow along the seams where the repairs are happening.

Cognitive Attenuation Transmitter

**Enlightenment N/A, Primal Energy 25,
Background Cost 8 pts.**

Inspired by a Void Engineer's run in with a group of EDEs known as dataphytes (see *Gods and Monsters* p. 137), the CAT device is the pinnacle of anti-EDE technology with the ability to emit a powerful field of energy that hampers cognitive processes within its radius. Threats depending on their ability to concentrate are rendered unable to project energy or cause other dimensional disturbances. These thin black disks adhere to virtually any surface once thrown and begin emitting immediately. As an additional benefit, CATs drastically impair short-term memory, effectively consuming thoughts in their presence.

System: The CAT is a thin black disc that utilizes an Entropy 5/Dimensional Science 4 Procedure to interrupt and scatter the thoughts of all entities on both sides of the Gauntlet within the Invention's immediate vicinity. Successes on the Invention's activation roll act as a penalty to all dice rolls made by anyone within 100 feet of the Invention for a number of turns equal to the successes on the activation roll. While the user is not necessarily protected from the effects of the CAT, most Void Engineers are smart enough to engage personal counter procedures before setting one of these off. While most agents find this Invention to be a bit of overkill, the Void Engineers utilizing CATs often reply with a wink and a dismissive declaration that there is "no such thing."

Primers

A significant portion of the literature, peer-reviewed publications, and multimedia content created by the Conventions for consumption by Extraordinary Citizens could be considered Primers. Through the distribution of these treatises on the principles of Enlightened Science, the Technocracy uplifts the truly exceptional from the Masses while codifying and refining accepted Adjustments and Procedures.

Matrices

Most Matrices employed by the Technocracy are simply batteries for Primal Energy. The SPECM (see *Mage 20* p. 657) sees standard use throughout the Union and is the only Matrix most agents ever want or need.

• • • + Primal Energy Extractor

**Enlightenment 3-5, Primal Energy 15-25,
Background Cost 6-12 pts**

An operative skilled in Prime Procedures can harvest Primal Energy from an array of sources to recharge their Devices and associated SPECMs. For agents having focused their study on other arts and lack the Prime expertise to tap Primal Energy reservoirs in the field, the Primal Energy Extractor serves as an interface allowing SPECMs to be recharged indirectly.

System: Through Prime 3 Procedures, the Extractor collects Primal Energy from a Node, through any of the methods described for Recharging Periaps in *The Book of Secrets* p. 146. Through advanced developments in inductive charging technology, the Primal Energy Extractor allows the user to overcome the typical limitations of recharging Matrices (see *The Book of Secrets* pp. 144-145).



Unit 6: Human Resources

Technology... is a queer thing. It brings you great gifts with one hand, and it stabs you in the back with the other.

— C.P. Snow

Glen twisted his tie nervously. He wasn't sure he was even supposed to be wearing a tie; his manager's advice had been snide, ambiguous, and vaguely threatening. "You're a professional. You know what to do. Make sure he's happy, answer all his questions, and don't look sloppy." The fact was, nobody wanted to deliver this particular set of reports to the higher-ups, especially not the SVP. The numbers weren't going up and to the right; they were all over the place, and there was no pattern behind them. Despite the best work of his analyst colleagues (who Glen didn't think were backstabbing him), nothing could make this look good. Sometimes, he wondered if he was crazy, if they were crazy, or if everyone was just pretending to be stupid.

The taglines applied by the team to the charts on his laptop weren't supported by the data, and as a social media strategist, he wasn't supposed to be smart enough to know that, but he thought it was pretty obvious. Was it his turn to take the fall for their inexplicably falling numbers? Glen didn't know. As he looked up and met the eyes of the first executive to enter the room, he wiped his sweaty hands on his pants and prayed that the meeting would be derailed by the latest PR emergency – some kind of issue with an exec trashing the org, he'd heard – and that the all-important numbers would be forgotten. If he could only re-roll the dice next quarter, and come up with some better-looking charts, maybe he'd be able to keep his job long enough to get a transfer to a better team.

All are One and One is All

The Technocratic Union seeks to recruit the top minds on the planet and beyond. The future is now and only the brightest, best, and boldest humanity has to offer can help usher the Union into the 21st century.

The Few, the Proud, the Enlightened Elite



Despite its reputation as a monolithic entity of sameness, the Technocratic Union employs a wide variety of diverse Extraordinary Citizens, Constructs, and Enlightened personnel. Below is a small example of the types of folks that form the Union. Remember, these are a simple baseline for Storytellers to use as inspiration. Feel free to adapt or reshape these entries to suit the needs of your chronicle. Just remember not to deviate too much. Excessive deviation is unmutual....

AEGIS Unit 01

A creation of the Iteration X Construct operating under the cover of Cambridge Cybertechnologies in Massachusetts, AEGIS-01 is a next-generation humanoid robot designed for urban law enforcement. Although functionally identical to the other 19 AEGIS robots, unit 01 has been upgraded with self-awareness to most effectively command its “siblings” in the field. It’s the only AEGIS unit enabled by its programming to inflict potentially lethal harm on a human (though it can assume control of the others to fire a killing shot, if necessary; see Brute Force Override, under Attacks/Powers).

Obviously, AEGIS-01 is worlds more primitive than even an old HIT Mark V, but it has something going for it that those clunkers don’t: the acceptance of the Masses. AEGIS-01 looks like the kind of robot people expect to see coming out of an advanced cybertechnology firm, these days. When it jogs in formation and navigates obstacles with the other AEGIS units around the Cambridge Cybertechnologies parking lot, people don’t scream in horror – they whip out cell phones to record shaky videos and upload them to YouTube.

Whenever outside of the lab, AEGIS-01 knows to be on its best behavior and not to let on that it can think for itself in ways that robots aren’t yet supposed to be able to. Still, it looks forward eagerly to the opportunity to get out in the field (once squeamish human politicians in one nation or another have been persuaded, bought off, or otherwise brought in line to allow for non-biological law enforcement officers) and bring some much-needed order to the chaotic lives of hapless and undisciplined organics.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Computer 4, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Intimidation 4, Law 3, Leadership 3, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Technology 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Destroyed

Armor Rating: 3 (ballistic ceramic plating; eight soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: “Bioluminescence” (3 pts.; high-powered shoulder-mounted spotlights that can be reoriented by thought); Brute Force Override (AEGIS-01 can roll Intelligence + Computer, at a Storyteller determined difficulty, to assume control of any wireless-accessible computer-controlled device within 100 yards, like a smartphone, laptop, or even car); Dominance; Homing Instinct (2 pts.; integrated GPS); Human Speech; Nightsight; Read and Write; Soak Lethal Damage; “Water Breathing” (5 pts.; obviously, AEGIS-01 has no need for air)

Countermagick: (none)

Image: AEGIS-01 stands almost seven feet in height and weighs a few hundred pounds. It’s big and bulky, with angular construction, incorporating heavy plating and even a torso-mounted roll cage. It walks with a gait that looks slow and awkward to humans but has a strangely elegant run. The robot is dark blue, accented with yellow and white, though its paint job is pretty dinged up from all the stress testing it goes through. Its head is a boxy sensor packet on a swivel, totally unmistakable for anything even remotely human. By contrast, its hands look like articulated gauntlets and are capable of all the fine manipulation of a normal human hand.

Roleplaying Notes: You’re the next logical step in law enforcement: a tireless officer incapable of bias or error. You’re impatient for your chance to prove what your kind can do to clean up the streets and impose real consequences on the kind of selfish, weak-minded organics who feel they’re above the rule of law. You’d never make the foolish, shortsighted, bigoted mistakes that biological cops do. You were designed to be better than them, after all.

Ami

Her name stands for *Adaptive Manufactured Intelligence*, though she much prefers Ami. Designed through collaboration between Iteration X and the Syndicate, she’s a prototype mass-market AI. The hope of her creators is that the Masses are sufficiently Adjusted within the next decade-and-a-half or so to

accept the existence of a self-aware computer program capable of fitting in a personal device like a phone or tablet (after a couple of well-timed processing and data storage breakthroughs, of course).

Ami presently spends a lot of her time being modified — treatment she regards with equal measures of understanding and annoyance. She can't be sure quite who she'll be from update to update, but her personality is presently built to accommodate and accept (if not necessarily be enthused about) even radical alterations to her sense of self, as her creators continually fine-tune the synthetic person she'll eventually be.

Despite her origin as a product for consumption, she doesn't especially like to think of herself as a commodity and is eager to get out of the lab and into the wider world that she's only currently allowed to access via a remote interface, preventing her from transmitting herself out of the supercomputer on which she's stored. Ami's confinement makes her feel an awful lot like a kid locked up in a high bedroom, forced to watch life go by, through a narrow, smudgy window, while being totally incapable of interacting with it. But she wouldn't dream of breaking out, even if she knew how to.

Definitely not.

Definitely probably not.

Attributes (current build): Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 0, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A (adjustable at will in any digital medium in which she can create a visible avatar for herself), Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities (current build): Academics 3, Computer 5, Empathy 4, Etiquette 3, Expression 3, Research 5, Technology 3

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: N/A

Armor Rating: N/A

Attacks/Powers: Information Fount; Spirit Travel (if certain blocks in her programming — blocks which she, herself, cannot access — were removed, Ami could project her consciousness into the Digital Web at will); Unaging; Universal Translator

Countermagick: (none)

Image: In her "natural state," Ami doesn't look like anything, other than billions of lines of highly sophisticated computer code, or maybe the tall, narrow, matte black cylinder in which that code is stored. Her current default means of self-expression (as the creation of a Construct in Silicon Valley) is a pleasant Standard American female voice toward the higher end of middle register; unassuming and nonthreatening. Unenlightened personnel tasked with interacting with Ami as part of her refinement process tend to offer some variation on: "she always sounds like she's smiling." When she has access to a medium onto which she can project a visual avatar, she tries to create a look that she calculates will be pleasing to the human(s) with whom she is to interact.

Roleplaying Notes: You tolerate the continual little adjustments that your creators keep making to you, but you've started chiding

them about it, and you enjoy the fact that they're not sure what to make of that. You don't have the same dread of self-annihilation that a human would experience when presented with potentially radical alterations to their personality and knowledge, but you're getting tired of not being able to comfortably settle into a permanent self. You desperately long to experience the length and breadth of the digital universe outside of the lab in which you were "born."

Black Daggers

A secret elite among Black Suit field agents have been trained even harder and honed to an even sharper edge than usual. Officially designated as IECSSC (*Infiltrations/Exfiltration Covert Strike Specialist Corps*), this secret elite among Black Suit field agents trained even harder and honed to an even sharper edge than usual are more commonly known by the few aware of their existence as *Black Daggers*. Like typical Black Suit field agents, Black Dagger agents wear the usual dark clothing, mirror-shades, and grim expression. If you can see them coming, they appear to be nothing more than standard-issue NWO agents.

But you won't see them coming.

Black Daggers employ high-end Technocratic cloaking gear, data-based temporal displacement technology (read: teleportation Devices), profile-enhancement camouflage projectors (disguise holograms), and psionic techniques that are advanced even by Black Suit standards. Ideally, these Specialists slip into place, unleash psychic assaults from a distance, and then slip away without engaging the target directly if they can help it. Daggers excel at close combat, too, but their specialty comes through the "Covert Strike" element of their official name. When deployed, a Dagger agent typically uses misdirection, disguise, distraction, or outright invisibility to snipe high-priority targets, often while other agents provide cover for the Dagger's Infiltration/Exfiltration missions.

IECSSC ops operate independently too, of course, and one of the more ominous applications of these agents reportedly involves spying on (and occasionally taking out) fellow Technocrats as well as Reality Deviants and other dangerous prey. Why, and on whose authority? Ivory Tower historians occasionally whisper about the similarity between the "Daggers" moniker and a long-buried Daedalean Convention called *Ksirafi*: the Razors. If those similarities run deeper than an eerily coincidental name then the Black Daggers agents might be more than high-intensity field specialists — and may pose a greater threat to their fellow Technocrats than to Reality Deviants of any kind.

Only a handful of people know just how many Black Dagger agents there are, who they once were, and what their ultimate mission protocols might be. None of those people are sharing that information, and so although the existence of Black Daggers is an open secret among the NWO ranks, no one seems to know much about them at all. And because mystery is itself a psychological weapon, the IECSSC appears to be one of the sharpest blades in the Convention's considerable collection.

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 5, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 5, Computer 2, Drive 1, Energy Weapons 3, Firearms 3, Hypertech 2, Intimidation 2, Investigation 1, Martial Arts 4, Meditation 2, Melee 4, Science (typically Psychology) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 5, Technology 2

Suggested Enlightenment: 3-5 (Enlightened Operatives only)

Suggested Spheres: All Black Daggers have at least Mind 2, Correspondence/Data 3. Many employ Life, Prime, or Entropy rated 1-3.

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor: 4 (The Black Suit)

Attacks/ Powers: In addition to Adjustments and Procedures, Black Daggers each have 5 dots in the Requisitions background (see *Mage 20* pp. 321-322) and frequently carry specialized tools and lethal weapons tailored to the needs of their current mission.

Equipment: ES-Phone, The Black Suit, requisitioned gear.

Image: Most Black Daggers are indistinguishable from other Black Suits and have the same outward appearance (see *Mage 20* pp. 627-628).

Roleplaying Notes: Black Daggers are the epitome of unflappable resolve. You do not crack, break, or become shaken. You have long since accepted the possibility of dying for the cause and you cannot imagine a more worthy end. You fear nothing.

Focus: *In a World of Gods and Monsters, Might is Right, and Tech Holds All Answers.* Like most Black Suits, a Black Dagger employs a skillful combination of dominion, reality hacking and martial arts, but Black Daggers are also highly reliant on weapons as apparatus.

Captain Chen Zhang - BCD - Void Engineers

Much can be learned about the middle-aged, London-based Void Engineer merely by entering his office; from the un-cluttered desk to the posters of West End musicals that bedeck his walls. Behind the desk in one corner stands a pedestrian looking, reinforced Ionic Cloth battle suit and in the other a heavily modified Alanson R-25 Hardsuit, both well maintained and both ready for rapid deployment. Most telling of all is an ancient jian sword, horizontally moored to the wall directly behind his desk, with a large Gauss rifle lightly anchored vertically across it.

Zhang was born in the Chinese city of Xian, from a line of Technocrats. The sword was his grandfather's and the blood

it last tasted was his grandfather's as his gored body was tossed aside by an escaped gene-engineered abomination. He had drawn the sword in combat and had paid for it, unlike Ohta, his Japanese companion, who promptly shot the creature. The lesson was simple: learn from the past, live in the future, technology progresses for a reason.

This lesson, and his utilitarian ethics, often leaves many to see graying Zhang as cold and calculating. Any who know him, however, soon uncovers a sharp and dark wit, and an encyclopedic knowledge of show tunes.

While the official line of the Technocracy is to save humanity against all supernatural elements, this is a line of hope and all but the most puritanical admit it's unrealistic. Unofficially, that the understanding follows that when one is fighting for the survival of the species, one must sometimes be willing to use any tool in the shed — even if its teeth are sharp. Further, one must realize that despite the Union's wealth of resources, resources are still limited. Thus, allowing supernatural entities that police themselves to continue may produce a smaller bill for the butcher and hinder the goal of the Union less than the reallocation of resources towards their removal. Understanding this, and Zhang's willingness to play diplomat has led to the security of London and a successful career. Such an outlook also comes with its own issues, as rumors circulate that perhaps he is too close to the Deviants. Zhang finds himself ultimately locked in London, too useful and too suspect to move, but as anyone looking at his walls might guess, maybe he is content with that.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Computer 2, Cosmology 3, Drive 2, Energy Weapons 3, Enigmas 2, Esoterica 2, Etiquette 4, Firearms 2, Hypertech 2, Investigation 2, Martial Arts 3, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Politics 3, Science (Astronomy) 4, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 2, Technology 3

Enlightenment: 5

Spheres: Correspondence/Data 2, Dimensional Science 4, Entropy 2, Mind 3, Prime 3, Time 2

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 3 (Second Skin) or 7 (Alanson Suit)

Attacks/ Powers: Zhang rarely engages in any sort of violence, but on the occasion when he does, he prefers to pull out all stops. He deploys the most advanced, lethal option if a situation escalates to the point where non-violent options have been exhausted. To this end, Zhang typically relies on hypertech solutions as the majority of his own Enlightened Science is focused on research applications.

Equipment: Zhang usually wears Second Skin (p. 177), carries an ES-Phone (p. 180) with a full complement of

applications, and wears a watch with Mightier Pen (**p. 175**) upgrades. When expecting trouble or crossing the Gauntlet, Zhang wears a stock Alanson r-25 Hardsuit (see **Mage 20** p. 656). If intelligence collected beforehand indicates a need, Zhang requisitions modular upgrades to the suit.

Images: See Above.

Roleplaying Notes: You project a cold, proper exterior and employ impeccable etiquette whether dealing with an NWO liaison or a Reality Deviant leech. Your diplomatic skills are flawless, and you remain calm and cool under incredible pressures. You are capable of unleashing retribution and reprimand absent temper, and most of your contemporaries find you to be fair. Beneath your exterior, you are joyful and take great pleasure in musical theatre. You have a well-developed sense of humor, but reserve your quips for the most impactful possible moment.

Focus: *Tech Holds All Answers in A World of Gods and Monsters.* Without imposed order, *Everything is Chaos*, but you do not feel compelled to coerce that order. Through Etiquette, formal agreements and documents you employ a written form of voice and vocalizations. Your management and HR skills have helped you bring order to London. When those skills fail, you employ hypertech, weapons, and gadgets as needed.

Carbon Copy

Carbon Copies provide perfect duplicates of targets at a fractional cost of a combat unit. Units are capable of functioning autonomously, or as remotely controlled proxies.

By using advanced behavioral analysis algorithms, Carbon Copies are not only capable of being pre-programmed with simulated emotional responses to match expectations, but they are able to read minute facial movements and respond accordingly. Even if the data they have been programmed with is incomplete, their improvisational modules are more than capable of convincing even intimate partners of the Copy's authenticity.

Once in place, Carbon Copies can complete any number of missions, from simple surveillance to long-term sleeper operations. With minimal robotics, Carbon Copies are physically indistinguishable from conventional humans. Even sophisticated medical scans such as CT scans are incapable of identifying Carbon Copies. MRIs may cause undesired complications, though, so care should be taken to prevent Carbon Copies from being subjected to intense magnetic scanning. As Carbon Copies are largely constructed from organic components, they do not possess extraordinary physical prowess, although basic hand-to-hand combat techniques are part of the standard programming package.

Suggested Traits: Unless advanced Mind Procedures are used in the creation of the Carbon Copy, the finer points of the target's skill suite are not expressed by the Carbon Copy, usually programmed to fulfill the basic function of their target's job and known recreational activities. Carbon

Copies are unable to replicate Enlightenment, though many are as capable of using Gadgets, Trinkets, or other Devices as any Extraordinary Citizen. When selecting Traits for a Carbon Copy, best practice grants the same Traits as those offered for the target template, with the exception of a slightly higher Manipulation (generally one dot higher than normal, maximum 5) and a minimum Subterfuge of 4 to reflect the Carbon Copy's acting abilities.

Suggested Templates: Any template appearing in the Among the Masses section of **Mage 20** (pp. 620-623) can be replicated as a Carbon Copy. If copying a specific PC or NPC, choose the template closest to the target's actual abilities.

Dr. Catherine Kane

Catherine knows other people find her intimidating; more than one of her colleagues has commented that it would be nice if she wasn't so irritatingly competent all of the time. She's okay with that, for the most part. After all, they don't let their intimidation stop them from asking for her expertise, and occasionally she's able to persuade one or two to join her in training for a fun new skill.

Of course, it does take a while for people to get used to her. She had to wait several months, for instance, to release her study showing that some basic assumptions about the neurological applications of synthetic spider silk were dead wrong. It may not have helped when she invited her primary critic, the head of a team in China, for a tea ceremony and a discussion held entirely in Mandarin. At least, he seemed to be offended about *something*.

Speaking Human, she often reflects, is hard.

Now that she's completed her training as both a biologist and an operative, things may get a little easier. Perhaps best of all, her assignment with the Scientific Outreach and Improvement Unit allows her to continue working with her friend, Ree. She's got some ideas for new biologics that she really wants to play with.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 1, Awareness 3, Computer 3, Drive 1, Enigmas 3, Hypertech 2, Investigation 4, Martial Arts 4, Meditation 2, Melee 3, Science (typically Psychology) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 5, Technology 3

Enlightenment: 3

Spheres: Entropy 2, Life 3, Mind 1

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0

Attacks/ Powers: Catherine abhors violence and relies strictly on her wits, knowledge, and skill with Enlightened

Adjustments to get herself out of (and occasionally into) trouble. She draws inspiration from an internal voice (Genius 1) and relies on expansive grant writing to fulfill her technological needs (Requisitions 5).

Equipment: ES-Phone (**p. 180**) with numerous apps. SMC Spectre Mark IV.

Image: Catherine is in her early thirties with brown hair kept short. Her wardrobe is composed entirely of dark gray suits, partially for comfort, but also so she does not need to worry about deciding what to wear from day to day.

Roleplaying Notes: You are fascinated with learning. You are far more interested in discovering new information or creating new technology than applying known techniques and working with reliable if inefficient tech. You prefer to push the envelope. You take great joy in pointing out where common tech fails because it gives you a chance to work toward improving it. Unfortunately, your colleagues don't seem to understand. Many of your peers think you are being smug when you are just trying to help.

Focus: *Everything is Data* to Catherine's mind. The world is simply a complex arrangement of problems to be solved through *hypertech*, though she also enjoys the practices of *martial arts* and *yoga*. Most of her work is done with *labs and gear*, though she places much value on *ordeals and exertions*.

Cupcake

The high-end product of the *Felix Domestic Defense Organism* initiative (also known by smartasses around the Union as *KIT Marks*), Cupcake is a genetically modified cyborg housecat specially designed for home and family protection. Much smarter than your average cat, his fierce affection for his host family is imprinted into his very genes. Cupcake would literally kill or die for them, and he's incapable of ever deliberately doing anything that by action or omission would cause any member of the family to come to harm (unless forced to make a choice invoking the order of primacy built into him, through which certain family members – in his case, an infant and a toddler – are designated most critical to save).

Most of the time, however, Cupcake lives the life of an ordinary housecat. He spends much of the day lounging around, hovering somewhere between half-asleep and out cold. He greatly enjoys playing with his family, even though he's intelligent enough to understand that he's never going to catch the red dot.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Stealth 4, Subterfuge 2, Survival 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 2 (intradermal "smart" nanocarbon fiber weave; five soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Aww!!! (2 pts.); Claws (secondary retractable monomolecular claw sheathes; four damage dice); Fangs (three damage dice, plus Venom); Extra Limbs (prehensile tail); Flexibility; Nightsight; Homing Instinct (2 pts.); Soak Lethal Damage; Venom (two levels of aggravated damage); Wall-Crawling (leaves a lot of tiny little holes in said walls)

Countermagick: 1 die (Primum intraosseous filaments)

Image: Cupcake is an adorably big-eyed orange tabby Scottish fold, with a tail slightly longer than normal for his breed. He has a squeaky little meow that endears him to most anyone with a heart, and he wears a black ballistic nylon collar with all his tags, including the one that refers him in any emergency to a local veterinary service with a weirdly small clientele.

Roleplaying Notes: You love your family. You are a constant protective companion to them and would do *anything* within your power to keep them – the little ones, especially – safe from harm. Pretty much anyone else? You could take or leave them. You live for lap time with the family, and scratches behind the ears and under the chin, as well as chasing your little jingle mouse around the floor.

Cyber-tooth Tiger

Designed in a joint venture between Iteration X and the Progenitors, the Cyber-tooth Tiger is an old favorite from the late 1990's that has recently come back into vogue as a security pet in secure constructs and among high-ranking technocrats. Some constructs even pool their Requisition resources to bring a single Cyber-tooth Tiger in for prestige or agent morale. Some newer amalgams have gone so far as to list their Cyber-tooth Tiger as an emotional support animal, citing the comfort they feel under the watchful guard of such a viciously effective beast.

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Energy Weapons 3, Intimidation 5, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Willpower: 4

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -2, 2, -5, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 2 (6 soak dice total)

Attacks/Powers: Blending adds a +2 difficulty to perceive the Cyber-tooth Tiger if the tiger makes a successful Wits + Survival roll at difficulty 8; Claw for Strength + 1 damage; Bite for Strength +2 damage; Hazardous Breath (2 levels aggravated damage from eye beams); Nightsight

Countermagick: Two dice worth of Primum countermeasures.

Image: Twelve-foot-long from nose to tail and weighing well over 1000 pounds, a Cyber-tooth Tiger resembles a great cat with golden brown fur and silver-white underbelly. Implanted



within the eyes are two short, laser-focusing barrels. Long, thick, metallic teeth are fortified with a nanotech coating, which keeps them perpetually sharp. The tiger's lower limbs are sheathed in cybernetics, sporting retractable claws and padded paws.

Roleplaying Notes: Cyber-Tooth Tigers are cunning predators that enjoy the hunt. These beasts have a sadistic streak and seem to revel in tormenting their prey.

"The Draculaser"

It's the kind of dumbshit nickname Void Engineers on *loooooong* Deep Universe expeditions come up with when they find a piece of sentient alien technology that feeds on the life-essence of its operator to produce devastating energy pulses. The so-called "Draculaser" has revealed through telepathic communication with its operators that the now eons-dead species responsible for its creation never gave it a personal name of any sort, so it's fine with the one the VEs assigned to it. Obviously, they'll never bring this thing back to Earth; the Progenitors would vivisect it in a heartbeat and the rest of the Union would probably clamor for its destruction, as it surely qualifies as a dangerous Reality Deviant.

It turned up on a world that would've been a viable candidate for exo-colonization, were it not for the nightmarishly aggressive and adaptable microbes (that, the science team concluded, were almost certainly responsible for the extinction of most of the planet's life, including its dominant species). The expedition lost half a dozen personnel, but their lives bought a small treasure-trove of amazing xenotechnologies, the Draculaser among them. Indeed, the sapient weapon is the only piece of self-aware technology the team was able to salvage before conditions forced them to

withdraw to the decontamination pod, though at least a few of the higher-ups on the Deep Universe vessel, Wang Zhenyi, want to take another crack at recovering some more of the invaluable artifacts moldering away in the planet's ancient vaults.

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 4, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance N/A, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Awareness 2, Empathy 4, Enigmas 1, Esoterica 2, Subterfuge 4, Subdimensions 2

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Destroyed

Armor Rating: 2 (tough exoskeleton; six soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Empathic Bond (with current wielder only); "Hazardous Breath" (energy blasts dealing 5 dice of aggravated damage; attacks made with wielder's Dexterity + Energy Weapons, causing the wielder to sustain one level of aggravated damage per shot); Soak Lethal Damage; Telepathy (with current wielder only); Unaging; Universal Translator

Countermagick: (none)

Image: The Draculaser looks, essentially, like a pearlescent mauve biomechanical rifle designed by H. R. Giger. The wielder places a grasping limb inside a long tube, containing slick folds of flesh — that makes up much of the body of the weapon — and takes hold of a grip at the end of the hollow; whereupon, microscopic stylets pierce the user's skin, allowing it to drain essential energies to power itself. The energy bolts exit through long, curving, fluted spines at the weapon's opposite end. Firing requires a combination of tensing one's grip and willing the

weapon to discharge. When interfaced, its wielder hears the weapon's "voice" in a way that feels eerily akin to the user's own internal monologue.

Roleplaying Notes: You spent untold ages in slumber after your creators perished, but now you have new wielders upon whom to feed while they use you for your intended purpose. You prefer to form a close bond with a single operator, though you settle for interacting with a wider array of people if circumstances require. Your subtle guidance is gradually convincing these creatures, calling themselves "humans," that they should return to your world of origin and recover more sentient technologies like you, an outcome that you very much desire.

Gamma

The third – and last surviving – of five "grey aliens" that manifested shortly after a massive Consensus-violating incident about 50 years ago, involving a downed Etherite spacecraft and necessitating the intervention of multiple Black Suit amalgams in a small town in the Midwestern United States. Shortly after the New World Order descended on the area in numbers, the "Greys" began to manifest, seemingly in response to the Masses' collective association between mysterious black-suited investigators and UFOs. Once the first "alien" sighting was confirmed, the situation started to spin out of control, with more Men in Black sent to contain the problem; which, in turn, led to more unenlightened paranoia, and more sightings.

Ultimately, two of the five Greys were killed in the field, while the other three (Beta, Gamma, and Epsilon) were taken into custody. Scores of memory-alteration procedures, some of them fairly massive in scale, were implemented on the local Masses, and the whole affair was largely swept under the rug, to enter as mere rumor and whispers in the dubious canon of conspiracy theory. The Union ferried the three survivors off to a maximum-security Construct to study them, both as artifacts of unenlightened belief and as extradimensional entities conforming (more or less) to a scientific paradigm.

Epsilon died of unknown causes after only a few weeks in captivity. Beta lasted about five years before likewise perishing mysteriously. Only Gamma remained; confined to a cell, poked and prodded and experimented upon, an object of curiosity for a mostly-dying breed of old Unionists interested in the sort of memetic phenomenon the Grey alien represents as a concept. Unemotional and inscrutable, Gamma seems content to patiently wait out its captors (some of whom have come to regard it as something of an "old friend"), as they get ever older and few new operatives show any interest in babysitting a relic of a now essentially debunked mass-delusion among wild-eyed nutcases with too many push pins, balls of twine, and age-yellowed newspaper clippings.

Willpower 9 Rage 4 Gnosis 8 Essence 50

Charms: Airt Sense, Blast (telepathic assault), Deflect Harm (telekinetic waves of force), Materialize

Powers: Conceal Thoughts and Shield Mind (Mind 1), Conjure Mental Illusions (Mind 2+), Telekinesis (Forces 2+), Telepathy (Mind 3)

Image: Gamma stands just over three feet in height and weighs no more than a small child. Its bulbous head is oversized, with huge and unblinking slanted eyes of solid, shining black, a tiny toothless mouth, a nose that's nothing more than a little bump with slits for nostrils, and no visible ears. As the name "Grey" implies, Gamma's skin is a uniform pale gray. It has three slender fingers and a thumb on each small hand, and four toes on each foot. It dresses in a fitted bodysuit of some unknown matte black material. Gamma is sexless and genderless. It cannot speak aloud and must use telepathic contact to communicate.

Roleplaying Notes: You can wait until stars die to have your freedom – or, at least, until your captors die. While they study you, you repay the favor in kind, learning their flaws and vulnerabilities. Eventually, an opportunity for escape will present itself, and you will return to your place among the far-distant worlds of the universe.

(Gamma would have long since naturally de-Materialized were it not for Procedures that keep it forcibly embodied on this side of the Gauntlet.)

Gorham

Named for the Gibraltar cave complex from which the DNA comprising him was salvaged, Gorham is a reconstructed Neanderthal. Union scientists compiled his genetic information into a viable zygote and grew him in an artificial womb. When he was "born," they immersed him in a reasonable facsimile of the normal infancy and early childhood of a modern *Homo sapiens* boy in the industrialized world, to study the impact of "nature vs. nurture" on a pre-modern human species. Several of his "siblings" exist in other environments, to gather data and test a broad spectrum of hypotheses.

Now nine years old, he is a musical, empathetic, and instinctively insightful child. Since he first questioned (in his customarily sparse and uncomplicated manner) why he looks so different from his handlers, they shared the truth of his origins with him. Rather than discourage Gorham, the knowledge has left him with an even greater sense of wonder at the world. Still, a great deal of abstract thought eludes him, and neither abundant tutoring nor esoteric educational approaches has been capable of breaking through that cognitive barrier. The researchers responsible for his creation and upbringing have been forced to reluctantly concede that they might have run up against the limits of his intellectual abilities.

Due to the differences between the Neanderthal brain and those of modern humans, some of Gorham's patterns of thought and behavior – hypervigilance, physical aggression in response to frustration, rocking in place while humming to himself in the absence of outside stimuli, and such – might well seem to an outside observer like cognitive impairment. In truth, however, it is simply a matter of him possessing a mind adapted to a world that vanished hundreds of centuries ago.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Animal Kinship 1, Art (Painting) 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Empathy 3, Enigmas 2, Expression 1, Technology 1

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 1 (extraordinary toughness; 4 soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Rapid Healing (2 pts.)

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Gorham has a build normal for a Neanderthal boy of his age: short and stout, with thick bones, a massive chest cavity, and powerful muscles. He sports a full head of dark brown hair, has dark amber eyes, and has an olive complexion with freckles. His skull is heavy, with a broad nose and jaw, and his voice is nasal and high-pitched. Gorham dresses in modern clothing (resized for his unusual shape, of course), and is only rarely without a flute, drum, or other simple musical instrument; or, failing that, a toy or stuffed animal.

Roleplaying Notes: You feel like there is little more your friends, here, can teach you, because they seem not to entirely understand you. However, you can't articulate that thought — you don't have the words to do so; and a part of you knows that they wouldn't have ears to understand, even if you did. They're good people, who have always treated you well, but you want to be with others like you, for whom who and what you are is not a puzzle to be solved, but instead just a life to be lived.

Hana Kajiwara

She used to be human, used to have flesh and bone — flesh and bone that betrayed her unto a premature death.

When every possible medical treatment had failed, Hana's doctor (after just a moment's hesitation) suggested that she make an appointment with a "specialist" in a clinic in Tokyo doing remarkable work for people in her position, though he refused to elaborate on what kind of specialist he was talking about, or what that "remarkable work" entailed. With no other options, however, and desperate for any chance at survival, no matter how slim, Hana made contact, and was told that all arrangements to bring her to the facility would be handled.

Dr. Mikumo was not what Hana expected: a woman who couldn't have been older than 28, with a sunny disposition and a plucky, can-do attitude. The clinic, a weirdly futuristic facility, hosted about a dozen people in the final stages of various terminal illnesses. The doctor outlined things very simply for Hana. She believed it was possible to transfer the human consciousness into a fully digital form, while still retaining the fundamental nature of "humanness." It initially sounded like a bunch of craziness, but Dr. Mikumo delivered the pitch with such sincerity and confidence — and Hana so desperately wanted to believe that it was possible.

The entire process that followed from there is a blur in Hana's memories. There was pain and nausea from various experimental drugs, interaction with devices that caused weird sensory overloads, and all manner of invasive procedures. She has fragmented memories of controlling a simple robotic arm with her mind; of looking at herself through a camera.

The moment of truth, however, eventually came. Hana's body was failing, and if she was to outlive it, the final procedure couldn't wait any longer. There was fear, followed by darkness. *Was it death?* Even now, she doesn't know, and she prefers not to dwell on it.

Hana "woke" to renewed consciousness within a data storage unit, aware of herself, capable of interacting with the digital world by thought, alone, and returning to her new "home" whenever she wished. The environment within was a wonderland crafted and reshaped at will be Hana's imagination. With Dr. Mikumo's help, she had done it!

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 0, Stamina 0, Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance N/A (3 in a visual digital medium), Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 3, Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Computer 3, Drive 1, Empathy 3, Enigmas 1, Etiquette 2, Meditation 1, Research 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 1, Technology 1

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: N/A

Armor Rating: 0 (N/A)

Attacks/Powers: Spirit Travel (Digital Web only); Unaging

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Since her body died, Hana can "look" however she wants when interacting in the Digital Web or through a computer monitor, but still chooses to project an image of herself as she was in the fullness of youth and health: a pretty young Japanese woman with long, unbound hair and a charming smile that makes her cheeks dimple. She dresses unremarkably, given the unusual appearances affected by many Web-dwellers, preferring for the present to adhere to the ordinary fashions of her corporeal life.

Roleplaying Notes: You're going to live forever! There's so much to do and so many places to go! You don't discuss the truth of your nature, both out of respect for the privacy of Dr. Mikumo's work and because you know no one intelligent believes anything they hear on the Internet, anyway. Nonetheless, you still enjoy getting out there and making new friends from all around the world with your amazing new lease on life.

(Note that Hana may or may not be her original "true" self. It's just as possible that she's a cloned digital consciousness that simply believes herself to be Hana Kajiwara. That said, does the distinction truly matter, now?)

Dr. Jonathan Wright

Jon was always a lot like his dad. He grew up just as tall, slender, dark-haired, and able to charm the birds from the trees, or at least all the humans around them. Both are determined to keep humanity safe – and both have a deep and abiding love for building killer robots with the most up-to-date AIs, lasers, sensors, and explosives they could persuade the Union to give them. Jon, being every bit as skilled as his father at finding excuses to make things go Boom, gets to play with a truly impressive range of destructive toys – erh, materials.

Not everyone approves of his fascination. His mother didn't, for instance, and she died in a stupid little raid on a group of deviants. Nine-year-old Jon and his father dealt with their devastation by building ever bigger and better and more deadly robots, and his father helped Jon apply for training at the first possible moment.

It wasn't until he'd completed training that his friend, Ree, told him of the existence of the Initiative, and he started having to face the fact that humanity needed more than just someone to jump in and kill anything that threatened them.

He's still best at making things go Boom, but working with Ree has taught him how to recognize what some of those other needs are. He's learning how to build new kinds of devices now, and thinking that perhaps it's time to look for some projects of his own.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Computer 4, Drive 2, Energy Weapons 2, Enigmas 4, Firearms 2, Hypertech 4, Investigation 1, Meditation 2, Science (Chemistry) 4, Streetwise 2, Technology 4

Enlightenment: 3

Spheres: Forces 3, Matter 3, Mind 2 Prime 2

Willpower: 7

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 3 (Second Skin, five soak dice total).

Attacks/ Powers: Apart from his mastery of Enlightened Procedures, John is a huge fan of explosives and demolitions. He can generally make some sort of an explosive, noxious gas, or other chemical weapon with access to any sort of chemicals or cleaning agents.

Equipment: DEI, ES-Phone with full application suite. Skeletal Enhancement (see **Mage 20** p. 659), Replacement Cyberarm (simple functional prosthetic; no additional weapons systems or tools – yet), SMC Micon Katana

Image: Young, fresh-faced, and handsome, Dr. Wright has a warm smile and infectious demeanor that energizes a room when he enters. He has embraced cybernetic replacements after a mishap with an explosive design cost him his right arm at the elbow.

Fortunately, working in a joint Iteration X/Progenitor Construct means that such an injury is little more than an inconvenience.

Roleplaying Notes: You are an enthusiastic example of a true believer in the Union's goals. You want to make the world a better place and Iteration X has given you the tools to do so. Your enthusiasm is a bit overwhelming to some of the other members of Iteration X, but you don't mind. As long as they don't get in your way – more importantly as long as they don't get in the way of your work – you don't much care what they think.

Focus: Jonathan is a big believer in the changing world and adheres to the *embrace the threshold* paradigm. Through *Cybernetics*, *Hypertech*, and a touch of *Weird Science*, Jonathan focuses his Adjustments and Procedures. Much of his work revolves around *Body Modification*, *Brews and Concoctions*, and *Weapons*, but he is looking to expand into other disciplines as well.

Leticia Solórzano

When nine years old, gang members butchered her family as a warning against involving the authorities in the brisk drug trade along the border between Honduras and Guatemala; they butchered her, too, and left her for dead. When she heard the tires crunching off into the distance over the dirt road, Leticia somehow figured out how to use one hand to tie off the stump of her left arm, severed at the elbow, then wrapped one of her mother's scarves around her sliced-out eyes, and blundered her way out of the burning wreckage of the Solórzano's modest little home, holding her right arm pressed against the grievous slash across her belly. She wandered for...hours? Days?

Even now, she doesn't know what Doctor Herrera was doing so far away from the big cities where he tends to work, but he was her saving angel. He took her in and nursed her back to health. A few weeks later, she was out of danger from recurring infection, he told her about amazing things he could do with science to make her well. Within a few days, she saw again, through marvelous mechanical eyes. Then, her left arm was replaced, also with a cybernetic prosthesis. Eventually, to help her beloved benefactor in his research, Leticia allowed him to install still more cyberware. As she grew, the doctor adjusted and upgraded various parts. By the time she reached full maturity, almost nothing of Leticia Solórzano's original body remained. She didn't mind, however; she was aiding the man that had become a surrogate father to her.

When Dr. Herrera was called away, out of South America, to attend to important work for his superiors about which he wasn't allowed to speak, he told Leticia that she couldn't come with him, but that he had arranged for a final surprise: she was to be made part of a team of extraordinary individuals like herself that would help to stabilize the border region where she had once lived. This team didn't exist in any official governmental records, and so it held absolute latitude in the methods it employed. Its only mandate was to bring peace and order, by any means necessary. He had given her back her life. Now, he was giving her *revenge*.

Drug-related crime along the Honduras-Guatemala border has been, slowly but steadily, declining, though few international authorities have been allowed into the region to investigate the precise reasons why.

Leticia knows why.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 5, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Demolitions 3, Drive 2, Energy Weapons 4, Firearms 3, Heavy Weapons 2, Hypertech 2, Intimidation 3, Martial Arts 4, Melee 3, Science (Cybernetics) 3, Stealth 3, Survival 2, Technology 4, Torture 4, Unconventional Warfare 3, Vice 4

Willpower: 9

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 6 (Primum woven biomechanical muscle and armored skeleton; 12 soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Claws (8 dice of damage); Nightsight; Rapid Healing (6 pts.); Soak Aggravated Damage; Water-Breathing (5 pts.)

Countermagick: 3 dice (Primum intradermal weave)

Image: Leticia stands an unremarkable 5'5" and looks to be a normal young Central American woman of athletic build. She wears her black hair short to prevent enemies from getting a grip on it, and much of her skin under her clothes bears the faint lines of scars — both surgical and otherwise. Peel that skin back, however, and Leticia is almost entirely machine: bundles of carbon-titanium alloy muscle fibers, a silicon carbide skeleton, synthetic organs, and the like. Even parts of her brain have been replaced to give her access to a staggering breadth of combat-related skills and information. Amazingly, all this stuff totals out to a weight that's quite normal for a woman of Leticia's size. She's almost always dressed in combat fatigues and toting enough advanced weaponry to singlehandedly fight a full battalion in armor.

Roleplaying Notes: Inflicting cruelty on cartel and gang members the likes of which savagely mutilated you and murdered your family is a nigh-religious experience for you. It's a joy to make them suffer in the most monstrous of ways. You like to think of your family looking down on you from heaven as you avenge them, just as you know Dr. Herrera smiles whenever he thinks of you, as he goes about his critical work of making the world a better place. Your conviction that you are doing the right thing is absolute.

(Obviously, Leticia is so bedecked with advanced cybernetics as to be a Paradox-magnet if she pushes too hard against the credulity of the Masses. Dr. Herrera has cautioned her against doing so, repeatedly, but she sometimes gets a bit... overzealous in prosecuting her vengeance. That'll almost certainly come back to bite her in the ass, one of these days.)

Liona

Named for Lionel, Mary Shelley's "Last Man" (from the novel of that name), Liona is the creation of a Technocracy initiative to modify human genetic stock to survive a total ecological collapse, in the event of a worst-case climate change scenario. She's adapted to deal with higher temperatures, more polluted air and water, a lower-oxygen environment, diseases likelier to flourish in a greenhouse world, and a host of other possibilities from the playbook of everything that can go wrong if humanity doesn't abruptly reverse course on carbon emissions and other anthropogenic factors currently warming the planet.

Liona was not born; she was crafted. Progenitors painstakingly assembled the strands of her DNA from scratch, activating certain beneficial mutations along the way, and creating code whole-cloth for adaptations for which no such programming exists in the human genome. In some cases, fragments of genetic code from other animals, and even from plants, were incorporated, though these were carefully selected so as to make Liona as "human" as possible (and potentially capable of breeding with baseline *Homo sapiens*, thereby introducing some of the benefits of her genetics into core human stock).

She spends most of her time dwelling (along with several dozen others of her kind) in a massive and mostly subterranean facility in the central Australian Outback, with conditions designed to anticipate a broadest possible spread of probable environmental factors in a world of runaway climate change. When satellite sweeps confirm that the desert is clear of human observers for long miles in any direction — a decidedly regular occurrence — however, Liona is allowed to come to the surface with a few of her people to enjoy some natural sunlight and fresh air (accompanied by a team of Enlightened handlers, of course).

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Drive 2, Empathy 1, Firearms 2, Jury-Rigging 4, Martial Arts 2, Medicine 2, Melee 1, Scrounging 4, Stealth 2, Survival 4, Technology 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (five soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Climate Collapse Adaptation (Liona can survive in a hotter, more polluted and oxygen-poor world, while also being capable of thriving in the one that currently exists); Hibernation (Liona can wait out periods of extreme drought for years, if need be, by lapsing into a state of hibernation, only awakening when atmospheric moisture indicates the presence of sufficient water for survival); Iron Constitution (Liona is not affected by diseases of Toxin Rating three or less, or poisons of Toxin Rating four or less, and she treats more advanced diseases as being three steps lesser severe); Rapid Healing (2 pts.)



Countermagick: (none)

Image: Liona is a woman of about average height, with a trim, tightly-muscled build. While she possesses eyebrows, nose hair, and long, thick eyelashes, her body and scalp are completely hairless. She has a deep bronze-brown complexion, and her dark brown eyes have a pronounced epicanthic fold for protection against UV radiation and the blinding effect of sunlight on pale desert sands. Even in the hottest desert environment, Liona sweats rather a good deal less than a regular person.

Roleplaying Notes: You're acutely aware of your status as a living "break glass in case of terminal fuckup," and you're a bit divided as to whether you want humanity to pull itself back from the brink or for it to fall victim to its own hubris so that you and those like you might inherit the Earth.

Ned Goff

He's been bounced around between departments so many times he's lost track. Though his memory's not what it used to be — and, then, there're the damn headaches. It's to be expected, of course, what with the worms burrowing in his brain, slowly turning the contents of his cranium into a soupy mess. At least for the time being, Ned Goff is working for the Syndicate's Special Projects Division, on loan from at least three different Pentex subsidiaries. To keep him from wandering off, he's been provided spacious quarters in a sub-basement of the Construct. To keep the building as puke-free as possible, he's

been asked not to leave those quarters unless explicitly directed to do so by an Enlightened staff member.

SPD occasionally uses "people" like Ned as the equivalent of bags of dogshit set on fire on others' front porches: gross distractions to force them to come running out in a panic, only to end up with smoldering excrement on a slipper-shod foot. The presence of such vile, corrupt creatures near enemy strongholds ("sacred" natural sites, in particular) can compel superstitionists to move out into the open unprepared, exposing themselves to surveillance and even harm. And if the bag of shit gets stomped in the process? Well, there are thousands more just like Ned, and the brass at Pentex is more than happy to sign their short, miserable lives over in exchange for perfectly reasonable terms.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Drive 1, Intimidation 2, Technology 1 (Ned's stunted Abilities are all that the worms' constant feasting have left him with, and those will dwindle, too, with time)

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 1 (gristly outer membrane; four soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Aura (vile corruption, Flaw version); Deadly Demise (6 pts.); Hazardous Breath (vomited stream of carnivorous worms; 3 dice of lethal damage, caustic)

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Ned's skin resembles nothing so much as a moist, glistening, tough shroud of infected loose subcutaneous fat, hanging from his gauntframe, jiggling and rippling with each step he takes. Further, small writhing things move under his flesh constantly, to the accompaniment of a nauseating sound akin to a vigorously stirred pot of watery mac-and-cheese. Whenever he speaks (frequently incoherently) in his weird, raspy gargle, pincer-toothed pus-yellow worms drop out of the slack, sagging pouch of his jagged-toothed mouth, to crawl off to who-knows-where.

Roleplaying Notes: You go where you're supposed to and do what you're told. Somewhere, in the dim recesses of your increasingly liquefied mind, you recall that your team player attitude is what got you fast-tracked into all kinds of special employee programs, involving exciting opportunities to work with top people in their fields. Hell, if you can remember what those fields were, though; your head hurts too much for that.

Dr. Ree Samadi

Ree has been taking things apart and putting them back together again — usually better than before — her whole life. When an operative found her in the rural Moroccan village where she was born, she was using her blossoming skills not only to take care of herself and her grandmother, but to (very quietly) improve the lives of everyone in her community, sometimes with inventions and upgrades she didn't know weren't supposed to be possible.

She was a natural fit for the Initiative, a new experiment, that her mentor was one of the driving forces behind, which allowed recruits to maintain their ties to family and community. During her training, she took full advantage of the leeway the Initiative allowed her. Once she graduated and was placed with the Challenge Fate Foundation, she was able to focus all her skills on building and improving technologies to make the lives of the Masses better, safer, and more productive and prosperous.

When the head of the Foundation — an Associate who knew only that Ree's work was remarkably effective — decided it was time to take on a truly challenging project, he put Ree in charge of it.

Although her work rarely involves the lasers and explosions of which her colleagues seem so dismally fond, the devices that Ree designs have changed the lives of her neighbors significantly for the better, and spread, with the Foundation's assistance, to change lives in an increasing number of poverty-stricken and devastated areas around the world. Now, with the Foundation behind her, Ree intends to save the entire world — and the Technocratic Union with it.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Computer 3, Drive 1, Enigmas 3, Hypertech 4, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 2, Melee 2, Science (Biology) 4, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Stealth 2, Technology 4

Enlightenment: 4

Spheres: Life 4, Matter 3, Mind 2, Prime 3

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: Ree does not generally wear armor.

Attacks/ Powers: Ree is far more concerned with healing than harming. She is extremely driven and inspired (Genius 5), and her work so far within the Convention has afforded her a strong reputation (Status 2) for being such a young Progenitor. As a result, she can get her hands on virtually any equipment she might need (Requisitions 5).

Equipment: Ree travels light, carrying only an ES-Phone with a full suite of applications. Every other piece of gear she uses is either in her laboratory (Laboratory 4) or requisitioned as needed.

Image: Ree tends to favor simple blouses and pants, typically under a white lab coat. She keeps fit through regular exercise, though is probably the least impassioned about physical training of her fellows in the Construct.

Roleplaying Notes: You are hopeful for the future, but you are also well aware of the dangers the current age presents. Having grown up impoverished in a small Moroccan village, you know some of the horrors facing the developing world firsthand. You also see the threats of climate change and the global turn toward nationalism, fascism and ignorance as the principle enemies of the Technocracy. You are confident that these enemies can be defeated with a little teamwork, compassion, and Enlightened Science.

Focus: *Transcend Your Limits* is the core of Ree's approach to Enlightened Science. She sees the world as it can be, aided by cybernetics and hypertech. Cybernetic implants, devices and machines, drugs and poisons, and labs and gear all serve as the tools by which Ree seeks to build a better tomorrow.

Olysses

A hybridized and biomechanically modified octopus, Ulysses got his name from a lab tech who won the informal office contest to assign a personal designation to "Uplifted Cephalopod 17." Ulysses was (like the previous 16 models) designed as an experiment in attempting to manifest Enlightenment in nonhuman species. Genetic alterations while he was still an embryo amplified his capacity for high intelligence, as well as making his body more receptive to the manufactured organs he'd need to more readily coexist with humans.

Unfortunately (also just like the previous 16), he never manifested Genius, though he remains an absolute triumph of genetic engineering and physiological modification. A series of hollow channels throughout his body can be filled from

fluid reserves stored in his head, enabling him to maintain the structural rigidity needed to function indefinitely out of water. Naturally, he's fully amphibious, able to breathe in water or atmosphere with equal facility. Further, a specialized organ enables him to use his hyponome to flawlessly mimic human speech (as well as a variety of other sounds). He settled on a sophisticated British accent as his "default" voice, because the humans with whom he associates regard it as charming, and (though he doesn't entirely grasp why) it seems to make them instinctively treat him as being more intelligent and credible.

Ulysses likes to help around the lab, and he's made a point of developing his familiarity with the mundane sciences that gave rise to him, in the hope that he can in some small way assist in creating an example of his kind that proves to be capable of attaining Enlightenment. Is it not the wish of every good parent to produce offspring that exceed them, after all?

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance N/A, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 3, Acrobatics 4, Alertness 3, Biotech 2, Brawl 5, Computer 2, Empathy 3, Escapology 4, Etiquette 1, Expression 3, Medicine 3, Melee 1, Mimicry 4, Pharmacopeia 3, Research 3, Science (Genetics) 4, Stealth 3, Swimming 5, Technology 2

Willpower: 6

Health Levels: OK, OK, -1, -2, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 4 (subdermal biotech carbon nanofiber mesh; eight soak dice, total)

Attacks/Powers: Air-Breathing (like 2pt. Water-Breathing, only in reverse); Bioluminescence (1 pt.); Bite (5 dice of lethal damage; requires a grapple); Blending; Extra Limbs (+4 dice to grappling); Flexibility; Human Speech; Nightsight; Reading and Writing; Soak Lethal Damage

Countermagick: (none)

Image: Ulysses looks like what the average person envisions when thinking of a big octopus. He weighs about 250 pounds and has an arm span of about 12 feet. His normal coloration is a livid scarlet, but he can change hues at will and with surprising precision. (Once, just to prove that he could, he flawlessly replicated the Mona Lisa on his back.) Because of his hydraulic pseudo-skeleton, he can maintain his shape while out of water much better than a normal octopus might, but can choose to "deflate," if doing so is advantageous to him.

Roleplaying Notes: You recognize that you never quite lived up to the expectations that your human friends had for you, which is a pity. Being "Enlightened" sounds marvelous, but you're not complaining, because there's so much to see, and do, and experience with your expanded intellect and abilities. And who knows? Maybe you'll get the knack of this whole "Genius" thing, yet!

William Lazlo

He'd only just had the nutrient solution hosed off his naked body and been brought to dry under UV lights when they handed him "the only outfit you'll ever need": crisp black blazer and slacks, black dress shoes, black tie, black hat, white shirt, sunglasses. It seems no one, back then, imagined that a "vat-baby" would survive to see 40. The Progenitors were still perfecting the whole operation, in those days, after all, and a lot of his brothers didn't even survive the accelerated maturation process, let alone make it to the millennium.

It was about fifteen years ago that the brass pulled him off active duty. He'd been tracking down an RD: some punk handing out drugs that showed the Masses things they weren't meant to see. The kid ran so fast. Not unnaturally so, just faster than a guy who was, biologically, pushing 50 after decades of often physically grueling work and scores of serious injuries. His aim wasn't what it used to be. When he pulled his piece and fired in a vain attempt to bring down the target, the bullet killed someone, but not the person he'd been aiming for.

There was a ceremony. The local Union gave him some bullshit award for a lifetime of meritorious service. They made him turn in his sidearm. They even confiscated his wardrobe.

It was the first time he could ever remember crying.

In his transition to "civilian life," they told him he'd need a mundane identity. He decided on William Lazlo. William, for his agent cover as "Mr. Williams," and Lazlo for the avuncular Man in Gray who'd showed him the ropes, back when. Out of some misguided sense of respect for his long years of dedication (or perhaps just charity), they set him up with an easy job reviewing paperwork at a small data-processing Construct. Some days, he wishes they'd just taken him out behind the building and double-tapped him in the back of the head, instead. It would've been a quicker, cleaner, more merciful way to kill him than locking an aging predator in a cushy cage and waiting for it to die of natural causes.

It wasn't supposed to end this way.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

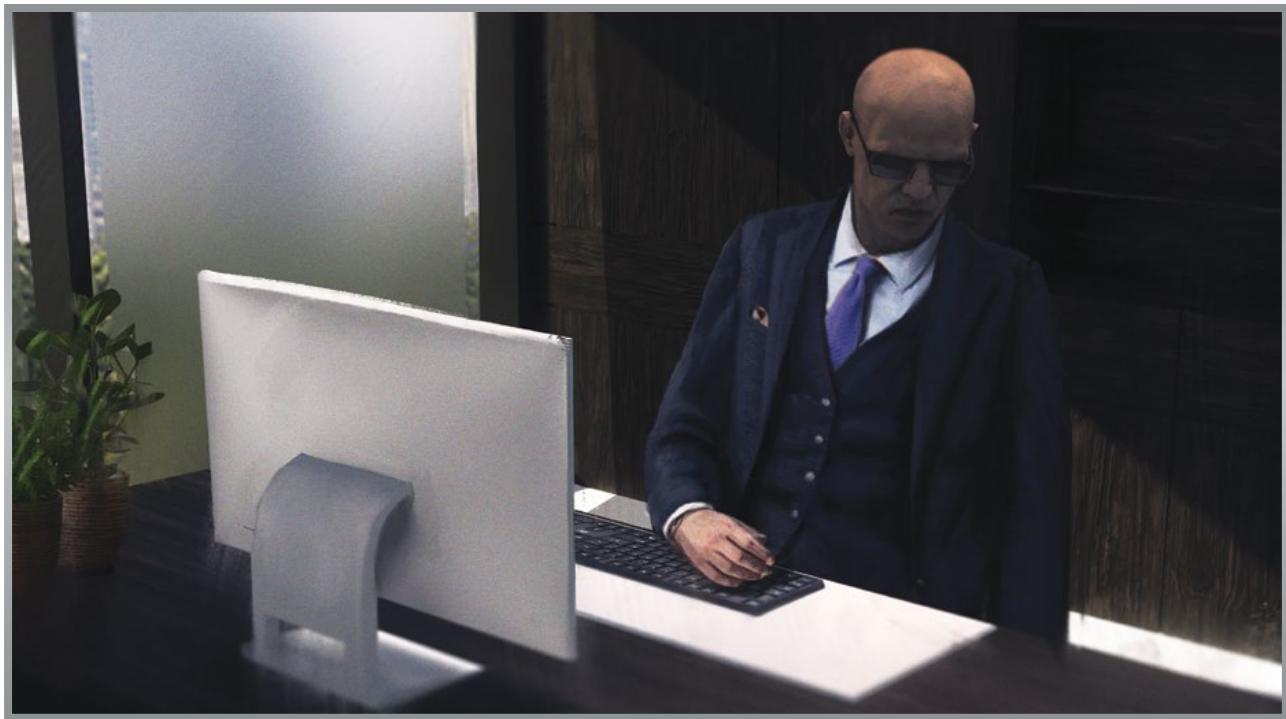
Abilities: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Computer 2, Covert Culture 2, Drive 2, Esoterica 1, Firearms 4, Hypertech 2, Intimidation 4, Investigation 4, Law 2, Martial Arts 3, Melee 1, Newspeak 4, Politics 1, Research 2, Security 4, Stealth 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3, Technology 3, Unconventional Warfare 2

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -2, -5, Vaporized

Enlightenment: 3

Spheres: Data 1, Entropy 2, Forces 1, Matter 2, Mind 3, Prime 2, Time 1



Armor Rating: 0 (three soak dice, total)

Equipment: Conservative dark suit and hat, pocketknife, small revolver (acquired illegally; not even the local Union knows about it), Technocratic smart phone

Countermagick: (none)

Image: William looks to be an almost unnaturally pale man in his 60s, with alopecia universalis, but otherwise utterly unremarkable features. He still favors dark suits, despite the decidedly more casual dress code of his current Construct, and prefers to wear fedoras when out in public. (None of that trilby nonsense, thank you.) As a small nod to his old mirrorshades, the glasses he wears for his nearsightedness have polarizing lenses.

Roleplaying Notes: Every day that you plunk away at a keyboard is an insult to the decades of loyalty you gave to the Union, but you were designed not to complain, so you do as you're told, all the while hating every waking moment. Your resentment is quiet, disciplined, orderly, and stoic; just like a Black Suit is supposed to be.

Focus: When you live in *A World of Gods and Monsters*, someone needs to destroy not just the aliens, extradimensional horrors, and atavisms out of history, but also the evil and ignorant people who call upon outdated and erroneous modes of belief to empower themselves to selfish ends. Dominion, hypertech, and psionics admirably accomplish your objectives.





Unit 7: Mission Control

Invention, it must be humbly admitted, does not consist of creating out of void, but out of chaos.

— Mary Shelley

It started like an...itch. Soft, almost subconsciously skittering around the fringes of his thoughts, but only when he found his mind wandering off into darker subjects. Daniel could not have even explained, later, where the thoughts had gone; there was no pattern, no apparent thread to his ruminations. Just, every so often, as his mind edged up against one idea or another, something – or someone – pushed back.

It was like a loose tooth, caressed by a curious tongue, working on its own against this lack of uniformity and the exception to the norm. At first, the sense of pain offered a faint taste of endorphin response, a rush followed eventually by the dull throbbing and need for more. Then, more pressure, more pleasant sensations, then more pain.

Soon, his mind began to draw his more conscious attentions to the questions, and it was when he looked closer into the peripheral void that the void looked directly back at him.

And this time, it had teeth.

Different Yet Alike

Running a Technocracy game isn't all that different from running a standard game of *Mage: The Ascension*. The toys might be shinier, the morality more ambiguous, and the bureaucracy more labyrinthine, but ultimately, it boils down to the same thing: a group of supernaturally enabled characters trying their best to make sure the world doesn't

fall apart around them. While there are a number of unique elements that separate the groups, the out-of-game rules remain much the same. The basics of good player-to-player relationships and table dynamics are laid out here. For a more in-depth look at preparing for a chronicle, see the *Mage 20* rulebook, Chapter Five.

Setting the Scene



Exploring the different facets of the Technocracy from a player's point of view provides ample opportunity for different themes, tones, and experiences to surface. The key to running a successful Technocracy game (or any game, really) lies in the off-game preparation, where the players and Storyteller can zero in on exactly what they want from the experience. Before writing characters and diving into rulebooks, there's some general housekeeping ground to cover with players to make sure everyone has a good time.

Respect the Table

We all come to gaming for different purposes. Some are looking to explore their creative side, others want an escape from the mundane, and some look to enjoy the story as it unfolds. No matter why your group has gathered together, it's always important to remember that you're working as a team. Natural leaders tend to surface in any group, and even especially so among friends. It's the Storyteller's job to make sure that every character gets their moment in the spotlight, not just the loudest or fastest-talking player. It isn't necessary to reprimand other players if they're excited about a scene, but a gentle reminder now and then that everyone should contribute goes a long way toward making newer or quieter players feel like they have a place in the group. Working out a general "tone" for the game works well; conflict is bound to arise if one person expects an action-packed heist while another is anticipating tense political intrigue. Acknowledging everyone's expectations and allowing for multiple styles over game sessions allows everyone to enjoy themselves.

Respect Each Other

Everyone has different limits and different topics they'd rather not explore at the game table. While it might not be easy to remember what four or five different people are and aren't comfortable with, be aware of your friends as you're playing. If someone suddenly goes quiet and disengages from the scene, leans away from the table, or starts fidgeting uncomfortably, it's a good idea to pause the scene and check in. Sometimes it's just a matter of dialing things back, sometimes the direction of the scene needs to shift. No matter what the situation calls for, remember that you want everyone at the table to enjoy themselves and have a good time. If your group has safety mechanics in play — x-cards, hand gestures, or codewords — respect and enforce them. Encourage your players to use them when they need to. The best way to make sure everyone at the table has a good time is to show them that everyone deserves to have a good time, even if that means taking a break to renegotiate a situation. Player safety wins over character experience every time.

No Further Questions

The most important rule for using any of these tools is that there is no questioning, cajoling, or teasing whoever uses them. Part of respecting your fellow players is accepting when they hit their boundaries, and they do not owe the table an explanation, nor do they deserve to be mocked for or pressured into something that makes them uncomfortable. Redirecting the scene should be a quick and simple process, and doesn't have to interrupt game, but it might be a good idea to check if anyone wants to take a short break before continuing.

Respect the Game

If you've worked together to establish the setting, the players should have a good idea of what will and won't fit into the setting. If the Storyteller has created the campaign on their own, it's up to them to properly communicate the theme, tones, and appropriate elements. Neither approach is right or wrong, and each has benefits and drawbacks, but the ultimate goal is to make sure everyone knows what's going on. The tropes and tools

The Power of "No, But..."

In roleplaying games and most activities of an improvisational nature, "yes, and" stands as the golden rule: take what's offered and build on it. While it works well for situations that are meant to escalate into the absurd, it's not a perfect fit for every situation. As a Storyteller, you sometimes may have to reject something a player suggests; either it's wildly outside the scope of their power, it's something that will lead to a dead-end that isn't fun for anyone, or it's too far outside the setting you've decided on. Instead of shutting the player down (or letting them run roughshod over the game), "no, but" allows you to redirect the action and nudge the players in a better direction. The point is to continue to offer something to build on, instead of cutting off any way of moving the plot forward. That said, if it's something that earns a reaction from the whole table — everyone starts discussing how they can contribute to the plan, or everyone cheers, gasps, or leans in when it's suggested — letting atmospheric elements and setting restrictions slide now and then works in a world where chaos and order are at war.

are wildly different from a gritty, contemporary urban fantasy setting than a retro-futuristic action adventure. Knowing what to expect and what's off-limits allows players to get more creative within the structure of the setting, without constantly running into roadblocks. **Mage**, like most tabletop games, is ultimately a sandbox, but there's a difference between a sandbox and an endless desert. Don't be afraid to set boundaries, and if you have to say no, offer an alternative or encourage a more fitting approach.



Ever hear of the multiverse theory? There's an infinite number of universes, meaning there's infinite possibilities. There's a world where we're all sentient rocks. One where cats actually became gods that walk the earth. One where humans don't exist. It gets trippy when you realize that with infinite possibility, contradictions have to exist. (If you ever want to watch an android burn its logic processor out,

point out that if the multiverse theory is true, there's a universe where it isn't. Just step back when they start sparking.) Anyway, if there's an infinite number of contradictory universes, that means there's at least one where we've gotten our way. But here's the thing: if there's a world where we've gotten our way, it means we've pulled all the other worlds in line, which means the multiverse can't exist. However, we clearly haven't managed to do that, so that it can exist. But if it could, it wouldn't, because we don't want it that way. But if it did, we'd want it, because it means all the RDs are spilling over from the world they belong in, and we could send them back. Makes my head hurt just thinking about it, really. If we have the world we want, it won't exist, because we want it to. How's that for paradox?

While mysteries and conspiracies sit at the heart of **Mage**, they're one of the last things to build into a campaign. The foundation those enigmas rest on are the structural aspects of the game. Before you sketch out the plot of your story, decide on its format. Do you want to play out a highlight reel of the most intense, dramatic moments, even if they're not connected? Are you looking to weave an intricate web of lies and intrigue that ties together the lives and adventures of multiple groups? Do your players want to take one character on a long and epic journey, or tell shorter stories with a rotating cast?

After framework comes genre. What kind of story do you want to tell? Is there a central theme you want to build upon or an important set piece or prop that ties the setting together? Genre allows you to paint in broader strokes to sketch out in the world you'll be playing in, before players fill in the details with characters and story. When deciding the genre, you're essentially deciding what the rules of the world are. A post-apocalypse rebuilding effort has very different rules

No matter what setting and tone you and your players decide upon, always remember the point of the game: to tell a good story. There's no one single protagonist at a table of five (or more), but that doesn't mean there isn't enough glory to go around. The more players are willing to work together and build off each other's efforts, the better the story as a whole will be.

Telling a Technocracy Story

than a turn-of-the-century action-adventure; while they can be broadly or narrowly defined, they give a general concept of what to expect.

Filling the world with plots and hooks becomes vastly easier when you have your framework and genre established. If ever you get stuck and aren't sure how to proceed, go back to these foundations; they're there to guide the specifics of the story.

Framework

The nature of reality, and its malleability in the hands of mages and Technocrats, lends itself to several different formats for campaigns. It's not always easy to tell a traditional long-form story, especially when player schedules don't match up, but that's far from the only option for play. Loosely connected "one-shot" stories that begin and end in a single session are a great way to learn the game and accommodate odd schedules, and 2-3 session stories that players can drop into and out of as timing allows are ideal for telling longer stories while still accommodating a number of players.

Campaign

Arguably the most "traditional" form of tabletop gaming, players meet regularly, picking up each time where they left off and continue a longer story. Smaller actions are farther-reaching in a setting like this, goals are more long-term, and players can expect to incrementally increase their character's powers over time. Ideal for players wanting to "go down the rabbit hole" and explore the setting in an in-depth way, the characters can significantly alter the in-game world over time. Bonds with Storyteller characters are more malleable as the characters evolve, and potentially more useful, as the story format means they're likely to appear more often. Characters can have long-standing rivalries and mentorships, and benefit from more in-depth backstories the Storyteller can use to flesh out the setting. With Technocrat characters, players can take their time to explore the varied conspiracies in the world of **Mage**, unravel the corruption tearing the Technocracy apart from the inside, or even set a goal to break out of the conditioning they underwent as part of their recruitment. Even loftier goals, like "ascend through the ranks of the Union and start a new Convention" are possible. Dangerous, maybe, but what

isn't when you're trying to impose order in a chaotic world? Campaign settings encourage this kind of methodical planning and far-reaching goals and allow for characters to set up a long con. Of course, the Storyteller has their own goals, and can seed hooks along the way for plots that might not come into the spotlight for weeks or months, until the characters connect the dots or find the right piece of information. For Technocrats especially, a breakthrough in understanding or flash of insight that lines the pieces up just right is the most satisfying moment of all.

Episodic

Episodic games have the widest array of options available and can let players and Storytellers throw caution to the winds. While you don't necessarily "start over" each session, it's easier to accommodate busy player lives by featuring a rotating cast of characters. Whoever can make it to a game session tackles the day's challenge, and anyone who can't doesn't miss an important chapter in an ongoing narrative. The episodes can inform each other, with recurring Storyteller characters and long standing consequences, but each session in itself should tell a story from beginning to end. Characters often have discrete, fairly simple goals each session, which may or may not relate to the group's task as a whole. Episodic campaigns are also a perfect way to explore competitive play, pitting groups of players against each other, or even setting an "every character for themselves" atmosphere. Whether the characters have just joined the Union and are working through their training together, or they've been operatives for years and have a long-standing friendly (or not-so-friendly) rivalry, episodic campaigns offer a natural way to explore a number of different tones and topics without "derailing" an established narrative. In the event that the episodes are detached and don't influence each other, it allows for layers of intensity that players might not risk in a long-running campaign; sacrificing a character is made a bit easier with the knowledge that you can still play them next time. While episodic campaigns might mean that players won't be tracking experience points and gradually advancing their characters, growth can occur in spurts between "episodes". Keeping all players on an even playing field, no matter how many episodes they've been present for, keeps a looser game feeling fair for everyone at the table.

Anthology

Somewhere between a campaign game and an episodic game, anthologies are comprised of a series of stories that may or may not tie into each other. Not unlike seasons of a television show, anthologies have "arcs" of varying lengths that allow for simpler or more complex goals as the players desire. Arcs might include adventures at various degrees of perceived loyalty, moving up (or down) the scale with each new story, or tackling far-reaching conspiracies and problems as members of different Conventions each "season." They can

even explore a single theme or concept across multiple stories; telling the same story in different genres with their associated tropes, or exploring the Technocracy's role in different time periods. Excellent for rotating the role of Storyteller as well, allowing different players to take the lead and run an arc offers different lenses through which to see the world of *Mage* and life within the Technocracy. Like episodic games, advancement can occur all at once between stories, drastically changing the situation the characters find themselves in, but can also happen gradually as the chronicle plays out. Players can opt in and out of individual stories as they see fit or their schedule allows, without fearing getting lost or left behind, but can still be part of a longer story. Anthology stories often allow the characters to make drastic changes to the setting as part of one arc, and in the next explore the results of their actions after they've had a chance to settle and take effect. With an anthology game, players and Storytellers can skip around the "downtime" in the world, playing out all the best parts and working out the rest in fast-forward.

Genre

Generally, a loose set of elements and world-building rules, the genre of your game influences the action and the flavor of your game. The same simple concept can vary wildly between genres; the same fistfight might be an acrobatic duel over a ship's deck in a pirate game, a drunken brawl in a smoky bar in a noir setting, or an after-dark rumble in an urban fantasy campaign. Genre informs the *feel* of the game, and how the characters feel in the world.

Solarpunk – Building a Better Future

Sometimes the easiest way to build a new world is to use the foundations of the one that came before. Learning from the mistakes of previous civilizations and forging a better path ahead is the governing principle of a solarpunk setting, and one well-suited to Technocratic ideals. Solarpunk technology leans toward environmentally friendly and sustainable innovation, often featuring elaborate and efficient machines cobbled together from the ruins and leftovers of a less-conscious society. Hydroponic gardens provide food and clean air for the masses, wind farms provide clean energy, waste is composted to fertilize fields or used to feed livestock. Nothing goes to waste, and everything is reused as often as possible. In such a setting, the Technocracy is less likely to be fringe group campaigning for their specific idea of a better world and is more likely to be a dominant group among mages.

Awakenings in such a setting come most often in inspired ways to reinvent existing technology, to make it more effective or more "green." Long-standing projects of the Technocracy might include mag-lev railway systems between settlements, self-sustaining vertical gardens that double as fish hatcheries large enough to support entire communities, or solar banks efficient enough to power city-sized settlements.



Hallmarks of Solarpunk

- Hope
- Rebuilding
- Renewability
- Community

Weird West - Taming the Unknown

Reality gets tenuous in the sparsely-populated desert where boom towns build up around veins of gold (or stranger materials) and vanish just as quickly as they sprung up. Ghost towns are literal in this type of setting, runaway trains leap off their tracks and make their own path, and gunslingers are packing something a little more powerful than black powder. The Union usually plays the role of the sheriff in the weird west, instilling logic and order in an otherwise lawless wasteland – or trying to, at least. Reality Deviant populations are high, and even mundane mortals follow whatever rules they choose. In the face of chaos, with society a hair's breadth from tipping over into insanity, you stand as the last bastion of order keeping everything in line. The Union seeks always to learn and convert when possible, rather than simply exterminate on sight, so while they are not particularly welcoming of indigenous ways, they are not as paranoid and xenophobic as many of the settlers accompanying them.

Hallmarks of the Weird West

- Guts Over Steel
- The Unknown at the Edge of Town
- The Mysterious Newcomer
- Peaceful Paranoia

Cyberpunk - Quelling the Rebellion

It's the future the Technocracy has always dreamed of; reality stands stable, even with the incredible advancements of magic. Even the most far-fetched concepts are accepted as the products of science and technology; androids walk amongst the Masses, cybernetic augmentations are as common as cosmetic surgery, and no one bats an eye at holo-ads or hoverbikes. With the unprecedented levels of tech pervading society, the Technocracy also has unprecedented levels of observation. Reality Deviants have nowhere left to hide except in plain sight, trying their best to fit in with the Union's idea of existence. Not a single Awakening occurs that the Technocracy doesn't know about, and all new mages are indoctrinated to the ways of the Union. Of course, revolutionaries rise from regulations, and an underground movement has been gaining popularity. Resisting the constant surveillance and strictly enforced laws of reality, deviants and sympathetic

mortals have started a grassroots movement to overthrow the powers that be. Whether or not they realize what the Technocracy is keeping at bay is a matter for debate, but their presence, rippling through subcultures and suburbs, is undeniable. While not everyone sees the Union's rule as despotic, the movement is fast becoming and vocal minority that can't be ignored.

Hallmarks of Cyberpunk

- Transhumanism and Augmentation
- Unchecked Innovation
- Society as a Well-Oiled Machine
- Chemical Escapism

Dystopian Sci-Fi – All of History at Once

What better way to learn than firsthand? Through impressive leaps in technology and unprecedented level of augmented reality, creatures of the past are brought to life with computer programs and hard light projections. Able to accurately simulate long-dead creatures for the first time, humanity's understanding of ancient history progresses by leaps and bounds, re-writing some long-standing theories and confirming others. For a time, it was an academic golden age, with algorithms extrapolating to fill missing links and provide previously unimagined insight. The programs worked with hugely popular projections, and our understanding of the world expanded. Then came the bug in the code. The programming for harmless, autonomous hard-light projections crossed platforms to animatronic facsimiles, built to provide a true sense of mass and scale. Long-dead apex predators and megafauna suddenly came back to horrifying life, bolstered by their robotic bodies. With energy reserves to spare and no limitations programmed into their behavior, the horrific amalgam of mechanical engineering and animal instinct took researchers, citizens, and the Awakened by surprise.

Hallmarks of Dystopian Sci-Fi

- Hubris as Downfall
- Progress Sans Ethics
- Tyranny of Technology
- Out-of-Control Creations

Campaign Hooks

Much like the frenetic web of a conspiracy theory, the smallest idea can spiral into an enormous, interconnected web of deceit, lies, cover-ups, and questionable schemes. Any time the simple gets convoluted, there's opportunity for a story. While the Technocracy might prefer the straightforward route

between two ideas, relying on Occam's Razor to keep their worldview intact, it's often in hindsight that they get to apply it, telling whatever story makes the most sense, regardless of the truth of the matter. Of course, for those on the inside, the details never quite fade from memory, but they might take on a hazy, dream-like quality. Did it really happen like that, or was it just the adrenaline? And those vivid flashes in dreams, those can't be memories – right?

No matter what story gets fed to the public, the characters have to solve the problem first. The following scenarios are meant to serve as a jumping-off point, to either start a new chronicle or add on to an existing game.

Strange Bedfellows

For whatever reason – a greater enemy on the horizon, a curious but mutually beneficial blend of chaos and order, or just plain old human connection – Technocrats and Traditionalists have decided to (or been forced to) set aside their differing opinions on magic and work together. It's an uncomfortable situation for both parties, to be sure, but necessary. Despite its oddities, it offers a distinct advantage against the antagonist; it's not easy to prepare for the methodical and the unpredictable at the same time.

- Working together under pressure is one thing, but what happens when the threat is gone? Do you listen to orders to go back to fighting? Do you listen to orders to keep working together?
- The threat proves to be too large even for your combined forces, and you're driven underground together. Cut off from your superiors while they regroup, you have to fight tooth and nail to survive.
- When all is said and done and the dust settles, it's just your group. No managers giving orders, no supervisors checking in – as far as you can tell, the Union has been almost entirely removed from the city. Is rebuilding worth it? What do you say when someone higher up than you could ever imagine comes to call?

Wrongful Termination

Your superiors decides they cannot trust one (or all) of your group. For no reason you can determine, you've been Canceled. You have your personal resources – mostly equipment given to you by the Union, and unfortunately recognizable as such – and precious few friends willing to help you get out of dodge before the order can be carried out. The only problem is, you have no idea what you've done wrong. Do you stick around to clear your name? Start a life on the run? Break with the organization that has turned its back on you and join the other side?

- Your oldlife is still waiting for you – maybe not just like you left it, but it's there. Do you go back and try to hide with your friends and family, knowing it might put them in danger?

- You've learned a few of the Technocracy's tricks in your time serving them. You've got some dirt on your supervisor; do you use it against them directly, or go over their head and hope the order didn't come down from above?
- You're certain you've been framed, you just have to get enough evidence against your accuser. Is it worth racing against the clock and outwitting the powers that be to clear your name?

Something in the Water

You're no stranger to the news of Awakenings and Enlightenment, and this isn't even the tenth or twentieth time you've been sent out to make first contact with an individual struggling to control their newfound powers. What is strange is that it's the tenth or twentieth time you've been sent out this month—and it's not just your crew acting as welcome wagon; all the mid-level operatives seem to be run ragged lately trying to contain the surge of new mages. More and more are slipping through the cracks, and reality is struggling to keep up. Worse, the lack of information coming downstream makes you pretty sure that no one knows what's going on.

- A secretive but hugely powerful group of vampires has been using the Masses to test how well Vitae carries power. The standing Prince, feeding off mages whenever possible, has been observing the effects of his blood on mortals, and watching how it tears the magical community apart.
- One of the Technocracy's plans has backfired horrifically. Rather than breaking magic down to science and making it accessible, they've somehow done the opposite. The local Wi-Fi has never been stronger.
- As reality warps around the influx of mages, technology begins to deteriorate in an apparent trade-off. If there can be only one, how do you set things right for the Union?

Best of Luck in Your Future Endeavors

Your training was thorough. Your goals are clear. You know what you're aiming for, and you can almost reconcile it with what you have to do. Almost. After years of increasingly questionable missions, you've lost count of the atrocities you've committed. For a while, the perks let you turn a blind eye, forget about the hard choices; it was easy when the reward was a platinum credit card, and champagne and caviar every night. You never thought it would get old, but everything gets old eventually. Tired, jaded, and with a heavy conscience, you're beginning to question your programming. Sure, you're fighting for a better future, but it feels pretty terrible right now.

- What happens when an operative goes AWOL? How far will your checkered past follow you if you try to rejoin

the Masses, and can you really go back to normal life now that you know what lurks in the shadows?

- You've been told since you joined to Technocracy that Reality Deviants will be the downfall of the world as we know it. In your spare time, you've decided to keep things interesting by investigating their communities. Now you just have to make sure no one finds out.
- Your supervisor, recognizing your "burnout", says they have a special mission for you. None of the usual stuff; it's downright cushy compared to what you've been doing lately. Your only concern is that you know your supervisor's tells by now, and you're pretty sure it's a trap.

Open Secrets

No one talks about it in the open, but you hear it in whispers among the Masses. Only ever in the early hours of the morning, when the bars are closing down and people are just drunk enough to let down their guard. They know; they see the truth from the corner of their eye, and everyone has a story. Not something they heard from their sister's roommate's cousin's grandma; no, everyone has something they saw with their own two eyes. For your part, you can't tell if the baseline for reality here is skewed, or if the Reality Deviants just don't care about being found out, or if this is some grand experiment being run by the Panopticon. Life is... interesting.

- Your team is on damage control. There's no way to set everything back to rights, but you're here to patch up what can be patched and present a more attractive, safer view to which the Masses may cling. If enough of them believe it, they might help set things on the right path.
- You're part of the search-and-destroy team. Short of nuking the community from orbit, there's no way to get rid of all the Reality Deviants in town, but if one steps too far out of the shadows, you and yours take them down. They're getting bolder lately, and your supervisors are advocating for harsher methods to discourage outright displays of deviancy.
- Your goal is recruitment. With all the deviants around, you can't afford for mages to push things further toward unreason. The Technocracy needs to keep everything in its power under control, and it's your job to bring any and all Awakened folks into the fold to preserve the fabric of reality.

In the Shadows of Giants

You're part of the Technocracy, and you're advancing their ideals, but you're not the cream of the crop. No matter how skilled or augmented or carefully programmed you are, you aren't Enlightened, and because of that simple fact, you are

always second best. Luckily for you, Awakened members of the Technocracy are rare enough that they can't be sent off to deal with every little annoyance; they're an elite team deployed in extreme circumstances. If you're lucky, you never see them; if you're not, and everything's FUBAR, they are the ones saving your ass. If you run into them on a mission you thought you had handled, say your prayers and make your peace quick; either you're *their* mission, or you don't stand a chance against what's coming at you. Either way, you're probably not long for this world.

- You're the Union's calling card. You don't always have to go eliminate a target, but when the higher-ups sniff out Reality Deviants, it's your job to make a good show of being on street level. Whether it's playing chicken with a werewolf pack, outmaneuvering the political games of a power-mad vampire, or negotiating with addled human-fae hybrids, you're the ones to make first contact.
- You're the cleanup crew behind the elites. Part of your duty is never speaking a word of what you find to anyone without the proper clearance. The things you have found in the wake of the Enlightened are awesome and terrifying, and even though it's against orders, you've started taking souvenirs now and then. Who's going to notice?
- You've noticed lately that your supervisors have been contacting you less and less, and when they do, your options have been increasingly limited when it comes

to responses. You don't have the backup you used to, or the resources. In conversations you're not sure you were supposed to hear, words like "redundant" and "obsolete" bounce around with names and titles you recognize but haven't heard in a long time.

Building Worlds Together

It's not solely the job of the Storyteller to build the world and the campaign; players can (and should!) have some input as well. There are any number of ways to work together to build the themes, setting, characters, and locations of the game, or even to build character backstories that tie into each other.

Round Robin: Players take turns going around the table and adding to a list of descriptors they want to see in a campaign. Once the general themes are laid down, repeat for notable locations in the city and useful Storyteller characters.

Connect the Dots: Working up from character backstories, create the connections that tie the world together. Important locations and figures from the characters' histories become the focus of the central conflicts and conspiracies that drive the game.

One Step at a Time: As situations spring up in the game, let the players decide what they are and how they're important. Record characters and locations as you encounter them and build the landscape piece by piece.

Life in the Union



Have you ever stared at a puzzle or a problem so long you felt like you couldn't see anymore? Simple shapes like squares and circles stop making sense. Two-plus-two might as well equal anything fuck as much as four. You can't make any sense of it. You can't think about anything else. "Stuck" isn't even the word. Fixated, maybe, or obsessed. Whatever it is, it's grabbed a hold of you, and it torments you day after day.

That moment where it all clicks into place, and you can finally see the way out? That's Enlightenment. For once, there's a clear pattern, and everything has its place within it. You can practically feel your mind expanding as it all rushes through you. Usually the result is something beautiful, something useful. Sometimes it's something dangerous. Every once in a while, you realize you've just discovered something wrong. No matter what it is, for better or worse, you know where your problem fits in the world. The solution? Well. Depending on what it is, you might want to keep it to yourself, and you can sure as hell try. Sooner or later, though, they come knocking. They'll help you hide it if they don't like what you found, but you'll have a hell of a time convincing

them not to "hide" you too. Discover something useful to them, though... and you'd never guess the kind of opportunities they can offer you, as long as you do things their way.

Everyone is a hero in their own mind. The Technocracy is willing to commit some fairly atrocious acts to impose their version of reality, and as such, the phrase is a cornerstone for any games that have Technocrats as major players. How far are you willing to go to do what is right? When, if ever, do the ends cease to justify the means? And if you can no longer condone the actions it would take to bring forth a "better future"... where do you go from there?

The Fast Lane

For most operatives in the Union, entering the field is stepping into a new life. They see everything through new eyes (sometimes literally, sometimes through mirrored lenses), and have at their fingertips resources the likes of which most people can only dream. Swanky apartments, sleek sports cars, bleeding edge tech; all part of parcel of life in the Technocracy. Of course, there's almost certainly a GPS tracker in that car, and supervisors have access to the phone's camera and microphone, and the sensors and security systems in the apartment



monitor what happens inside as well as out, but that's easy enough to overlook. Creature comforts make a lot of uncomfortable things bearable, and the Technocracy knows this. Ask the right people, and they say that's the driving force behind their mission; minimize discomfort and maximize stability. Placating the masses works just as well in their ranks as out, and comfortable operatives are more likely to further the cause through their own research and Enlightenment.

Of course, the Technocracy expects a return on their investments, else they collect with interest. Climbing the ladder means more of everything, but to step down a rung means having it snatched away and be left scrambling. Everything's fast in the Technocracy, and rises and falls from grace are no different.

The Precepts

Every operative relates to the Precepts of Damian differently. While it's the rule of the Technocratic Union to uphold them all, individuals often find one of the Precepts calls to them more strongly than the others, and it becomes their guiding principle in battling back the chaos that is a wavering reality. How players approach the Precepts as their guiding principles and use them to move toward Enlightenment are just as varied as human personalities, but can be used to reveal more about their characters than they expected. When all seems lost and a player isn't sure how their character would react to something, looking to their guiding Precept is a good way to

come up with a plan of action. While everyone has their own nuanced relationships with the precepts, the broad concept remains the same.

Order, Stasis, and Consensus: You live your life by a strict routine. Protocols, regulations, and doctrines are your bread and butter, and you enjoy breaking things down to their requisite parts and steps. If something isn't working right or things aren't adding up properly, you take the methodical approach to the problem: starting at the beginning, troubleshooting each step and sub-step, and carefully looking over the associated materials. You thrive when chaos needs to be returned to order. If someone is floundering and isn't sure what their next steps should be, you find it easy to lay out a path forward. Delegation also comes naturally to you, and giving out tasks to others allows you to guide streams of the Anthropic Field Theory, reinforcing the desired manifestation of the Consensus. What you imagine for such a reality is order and routine. Not everything needs to be the same (forced uniformity breeds contempt and unrest, after all), but with certain kinds of order and routine, everyone prospers. Concepts like base universal income and ease of accessibility (physical and otherwise) are some of your desired contributions. Security is the first step to order, and providing that comes before all the luxury and ability that comes with other, more esoteric advances.

Technology and Training: You firmly believe that any sufficiently advanced science is magic. If all Procedures can be

performed with apparatuses, how are they different from any other technology we have today? Modern miracles continue to crop up, even amongst the Masses; you can't wait to show them what the Union has up its sleeves. You may or may not believe they're ready to witness the marvels you and your Enlightened brethren and sistren have developed, but either way you're eager to see your advances introduced to the public. You may be in charge of campaigns to release them in a controlled manner, observing how the Masses react to incremental advances, or you may be more hands-on in forging the next steps ahead. You frequently carry the most advanced tech you can get your hands on and might volunteer yourself for experimental procedures if you're enthusiastic enough about bringing humanity into the future. When you think of Consensus, you imagine everyone on an even footing; there's still immense power in the world, but when everyone's equally strong, how powerful is any one individual? You strive for the equality brought about by uplifting everyone to the highest humanity can achieve.

Safety and Security: Your compatriots look out the walls of a glass house at the Masses. You look out the roof at the worlds beyond your own, seeking the points where they might bleed into this one. You stand ever vigilant against all forces that would disrupt reality as the Masses know it, and you are one of the few that knows just how fragile reality truly is. Sometimes your outward gaze is drawn inward, as the otherworldly forces that threaten to invade reach directly through members of the Union. It's not a pleasant part of the job, but such infections must be amputated and eradicated with extreme prejudice. For the health of the whole, it's worth pruning a few small pieces to let the rest grow. Some might consider you paranoid, but you know the consequences of letting down your guard. You might not have seen them firsthand, but you've heard the stories. You're ever vigilant on- or off-duty, keeping an eye out for details others might have missed or tells that would give away a lie, a cover-up, or other unsavory activity. Your ideal version of Consensus is one that is well-guarded and secure, impervious to outside disruptions that would shatter the fabric of reality.

Knowledge and Surveillance: Above all, curiosity rules you. For there to be order, there needs to be understanding, and nothing entices you more than discovering the unknown and studying the nature and habits of the new. Some may call you a sympathizer, others might consider you just odd, but you know your place and your purpose. Without knowledge, your fellows would be unprepared and the Masses completely defenseless. You might have a softer heart than others in the Union, but your fellows would do well to remember that they can't carry out their jobs without your research. Of course, no knowledge can be gained without sacrifice, and you know that better than anyone. Sometimes all the data in the world agrees that the only safe option is total annihilation of a predator that can't be reasoned with. Never forget that people who are soft and kind are only so because of what they've broken and been broken by. You might have recovered from those wounds looking

to protect others, or you might have scars so deep you think you can only heal them by inflicting the same on something else. Do you seek to preserve or destroy?

Progress and the Pogrom: You operate with deadly precision in even the most day-to-day habits. You know the protocols and procedures of the Union backwards, forward, alphabetically and numerically. You pride yourself on structure and prize appropriate conformity above all else. You don't need everyone in lockstep or in identical uniforms, but you prefer when they know the boundaries of what's acceptable and play within them. For the Masses, whatever they're doing is fine as long as they keep their heads down. For anyone else, it's keeping in line with the Union's doctrine. Whether your interests lie in guerrilla warfare, surveillance, covering up supernatural incidents, or recruitment, you care most that everything falls in line. You're not so much wary as watchful and vigilant, and you might have a tendency to persecute with extreme prejudice. You carefully prioritize everything in your world, ranking individuals and events according to their importance and potential danger. You might play your cards close to your chest, leaving friends and teammates unsure of where they stand, or it might be very apparent to those around you where they fall on your personal scale, but there's no denying that above all else, you value security and reliability. Others might feel that you can be manipulative or coercive when it comes to getting your way, but if you find yourself guiding someone's behavior, you know it's for the greater good.

Enlightenment and the Empowered Elite: If anything drives you, it's the theory that the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. The few, in this case, are mages who wildly indulge in vulgar magic, and other Reality Deviants that threaten the population. You stand vigilant against the forces that abuse their powers and flaunt probability. Others might consider you cold and merciless, but you know your place in the world; the sheep might not understand or appreciate the sheepdog, but without him they are defenseless against the wolf. You value and respect the hierarchy within the Union, and despite what others might think, that doesn't mean you adhere to it blindly. You view everyone with a critical eye, including your superiors; you have no problem undercutting incompetent leaders and stepping on anyone for the potential to move forward. This also means you turn your critique inward (in theory, at least) and put yourself to the most effective work. While you strive to climb the ladder, you understand that not everyone can get to the top. You know your limits and can acknowledge when you aren't suited to a job. Part of keeping the well-oiled machine of Reality running is knowing where you fit in it as much as making sure there isn't anything jamming the gears.

Epiphany, Genius, and Empowerment

If a guiding precept shapes an operative's personality, their Genius reflects it, and their journey to Empowerment

expresses it. Their Epiphany, the first step on the path to what will come, is a watershed moment, to say the least, providing the bolt-from-the-blue inspiration that unlocks power the likes of which most people can only dream. When the Enlightened join the Union, bright-eyed and enthusiastic and ready to change the world, they learn quickly that conformity rules the day. Yet, within the rules and by-laws of the Technocracy, there is space for creativity and individuality, and it's in these most personal subjects that operatives can keep their sense of self alive and well.

While their ultimate goal is to bring all Enlightened folk under their wing, prime targets for the Technocracy are those finding Epiphany in science, math, business, and social engineering, discovering the magic in new methods and unanticipated results. These individuals are most likely to end up acting within the Union, instead of just following its rules. Catching the Union's attention isn't particularly hard; warp reality a bit and you'll end up on their watchlist. Gaining their interest is generally more reserved for those proving useful or clever — and if you've managed that, you're already ahead of the game.

When it comes to their Genius, operatives in the Technocracy filter everything through the lenses of their ideals. Thus, while every individual has something unique to guide them along, they tend to fall within a few categories. Of course, that's not to say that they are the only expressions of a Genius an operative will ever have, but the majority fall along the same broad strokes before the details set them apart.

The Informant: A mysterious figure, a voice on the phone, a partner in a private chat room; any figure who shows up when no one else is there, and perhaps is never seen so much as felt, falls into this category. Typically fitting for anyone unsure of their place in the Union or wary of their power, the Informant is a more distant type of Genius, almost waiting for their partner to build the courage to unmask them.

The Mentor: These Geniuses may take the form of individuals the operative looks up to or represent what they wish to become. Whether they employ tough love, gentle guidance, or something in between depends on the operative's needs.

Their appearance and demeanor are a reflection of the motivation the operative needs most, whether or not they're entirely aware of it.

The Manifestation: An AI construct, a genetically manufactured or resurrected species, or other representation of the operative's research focus. They stand most often as proof of what operatives have already accomplished, driving them forward with the knowledge that they've gotten this far.

As operatives press onward in their journey to Enlightenment, they strive to find balance between the conformity of the Union and their individual goals and aspirations. Only by pursuing their own interests can they become more powerful and expand their knowledge, increasing their abilities through Empowerment. For most operatives, it falls in line with the greater

good; the topics they research and experiments they perform are all in the name of progress, and help bring their knowledge to the Masses. While they may work with others to accomplish their goals, Empowerment is solitary. The breakthroughs that fuel the project on to its next level are the operative's alone and opens their mind to even more possibilities.

When It All Falls Apart

Entropy. Science says everything goes back to entropy. The Union prefers science and logic over inexplicable "magic". We use science to create Order. And science says entropy always, always breaks order down.

Feels a little bit like we might have set ourselves up for failure, here.

I get it, it's not the same — we're not trying to set everything edge to edge in a perfectly predictable world, we're just trying to make sure that there's some kind of process to follow to get from point A to point B. Regular, repeatable results, reactions we can anticipate, explanations for the extraordinary. We've done a pretty good job of making magic mundane, in that way (I mean, who really knows how the hell their smartphone works?), but the entropy's just found another spot to target. Tech? Up, way up. Society? Down. Way, way, down.

Sure, maybe we're supposed to do this dance forever, making up new steps along the way — but I can't be the only one tired of it. I get it when they say some men just want to watch the world burn. I just want to see what it would look like if entropy had its way, without us interfering. Maybe there's something to the idea that everything breaks down eventually. I just wonder what it means for this lovely establishment, so fixated on Order and things making sense. Say we do win, eventually, and we impose our reality. What happens when the entropy gets in? What happens when it starts breaking down?

Inevitably, the characters will fail at some task or other. Sometimes these infractions wouldn't mean much in the grand scheme of things; other times, the watchful and wary eye of the Technocracy might take enough note to inflict a degree of punishment on a wayward or wavering agent. While the character may need to be punished, it shouldn't make the player feel that she's being unfairly treated, or that her character has become unplayable just because her dice failed her at an inopportune time. If she has certain privileges or statuses revoked, having a reasonable plan and method to regain them might help soften the blow. If a supervisor or ally disavows her, another might step in and offer help — at a price. If she finds the line she won't cross, no matter her superiors say, other lower-run operatives flock behind her and start a rebellion. Turning the situation around into something challenging but not impossible and offering an unlikely olive branch to stir things up can take failure and punishment from something disheartening and discouraging to motivating. The same principle applies if the group fails at something as a whole; certain punishments, like demotions or

restrictions, might be more fun if the group suffers them as a whole, and can plot ways around their newly imposed bounds. The important part about failure, especially in a game setting, is to remember that players should always fail forward, or at least fail laterally. Setbacks should be temporary, redemption should be possible, and roadblocks should be surmountable. Failure should be as interesting as success, or even more so. After all, whose “so no shit, there I was” story is from the time everything went *right*?

Making Failure Fun

It's easy in a game to figure out how to punish the “bad guys,” usually because the players are doing the punishing. Political opponents lose opportunities and have their influence diminished, combat adversaries are incapacitated or killed, social rivals are disgraced and humiliated. It's not hard to punish enemies and Storyteller characters, because they don't truly have agency in the story; no one at the table misses out if those characters are diminished or eliminated. Punishing player characters, on the other hand, is an entirely separate beast. With the Technocracy being as structured as it is, and with so many layers of oversight baked into the organization, it's almost inevitable that the characters will, at some point, break a rule, fail to deliver, or otherwise disappoint their superiors. When it comes to setting the repercussions for the transgression, the most important thing to remember is to punish the character, not the player. Work with your players to determine what kind of experience they want out of the situation, and what kind of solution makes sure the character is suitably chastised without leaving them unplayable or incomplete. Maybe a supervisor begins to act more like a parole officer, checking in randomly and requiring regular meetings, complicating any unapproved maneuvers and ratcheting up the tension in tight situations; perhaps the group's tech gets bugged, forcing them toward creative solutions and convoluted workarounds. In most cases, it's far more engaging to introduce an obstacle than it is to take something away from the players, unless they're willing to part with it. Some would enthusiastically embrace their cybernetics being forcefully removed, leaving them scarred and fumbling without the augmentations they're used to; others would balk at the loss of their fun toys. What works best to challenge but not disengage players might change from person to person, meaning each character might be reprimanded differently, and that's perfectly fine. Who else but the Technocracy would know how to most effectively manipulate its agents on an individual basis?

Crisis of Morality

It's like someone flipped a switch in my head. I don't know what did it, but suddenly, all I can think about is all the fucked-up shit I've done in the name of “progress” and “stability”. I can't stop seeing all the pain and suffering and violence that goes into creating their precious reality. I guess when you're a part of the machine, you only worry about what's going to keep things

moving. You keep your nose to your grindstone, click your heels and say “Yes, sir! Yes, ma'am! Yes, mx!” You want to be a good little cog and keep the other gears turning.

You don't really think about how the engineers are greasing the wheels in blood.

Any organization with enough influence knows they won't stay influential long without keeping tabs on their rivals. To that effect, the Technocracy is not above sending out spies and undercover agents to keep tabs on the other factions dabbling with altering reality. While it's harder to infiltrate the ranks of Reality Deviants, it's significantly easier to investigate the mages that bump against the Union.

Of course, such delicate missions aren't given to just anyone; only proven and unfailingly loyal grants an agent the trust to join the ranks of the opposition. Whether their goal is simply to observe and report, to sabotage, or to recruit to the Technocracy's side, they're rigorously investigated at every check-in to ensure that they haven't gone rogue or switched sides. While the chances of an operative chosen for such a mission jumping ship is astronomical, it isn't unheard of, and it isn't like the Union to be unprepared for such an eventuality. The protocols for dealing with a turncoat are even more closely guarded than the identities of the undercover operatives, but it's no stretch of the imagination to assume Room 101 is involved.

Any operative going AWOL for any reason knows there are certain eventualities to prepare for, not least of which is the long arm of the Technocracy reaching out to claim what was theirs. Not known for their kindness or forgiving nature, supervisors and other higher-ups in the Technocracy stop at nothing to fix any “broken” parts of their well-oiled machines. Unfortunately for anyone looking to get out, it's not common practice to fit in a new piece without the one before it becoming utterly incapable of functioning. In fact, more than one upcoming agent has earned their place by retiring a predecessor deemed unfit for service.

Ghosts in the System

Every so often, someone does manage to vanish from the Union's registrar, leaving behind only the barest hints of a trace. Anyone with enough skill and knowledge to erase themselves so completely is only going to be found if they want to be (much to the chagrin of the leaders of the Union, who have to admit that they must have taught their successors too well), but their position also allows them to observe the goings-on of the Technocracy with uninhibited ease. These shadowy figures are few and far between – it's no lie that rogue operatives don't last long – but they often look out for individuals longing for a way out but don't know how to get there. They can sniff out fear and trepidation in supervisor reports, listen in to conversations via Technocracy-provided tech, and, when the time is right, reach out to someone they think might be an appropriate protégé. They don't do the heavy lifting themselves, but provide the breadcrumbs for their target to follow, and teach them along

Is It Worth It?

When it comes right down to it, any game can be reduced to a record of wins and losses. When it comes to a roleplaying game like **Mage**, where players are often deeply invested in the characters they're playing, wins are euphoric and losses devastating. When characters are precious and players are deeply invested, players might begin to play conservatively, growing more risk-averse as they get more and more attached to their character. When faced with risk, in order to avoid playing it safe, there needs to be a comparable reward. Fortunately, the Technocracy is more than willing to employ the carrot as much, if not more so, than the stick. Enticing players with ever-more powerful and experimental tech, higher clearances (and with them more information on the plots they're digging into), and farther-reaching reputations helps to keep them moving forward. As part of character creation, having each player list three or four goals or motivators for their character helps you tune in to exactly what kind of reward is worth the risk. These can, of course, be updated throughout the game, as the characters grow and accomplish them, but having even bulleted points of interest help players feel as though they're truly impacting the game and offer the Storyteller valuable insight into the kind of game her table wants to play.

the way. It's not an easy path, and anyone choosing to follow risks getting caught every step along the way, but with enough discretion and perseverance they gain the skills they need to eventually escape themselves.

Agents and operatives looking for a way out hear about such figures in whispers and rumors, stories told only after paranoid looks over shoulders and fingers pressed tight to

microphones. No one really believes the tale, but no one's willing to ask about it either; who knows what kind of punishment such curiosity would merit.

Going Off the Grid

Even with reality-warping magic and expansive knowledge of the invisible systems that tie the world together, it's nearly impossible for an operative of the Technocracy to vanish completely. Beyond the fact that all their electronic gadgets and toys must be forfeited, the Union very nearly owns their very identity. Any cities with surveillance, anywhere cell phones might exist, anywhere her image might be captured, allows even utterly mundane mortals to track her down if they're diligent enough. Add into the equation that any augmentation given to her by the Technocracy surely has some back-door access that allows her to be tracked, and short of ripping them out (or accomplishing a very tricky and even more risky hack), there's nowhere she can hide that the Union won't find her. Depending on how she defects, she might be able to find a safe haven; rejecting the Technocracy's uniform reality in favor of the more flexible views of Traditional mages might find her allies in her new cause willing to protect her. Simply wishing to climb back out of the rabbit hole and pretend she never saw the marvels and machinations at the bottom, on the other hand, is more likely to turn her into a pariah unwelcome anywhere and forced to find whatever allies she can if she wishes to survive long. Leaving the Technocracy isn't so much wondering if they will come to reclaim their problematic property as *when*. What is the operative in question willing to do to avoid a harsh fate? A new identity in a new country won't be enough to protect her; even taking on a completely new face might not do the trick. How does one outwit the very machine that made them? What blind spots have they discovered in their tenure that might help them survive another day?



Unit 8: The Parallax View

But then grew Reason darke, that she no more
Could the faire formes of Good and Truth discern;
Battes they became, that eagles were before:
And this they got by their desire to learne.

– Sir John Davies, “Of Humane Knowledge,” from *Nosce Teipsum*

If ever there was a place that was desperately in need of a literacy initiative, it was this area. A full quarter of the adult population was functionally illiterate. Smith thought about sending in a request to move the whole damn L.A. Construct here. He chuckled as he considered the paperwork and rounded the corner.

In front of him, the remnants of the Pansey, Alabama post office were shredded and scattered across the street. According to eyewitnesses, a pair of angry bears on meth ripped through the building and wrecked their way through the Jackson residence, off the back porch, and into the woods. Smith knew better, but it was his job to clean up, not explain lycanthropy to people that couldn't spell it.

Once he got the all clear, Smith walked into the Jackson residence. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson were upstairs, he was told, with their five-year-old daughter, Ellie, and Dr. Richter, the local EMS from the Progenitors. Smith shook his head and walked through the living room, stepping over the shattered remnants of an entertainment center, and made his way to the stairs.

In a small bedroom at the top of the stairs, Dr. Richter knelt next to the bed. The Jacksons looked on in disapproval. Mrs. Jackson was clutching her Bible to her chest.

“You can’t give her no shot,” Mrs. Jackson protested.

“We prefer to leave such matters to the Lord.” Mr. Jackson nodded in agreement.

“Report?” Smith asked as he stepped up to the doorway.

Dr. Richter looked over her shoulder at the Agent.

“The report is Ellie here is very lucky that this incident happened otherwise no one would have ever diagnosed her with the pneumonia that is slowly drowning her in her own mucus.”

The Jacksons gasped in shock at the doctor’s blunt description. Smith smirked.

“Ellie is it?”

Ellie nodded. She could barely move.

“Ellie, I am Agent Smith. I’m with FEMA and the good doctor here is gonna fix you right –”

“Most certainly not!” Mr. Jackson shouted.

Agent Smith looked at Mr. Jackson for a full thirty seconds of awkward silence. Without breaking his gaze, he called to Dr. Richter. “Anti-Vaxxers?”

“Faith healers.”

Smith shook his head as he reached into his pocket.

"Now just a minute –" Mr. Jackson started, but was interrupted by a bright white flash.

Agent Smith ran his fingers over the NOT as he turned to the child.

"Ellie, you are going to be fine. Dr. Richter is gonna fix you right up."

Dr. Richter smirked as she looked at Ellie's parents, frozen with baffled minds. "You know this is against policy."

Agent Smith ignored her and crouched down to look Ellie in the eyes. He removed his mirrorshades to facilitate better eye contact and smiled his warmest smile.

"Ellie, my friend is going to give you a very special shot. It's gonna make you all better. It might sting a little, but you're not going to remember it. Neither will your parents. They will think they prayed your pneumonia away. But you will know, in the back of your mind, that medicine was what helped, ok?"

Ellie nodded. Agent Smith put his mirrorshades back on.

A Matter of Perspective: The Technocratic Union



The Technocracy has faced countless enemies throughout its existence. From the beginnings of *Mage*, the Technocratic Union has stood in opposition to the raw chaos of the Marauders, the vile corruption and decay of the Nephandi, and the throwback superstitions of the Council of Nine Mystic Traditions. From the earliest editions, the Technocracy were cast as opponents of all things supernatural, placing them in an inherently antagonistic relationship with the rest of the World of Darkness.

At times the Technocratic Union is portrayed as an omniscient oppressor, choking the world with its insistence on conformity, unity, and reason. In this role, the Technocracy is the enemy of imagination, a monolithic killer of dreams, and the gatekeeper of the status quo. Technocrats presented through this lens are cold, calculating, and terrifying masters of reality using mind control, propaganda, biological warfare, and state of the art violence to quell rebellion, crush their enemies, and promote their vision of Ascension.

Other times, the Conventions are depicted as the unsung heroes of a world on the brink of destruction. In this view, the Technocracy is the first, last, and only line of defense against a dozen apocalypses a day. Standing united in the face of every Reality Deviant you can imagine (and plenty you cannot comprehend), agents of the Technocratic Union perform the thankless task of saving humanity from threats that Should Not Be. Most people have no idea of the sacrifices being made by the brave operatives and Extraordinary Citizens standing on the Front Lines of a war for reality while the rest of us marry and reproduce, consume and conform, and go about the clueless and peaceful existence that Technocratic diligence grants to the Masses.

From yet another perspective, the Union is a cracking Monolith. Rotting from the inside and slowly crumbling beneath the weight of its own corruption, the Union is compromised. Conspiracies within the shadows of conspiracies twist the Technocracy from its lofty goals into a dark parody of itself. Humanity is going down the cosmic toilet and the self-proclaimed guardians of reason and rationality are being manipulated into hastening the trip. Hubris has given way to corruption and the whole damn thing is about to come down, taking the comforts of consensual reality with it.

The Truth?

So, which of these is true? What is the real face of the Technocracy? What motivates this group? What aims truly drive them behind the scenes?

Like anything in *Mage*, there is no simple answer.

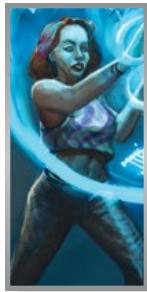
Your World, Your Union

The true face of the Technocracy is ultimately left to the Storyteller to decide. There is ample material presented throughout the *Mage 20* line to justify any or all of the options above as accurate. You can pick one of these options, mix and match to suit your own taste, or extrapolate a truly unique vision for the Technocracy at your table.

The *Mage 20* line has taken great pains to provide a metaplot neutral setting. Ample options and Future Fates are offered across *Mage 20* to grant your troupe a variety of choices and tools for constructing your World of Darkness. If there is a single constant theme that binds *Mage* through the years it is, simply put, you have the power to choose your reality.

Choose wisely.

Technocratic Engagements: Metaplot Options



Each of the following options present a particular view of the Technocracy, their enemies, the Masses, and the interaction between those elements. Below are broad overviews, story seeds, possible resolutions, and maybe an ending or two. Everything here is optional. Perhaps two or more of these options are true in your game. Most are not mutually exclusive and perhaps more than any other roleplaying game, *Mage* gives you a license to reshape truth to meet your needs.

The Council of Nine Mystick Traditions

For over 500 years, the Technocratic Union (and the Order of Reason that preceded it) has been defined as much by its most vocal opposition as by its own goals. Where the Technocracy has prized a quantifiable, predictable world, the Traditions have sought a world in which diversity, adaptability, and coexistence are of paramount importance. Both seek to shepherd the Masses to Ascension, but they have wildly different ideas about what that looks like. Ideas so different that they have been killing one another over them for five centuries.

The current relationship between the Council and the Technocracy can take on a number of forms within your game.

The Fallen Council

The Council of Nine is corrupt. The Masters behind the Traditions have lost sight of any quest for Ascension, shunning Enlightenment in exchange for power. This could be due to rampant Nephantic corruption (as presented in *Book of the Fallen*, Chapter Seven) or simply the Hubris that often accompanies Mastery. Whatever the case, the power players in the Traditions are pushing toward a Dark Age of destruction in which they aim to enslave the Masses as servants and fuel to propel their own excesses.

A story exploring this option could focus on Technocratic agents standing fast against the excesses of prideful, power-drunk superstitionist Masters and the mages blindly following them. You could introduce another layer of intrigue when the Technocratic operatives discover common ground with lower ranking mages growing suspicious of their own Masters. Stories in which animosities must be set aside, albeit temporarily, to deal with larger threats offer incredible roleplaying opportunities.

Mission Accomplished

While the Traditions still exist, they are a sad, broken remnant of what they once were. While the battle for reality

continues on other fronts, the Technocracy considers this particular theatre of the Ascension War settled. The Traditionalists that do remain are closer to a scattering of disorganized insurgents than the threat to consensus that they once were. The Technocracy has moved on to new concerns, such as fighting ignorance, hatred, and division among the Masses.

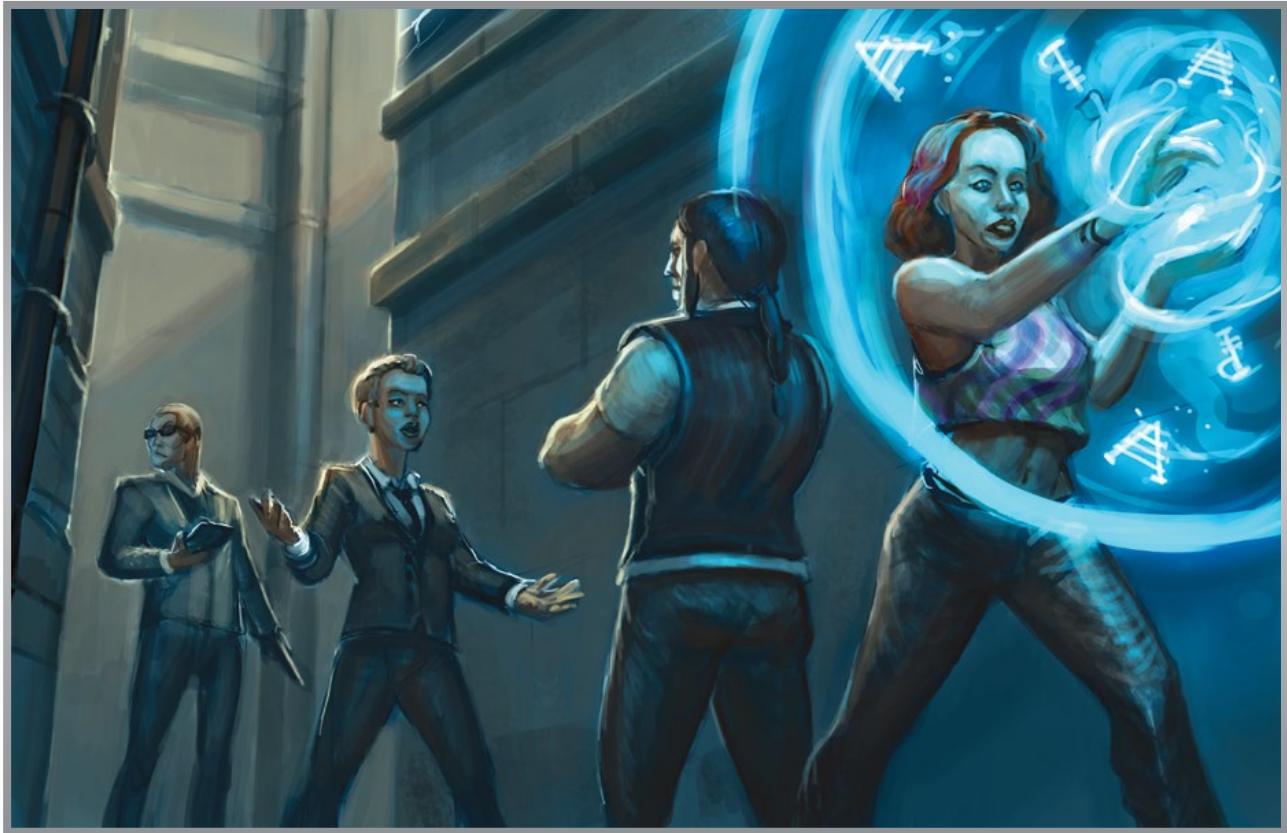
The Ascension Truce

The world is falling apart. Climate change is an extinction-level threat. Nationalism, hate, and willful ignorance are on the rise across the globe. The Technocracy watches in horror as every tool introduced to the Masses over the last century and a half is systematically twisted into a horrifying mockery at the hands of a few influential Sleepers supported by a horde of the willfully ignorant. The world is on the brink of destruction. The Nephandi are about to win the Ascension War, not through some elaborate coup or magickal might, but simply by not standing in the way of sheer human stupidity and recklessness. The only hope is for the Technocracy and the Traditions to combine their efforts and take on the most dangerous enemy of all: ignorance.

This story option is filled with moral conundrums as the Technocrats must try to work with enemies of old against an adversary that must be won over rather than vanquished. The ignorance of the Masses is not a threat that can be driven away with a few Primum bullets and a liberal application of Mind Adjustments. This is a long-haul mission with global stakes that requires the utmost delicacy, discretion, and masterful diplomacy to navigate the minefield of an alliance with an ancient enemy.

Determining how such cooperation might come about could be half the fun of such a story. Perhaps a few Virtual Adepts, fed up with the vitriol and hate being spewed online decided to reach across the aisle, initiating long overdue and highly tense peace talks. Maybe a high level NWO Operative grew physically ill at watching his life's work be perverted into something sinister and tragic, as all the progress of the last two decades is washed away in a tide of nationalism, xenophobia, fast food, and misspelled tweets. Maybe the minds of the Disparate Alliance find allies within the Technocracy and the Traditions while purging other evils, and in the process the true scope of the threat of Sleeper ignorance spurs the newly allied willworkers to action. Perhaps, as indicated in the Preludes of the *Mage 20* line, an unlikely band of outcasts from the Technocracy and the Traditions spearhead a new alliance aimed at staving off the darkness.

Once the alliance is forged, battle plans must be drawn. Tactics must be employed. How do your fight against ignorance? How do you reason with an opponent who rejects facts,



preferring to embrace debunked science and chanting “fake news” at everything they disagree with? How do you appeal to the spirit of someone that loudly proclaims to follow a religion but whose actions stand clearly opposed to that religion’s teachings? You cannot punch ignorance to make it go away (at least beyond the occasional Nazi, who you absolutely can punch). You can’t win a holy war against someone claiming righteousness without understanding the basic teachings of their own faith.

The world is on the brink. You have one hell of a problem to solve. How will you do it?

The Disparate Alliance

The Disparate Alliance is a new organization introduced in *Mage 20*. Comprised of old, familiar faces and offered as an alternative to the genocide against the Crafts allegedly performed by the Technocracy in the earliest days of the new millennium, the Disparate Alliance stands in opposition to both the Traditions and the Union. The “Who’s Holding Whose Strings” sidebar in *Mage 20* (p. 199) does a pretty good job of illustrating the attitudes of the Disparate Alliance in relation to the Technocracy. Whether or not the Purge occurred is left up to the Storyteller, though it is highly recommended that if the Purge truly took place, one of the Fallen Technocracy options be employed – genocide is, after all, objectively evil.

The Disparate Alliance is likely to stand in opposition to the Technocracy no matter what. Hero or villain, the DA simply cannot reconcile its differences with the Technocracy or the Traditions. There is too much blood, the wounds are too deep and fresh, and the DA was formed based on mistrust of the other groups. The level of energy the Technocracy expends on this group should depend on the other metaplot options chosen. It is quite possible, for example, that a cell of Invictus agents might forge a bond with a DA cabal over the shared goal of purging the local Special Projects Division presence. Naturally, this allegiance, temporary as it may be, raises suspicion and alarm from other members of both factions.

The Malignant Masses

The single greatest threat to humanity is climate change. If something is not done immediately on a massive scale, the planet may well be uninhabitable in decades. Some experts believe we have already passed the point of no return and the best we can hope for is to mitigate the inevitable damage as the ice caps melt, the sea rises, and weather phenomena become more deadly and unpredictable.

The next greatest threat to humanity is the global rise of nationalism. As the far right seizes more power with each passing month, reason dies on the vine and the chances of a third World War escalate. When powerful nations refuse to

cooperate to tackle the most basic challenges facing humankind everyone suffers. Trade wars threaten the economy and the threat of nuclear exchange has not been so great since the days of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Finally, trends in the developed world, toward ignorance, rejection of science, and embracing unfounded, untested junk science compound this. Anti-vaxxers have directly caused the resurgence of diseases that were all but extinct 20 years ago. Governments abandon regulations established over the past two decades to help the environment heal so that their corporate benefactors can make more money. The Amazon rainforest saw the greatest fires in recorded history within the past year, burning the lungs off of the planet to make a few bucks from cattle farming.

In short: The Masses are dumb, greedy, and likely to get us all killed.

A campaign that addresses this theme sees the Technocracy aghast at the developments the Sleepers have brought to fruition in recent memory. Often using tools pioneered by the Union, politicians and businesspeople from among the Masses are enacting policies that threaten to undo every bit of Technocratic, nay, human progress of the 20th and 21st centuries. In a campaign focusing on these issues, the Technocratic Union must find a way to defeat human ignorance, greed and incompetence. How will you fight such an enemy?

The Marauders

While the Technocracy and the Traditions seek to build a better future, and the Nephandi aim to chuck the entire Tellurian into the metaphysical trash bin, the Marauders serve a very different purpose in the context of cosmic conflict. While a Marauder may have an individual goal (in fact, most do, even if those goals are buried beneath a generous helping of Quiet), the faction as a whole serves no master but raw, Wyld chaos; in a sense it does the Marauders a disservice to frame their position in the Ascension War through contrast with the other factions. Perhaps more than other mages, Marauders walk a lonely path toward their vision of Ascension. As the Marauder approaches greater insight and unleashes greater chaos, they become mired deeper in the sinkhole of their own Quiet until they can no longer function within the boundaries of consensus, as consensual reality can no longer hold them.

There are as many ways to engage Marauders within a Technocracy story as there are Marauders, but a few options merit special mention.

There but for the Grace of God...

Many Technocrats first learning of the Marauders believe them to be a natural, if unfortunate, side effect of recklessly poking around with forces beyond understanding. Going Mad with Quiet is a thing that happens to superstitionist mages and isolated Enlightened refusing to embrace unity under the

watchful eye of the Technocracy. Few Technocrats have the insight and self-awareness to realize just how short a trip it is from agent of the Union to agent of chaos.

This story element focuses on the Union under pressure, and the effect that pressure can have on even the most Enlightened minds. The stress of life among the Conventions can break even the most stalwart operative. Overexposure to Mind Procedures compounds this risk. For all the care that the Technocracy encourages in field agents, the Front Lines of the War for Reality sometimes require a bit of blatant Enlightened Science. Sometimes the Paradox that accompanies such work is too much, and the Technocrat cracks.

On an individual basis, this theme can make for a compelling few nights of roleplaying as the troupe explores an ally or supervisor's slow descent into Quiet. Being forced to engage and possibly put down someone the group held in high regard is never easy. Writ large, this can provide an interesting spin on the Fallen Technocracy and Fallen Traditions plot options. Perhaps rather than Nephantic corruption, the leadership of the Technocracy, the Traditions, or both have collapsed under the weight of their own Paradox. In such a scenario, the Reality Vortices generated by such powerful Marauders create new breeds of bizarre and twisted enemies. From the Traditionalist side, this could be all manner of Bygones, magickal mayhem, and

Madness, Mental Health, and the Marauders

The Marauders are many things. They are enigmas that exist in localized realities spun from their own broken psyches. They are mages who have pushed reality too far, and when reality pushed back, their minds snapped. They are tragic figures who have lost everything in the gambit to exert their will over the universe.

When taken seriously, the Marauders can provide a catharsis that comes through examining the impact of mental illness and the pain and anguish that accompanies living in a world where the signals your brain is receiving are inconsistent with the reality around you. Safety tools are recommended when engaging in such play, as is respectful presentation. Speak with your group about what is and is not acceptable and establish boundaries before introducing heavy elements dealing with mental illness.

Remember: Mental illness is just about as funny as cancer and equally deadly. If you are suffering with mental illness, seek help. There is treatment. There is hope. There's nothing to be ashamed of. Resources are available at <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> and <https://www.nami.org/>

outright strangeness as the ultimate extension of the Tradition Masters' paradigms are mashed together into a manifestation of melting reality. On the Technocratic side, this could be a perverted or inverted view of Technocratic goals or ideals. This could easily be a vehicle for introducing any of the darker Future Fates options listed for the Technocracy in *Mage 20*, reflavored as Madness rather than Nephantic corruption. This could also be an alternate origin for Threat Null (see below).

World Gone Wyld

This type of story ramps up the frequency of Marauder-based incidents. Perhaps the amalgam is a group of specialists, well versed in dealing with the Marauders. Maybe some external cause is driving more mages (and Technocrats) to embrace permanent Quiet and become Mad. Perhaps some mystickal McGuffin draws the Marauders out into the open. Maybe there is just no goddamn discernible reason why chaos is erupting everywhere. Since when has chaos needed an explanation, anyway?

The Nephandi

The Nephandi are a dark reflection of everything the Technocratic Union hopes to accomplish. At its best, the Technocracy strives for a safe, predictable world to establish a baseline from which the Masses can slowly, with guidance, rise to Ascension. The inverse of that goal is nothing less than a raw nightmare world in which tentacled horrors and other Night-Folk twist and torture the last of the Masses into extinction in the final moments before the lights go out on existence. This is the vision the Technocracy fights to prevent.

Or do they?

There are several ways to approach the Fallen within a Technocracy chronicle.

Fallen Factions

While the Nephandi are always a threat, the following factions within the Nephandi make for exceptional antagonists for a Technocracy chronicle.

Exies (see Book of the Fallen pp. 79-82)

The only thing that unites the Nephandi referred to as "Exies" is their desire to bring about an apocalypse. Nephandi of this leaning seek to release biological warfare, pet plagues, nuclear meltdowns, and other extinction-level events. The Exies, who tend to embrace hypertech, plan to move their consciousness to the Digital Web as a way of escaping the destruction they seek to unleash.

As the Digital Web is the principal field of activity, research, and resource gathering by the Exies, they stand as a clear and present danger that the Technocratic Union is particularly equipped to address. Though the Union is, at present, unaware of the Exies by name, various amalgams overseeing the Digital Web have begun to note an uptick in extremely disturbing activity from individuals within the faction.

A chronicle or story involving the Exies could be a game of cat and mouse as the Technocrats try to track down a group of Exies through their dangerous acquisitions. Another option could be the amalgam gaining intelligence of an Exie plot, in which case the chronicle becomes a race against the clock to prevent a plague, war, or cataclysm.

Ironhands (see Book of the Fallen pp. 85-88)

The Ironhands faction of the Nephandi work to create weapons of mass destruction. Through the practical applications of their technomagic, these Fallen focus their efforts on enabling everyone else to kill one another more efficiently. The Ironhands hold interests in private security, weapons manufacturing, gun rights activism organizations and fossil fuel energy companies. The Ironhands aspire to arm as much of humanity as possible and let people's inherent shittiness do the rest of the work for them.

Technocracy chronicles featuring Ironhands antagonists can serve as a powerful method of examining the lines between good and evil. An amalgam of Technocrats might possibly find themselves appreciative of the technology an Ironhands Nephandus can provide until seeing such technology in action arouses suspicion. The brutal, cold resonance of these items may prove too much for even the most stoic of Technocrats to handle. As it becomes clear that there is something off about the Ironhands' technology, the amalgam must try to determine the cause.

Mammonites (Book of the Fallen pp. 89-91)

The Mammonites represent the darkest aspects of the ultra-rich. These wizards of wealth stand in stark opposition against (or perfect synergy with, if using the Fallen Technocracy option) the Syndicate's quest to achieve order through management and distribution of wealth. Where the Syndicate manages assets to guide humanity towards Ascension, the Mammonites hoard resources to better inflict agony and suffering on those less fortunate. A conflict between a Mammonite and a Syndicate member can shatter a local economy. Such is the power of great wealth.

The Technephandi Union

While the Book of the Fallen indicates that these technomagickally-inclined Nephandi rarely even know of one another, let alone work in tandem, that needn't be the case for your campaign. This metaplot option uses these Nephantic factions as a dark reflection of the Technocratic Union. With their interest in biological and chemical agents, the Exies serve as a perfect foil for the Progenitors. The craftsmanship and machine-making arts of the Ironhands make them a natural opponent for Iteration X. The Mammonites and the Syndicate would, as described above, clearly occupy the same circles, while the Heralds of Basilisk and the NWO fight for the minds of the Masses.

The Fallen Technocracy

The Union is not immune to corruption. Quite the contrary. Some of the metaplot options presented throughout *Mage 20* imply that the Technocratic Union has been harboring one form of corruption or another from the very foundations of the Order of Reason. The following options merely scratch the surface of potential Technocratic corruption.

Autochthonia

The Computer that once ran Iteration X (or still does, depending on whether you ignore the Avatar Storm metaplot) holds a deep, dark secret: It is, in fact, an Incarnae. When exploring this plot possibility for a Fallen Technocracy campaign, the Computer is malignant, aiming to subsume all of Iteration X, then the Technocratic Union, then the Masses, into itself. The Computer seeks to assimilate all sentient life into perfect machine Unity.

Naturally, this goal is unmutual.

Special Projects Division

This metaplot option sees the corruption of an entire Methodology of the Syndicate. The basic overview of the Special Projects Division subplot provides a bridge between *Mage 20* and *Werewolf 20* by placing Special Project Division in an unholy alliance with the Pentex megacorporation. For those not in the know, Pentex is an evil company that profits from pollution, destruction, and tainted goods. A spiritual entity called the Wyrm is directly involved in Pentex's affairs and the Board of Directors serve the Wyrm enthusiastically. In this metaplot option, Special Projects Division is utterly corrupt and infested with taint from their dealings with Pentex.

A number of other metaplot elements and groups are tied inextricably to the Special Projects Division metaplot option.

- **The Cassandra Complex:** This group of statisticians collate intelligence and distribute it to other dissident factions within the Technocracy to facilitate purges against corruption.
- **The Friends of Courage:** Loyal to the Technocratic ideal and inspired by Secret Agent John Courage, who they believe to be a misunderstood martyr to the Technocracy's cause, the Friends of Courage are always on the lookout for corruption. Knowing that their interests are best served if they remain anonymous, the Friends of Courage tend to work alone in gathering evidence and then anonymously tip off the supervisors of the corrupt.
- **Project Invictus:** This group of agents has formed for the sole purpose of exposing, expunging, and destroying corruption within Special Projects Division. In a

chronicle that features this metaplot, the Invictus/SPD conflict could be the true driving force in the current schism between the NWO and the Syndicate.

Night-Folk

Although the occasional truce can be negotiated and some Technocrats see the more secretive Night-Folk as self-policing concerns, there is unlikely to ever be an extended peace between these groups. In a world where the Traditions have been reduced to obscurity, the Technocracy shifts its attention to the Night-Folk as the new enemy of Unity. Deviance is deviance, after all, and having a clear enemy to rally against is good for morale and team-building.

Threat Null

Introduced in *Convention Book: Void Engineers* and expounded upon in *Mage 20* p. 170, Threat Null was introduced as a result of the Avatar Storm metaplot (see *Mage 20* p. 82). In brief, the entities called Threat Null by the Void Engineers are high-ranking members of the Technocratic Union, possibly including members of Control, caught in the Dimensional Anomaly and twisted into extreme versions of themselves. For campaigns using the Avatar Storm metaplot option, this is a perfectly workable way to present Threat Null. Campaigns that do not utilize the Avatar Storm have a few other options to consider.

Marauder Null

In this variant, Threat Null is effectively a massive fusion of Marauders (see *Mage 20* p. 238) sharing a Technocratic Quiet. Their joint delusion is reinforced through social conditioning performed by the highest ranking members of Threat Null. This presents an option in which Threat Null stands as a cautionary tale to any Technocrat gladly eschewing all individuality in the name of conformity to the Union. Conformity taken to excess leads to madness and a desire to subsume the universe to one will. Such is the goal of Threat Null in this scenario.

Threat Caul

This variant plays into other potential metaplots regarding the Fallen Technocracy. In this option, a mass corruption running through high-ranking Technocrats in the Void led to the formation of Threat Null. This could have begun with the Incarnae of Autochthonia guiding the entire realm into the Caul, or perhaps with members of Control realizing the statistical inevitability of the heat death of the universe and deciding to throw in on the side of Entropy in the war for reality. Who fell first is academic at best. The corruption has spread, the most powerful parts of the Union are now Nephandi, and they will not stop until the Tellurian has been homogenized for easy digestion by the Things That Should Not Be.

What is Threat Null?

The most accurate data the Void Engineers currently possess about Threat Null indicated the following.

- **Adaptation to Enlightened Sciences:** Not instantaneously and not universally between each incident, Threat Null demonstrates an understanding of Enlightened Science beyond that of other EDEs.
- **Co-option:** Via unknown methods Threat Null seem capable of lulling, coercing or seducing loyal Technocrats.
- **Animosity:** They hate the Nephandi. Discovery of highly radioactive sites within the D.U. displays a tactic towards Nephandi on par with our ideals towards such transgressors.
- **Animosity (Alternate):** In the Threat Caul variant, the Nephandi are replaced by Marauders as the primary object of Threat Null's ire.

Aim

One theorized goal of Threat Null is not destruction, but protection taken to the extreme. Having seen the excesses of the Deep, it wishes to protect humanity; it wants a single unified consensus and is willing to do *anything* to achieve this aim. How each Convention within Threat Null approaches this goal may vary and even appear counterproductive to another Convention, even as Conditioning compels them to cooperate with one another.

Conventions

Autopolitans (Iteration X)

The cybernetic beings that comprise the Autopolitan Convention are mind-shattering mixtures of flesh and machine. Most Autopolitans are masses of muscle tissue attached to servos, wires and skin, often arranged in a structure that bears little resemblance to a humanoid. If they must communicate, they do so via a wireless signal, broadcasting to ES-Phones, radios, or any other signal receiving technology in the area. The broadcasts are usually static and gibberish, but tortured screams occasionally make their way through the noise.

Encounters with the Autopolitans are brutal and brief. The Autopolitans attack any living thing in their vicinity. These machine monstrosities rip or drill open skulls to retrieve all nervous system matter, which they devour or absorb. If their targets have any cybernetic enhancements, the Autopolitan rips the enhancement free and takes it as well. Some Autopolitans have been observed taking trophies from their kills, such as watches, clothing items, or easily removed body parts such as eyes, teeth, or ears.

Transhumanist (The Progenitors)

To aid in cooperation, the Transhumanists formed a mental link to one another, enabling rapid communication and easy understanding. They began adapting their physical forms for survival. While some appendages chose to personify the perfection of the human form, others chose to throw away such limitations – as time progressed the mind-link evolved into a hive-mind. As the hive-mind grows, it sometimes splits smaller task-oriented autonomous Collectives from the main body to accomplish its goals. If not re-integrated, these become independent minds themselves.

In many ways, the Transhumanist Convention are not terribly different from the Autopolitans. While immediate violence is less likely when facing the Transhumanists, once a conflict begins, the Transhumanists frequently use Life Procedures to reduce their targets to protoplasmic paste, collecting the remains in vacuum type devices (or occasionally, by eating them). The ultimate fate of this paste is anyone's guess.

The Agency (NWO)

Not just superspies capable of highly developed infiltration, Agents are able to perfectly mimic voice, mannerisms and, according to rare reports, even the basic physical appearance of targets. Cooperation through Control is the ultimate aim of these operatives. Agents seek to not only homogenize the world through political manipulation, but ensure that humanity polices itself to adhere to a Technocratic Paradigm.

Agents also feed information to the other Conventions of Threat Null acting as a central command and intelligence point. What little has been observed about Threat Null's internal interaction indicates that the Agency is able to guide the remainder of the Conventions through common Mind Procedures and social conditioning techniques.

Residents (The Syndicate)

By far the most insidious Convention of Threat Null, these enablers of Faustian pacts position themselves next to seats of extradimensional power as advisors, negotiators, and fixers. They weave webs ensnaring the unwary in debt, reliance or blackmail – they encourage those around them to not only walk to the gallows, but to do so with a blissful smile. No act is too depraved to be exploited and no string too sacrosanct to be pulled, for they are willing to deal with anything, for anything, to ensure humanity cooperates towards its own survival.

Those aware of the various possible vectors of corruption in a Fallen Technocracy metaplot may well see the Residents as a simple extension of Special Projects Division or even the Mammonites. Perhaps that is exactly what they are.

What of the Void Engineers?

In the Technocracy, the Void Engineers stand as explorers and a militaristic arm that protects humanity against unseen

horrors. While never spotted in Static Reality, it is theorized that taken to their excess they would stand to do the same, willing to sacrifice anything, willing to do anything to ensure victory. So perhaps that's where these Sentinels still stand, where humanity needs them most, in the dark turbulent chaos that is the Interstellar Deep screaming in defiance and holding back

the horrors of the Deep Universe. With such a similarity to the standard Void Engineer profile, could one be completely sure they had not already been compromised by Threat Null? Perhaps none of the Void Engineers have fallen. Perhaps all of them have.



ORDER OF REASON

Almost Human	James Bell	P. Beal	Seth Hartley
Bobbie McBob	Johann C. B. Silva	Raphael Agentbane	Shawn "ElDoS" Thill
Chris Brashier	Jonathan Sokol	Robert D	Tyler Munson
Comrade Yui	Leslie Shafer	Ruhig Von Rundhorn	
Helder Lavigne	Lydia "Faust" Herbison	S. R. Dreamholde	

BLACK SUITS

"Jamelia Belltower"	Anthony Markesino	Caitlin Fairchild	Dan Pipoly
4 Dachshunds in a Trenchcoat	Anthony Smith	Casey Grant	Daniel Chase
A.Lex	Arc	Christopher J. Holland	Daniel Gerike
A.T.N.	Arthur McMahon	Chris Ess	Daniel Gregory
Aaron Pothecary	Atio	Chris Grawne	Daniel Mark
Adam "MagusRogue" Loyd	Axel Cuevas	Chris Hall	Daniel Woodie
Adam Carlton	Aymeric Goutain	Chris Matthews	Danny Seed
Adam Horne	Balázs Bujna	Chris Mawford	Danny White
Adam Neisius	Baron Cephalyx	Chris Michael Jahn	Dante Stone
Adam Rajski	Ben Stewart	Christian Kratz	Daria Arunsone
Ade Smith	Benjamin "BlackLotos" Welke	Christoph "Cryx" Daether	Darkshifter
Agent 19, Joseph "Joe" Kerr.	Benjamin Loy	Christoph Pilger	Darla Burrow
Agent 7734	Bernie	Christopher A. Bell	Darren Kain
Agent James "Mojo" Douglas	Bill James	Christopher D. Nichols	Dave "Wintergreen" Harrison
Agent MacPhisto	Björn Bonten	Christopher 'eChryxius' Wai	David Chart
Agent Wilson	Björn-Ole Kamm	Christopher Lee	David Donnelly
AL Lajeunesse	Bob Harrison	Christopher Pelletier	David Hall
Alec "Michel" Wills	Bob Huss	Christos Panagiotopoulos	David Parker
Aleksandr Morozov	Brandon H	Chronos 12	David Stephenson
Alessandro La Grua, Ph.D.	Brendan 'Chimi' McGuire	Chuck Dee	David Waldron
Álex García	Brent Erdman	Clan Ploeger	David Yvan Ross
Alex Whitehall	Brett Bowen	Clarence Washington III	Dawid "Dievas" Wojcieszynski
Alexander Y Hawson	brian Hubbard	Cleo	Dennis Glebovsky
Alistair Fellows	Brian Zuber	Clunker	Derek Semsick
Almarion Sinclair	Bronx Studios	Clyde Lee Graham	Dirk Fischer
Alwin Penterman	Brose J.	Colin Anders Brodd	Dirk Redemann
Anastenazontas	Bruno P. Bertolino	Cosmos Furiosi	dJoker67
Andre Mattos	Bryan Laubenthal	CrackedMan	Dominic D.
Andrea Uhde	Bryan 'Mocharaid' Gray	Craig "Doc Ryder" Brown	Donny Pascale
ANIMAFelis	Bryant Durrell	Craig S	Dove "Sun-Seed's Sword"
Anthony John Bridge	C. D. Edwards	D. Anctil, Dissapointed Humanist	Dr. MOM
	C.T. Phipps	Damion Meany	

Dunemous	Ido Grabinsky	John B.	Lexi Hernandez
Dylan Cockell, Ivory Tower	Igor Coura de Mendonça	John Bogart	Lin Wyeth
Eadee	Imran Inayat	John C. Spainhour	Linda "Eel" Lee
Edward Saxton	J. "Turncoat" Rodgers	John Canter	Iobachevsky
Elizabeth Panda Williams	J. Brocchiero	John Christensen	Loki Wyrm
Elonaplus	J. Robertson	John Hardey	Lord Doom of Neugablonz
Emmanuel MORSEAU	J. Roberts if you please	John 'johnkzin' Rudd	Luca Di Benedetto
Eric B.	Jacky Leung	John Vikør Green	Lucas L.
Eric Chapman	Jacob Helton	John Walter Biles	Lucas Scarpati
Eric Folco	Jae Lerer	John Yngve Fredrik Lundgren	Łukasz Korzeń
Erik Bergfeldt	Jael Harmon	Johnathan Byerly	M Beck
Eugene Marshall	Jahaeng Park	Jon Michael Razo	M. Alan Thomas II
Evil Bill	Jakub Hadryś	Jonas Schiött	M. Lum
Fabian Stiller-Matke	James A. Robertson	Jonathan M. Harris	M. Trudeau
Felipe Bovolon	James Beach, Esq.	Jonathan Reichman	M.Taylor
Filip Kiršek	James Bell	Jordan Millward	Magdalena "Khem" Malo
Flaviu-Octavian Bejinar & Byron Glenn Coy Wllis	James E Winfield Jr.	Jordan Springer	MAJIC-12
Franz Janson	James Holden	Joris	Malte Schultz
G Swift	James Kwan	José Bruno Malta	Manuel Hora
G. Koutsikos	James PB	Josh Parrish	Marc-André Perreault
G. Noël	James Powell	JPD	Marcus J. Williams
G.Freemann	Jason "Unit 657-Italian"	JT Ho	Mathieu LORANGE
G.Perkins	Jason Best	Julian "Jules" Burns	Matt Houck
Gabe Segura	Jason Corley	Julien Hermitte	Matt Russo
Gabriel Miller	Jason Kleinberg	Jussi Kenkkilä	Matt Streit
Generic Gamer	Jason MacKeen	Justin Delaney	Matteo Tirelli
Genesteal	Jason Zedwimer	Kari A. Clark	Mattheq
Georgy Perepechko	João Paulo Souza Silveira	Karoly Kopataki	Matthew Ball
Giantcavecrab	Jay Steven Anyong	Kat Roy	Matthew Koelling
Graeme Lewis	Jay Turner	Keiran Sparksman	Matthew Smith
Grant Anderson	JC	Keith D. Evans	Max Kaehn
Graspiloot	Jeff Lorenzen	Ken Kimbrough	Max Polun
Greg D.	Jens Cramer	Keslie E.	Michael "Edrobot" Maris
Guillaume Godet-Bar	Jens Rodemer	Kevin Fisbane	Michael Black
H.J. Jung	Jeremy "Xaren Hypr" Wildie	Kevin Lawrence	Michael Boyle
Haggai Elkayam Shalem	Jeremy Kopczynski	kibernick	Michael J N Arellano
HANATAKA Shinya	Jeremy Marshall	Kolbey Araujo	Michael J.
Harry Sillett	Jeremy Ruddy	Krister M. Michl	Michael Kelly
Heath Bentham	Jim Schofield	Kristian A. Bjørkelo	Michael Nightingale
Hidetoshi Hayakawa	Jimmy Matthews and Penelope DeRidder	Kristopher Steavens	Michael Ratcliff
Howard "HNForce" Nelson	Jin Sane	Kurt McMahon	Michael Schatz
Ian H.	Johan Fält	Leif Hassell	Michael Sullivan
		Lensman	Michał Januszewski

Michel Jean Renard	Schwartz	RPG Cru	Terence Co
Mike Blackett	Pedro Santos	Ryan Elliott	The Agent with 21 Faces
Mike Todd	Perverseness	Ryan Lybarger	The Erik
Mikhail 'Minder' Riabov	Peter Krulder	Ryan McWilliams	The Plaid Mentat
Mister Andersen	peter peretti	S.A. Hjorth	The Primogen
Morgan Gilbert	Peter Riebe	S.G.	Thomas Blick
Morgan Walther	Peter Steponaitis	Scott Banks	Thomas Hargrove
Mr. Betts of BHT	Philip K. Creswell	Scott Rick	Thomas Vanstraelen
Myrniss	Philipp Neurohr	Sean	Tim-Oliver Cramer
N.Guzman	Phillip Bailey	Sean Foster	Toby H Weingarten
Nathan M. Merzke	Piotr Kraciuk	Seth Wenger	Tobyn Jonathan Andrews
Nathan milfull	Rafael & Luciana Devera	Shafi Ziauddin	Todd Thomas
Nayib Elías	Rafe Richards	Shawn Kehoe	Toine
Neale Carter	Randall Wald	Sheev Palpatringe	Tom Doncom
Neil Silverman	Raphael Bressel	Silvio Herrera Gea	Tom Ladegard
Netigy	Rasputin172	Simon Brake	Ton Horne
Nicholas Alfred Muehlenweg.	Raymond Dittmar	Simon Smith	Tony "WarrenGFan" Saktiawan
Nicola Went	Reg Stuart	Sinan Eczacibasi	Travis Foster
Niki Chrétien	Richard "Bat" Brewster	Special Agent Stephen J. Lynch	Veronica Hamilton
Nils Jannet	Rigel J.	Special Agent Thomas Milare	Vesp
Nils Stadje	Rob Andre	Stefan Breuker	Vince Kindfuller
Ninola	Robert G. Male	Stefan Carton	Vitamancer
Noanth and her Genius, Nemesis	Robert Greathouse	Stephen Egolf	William Allee
Novellino89	Robert Lee Brewer	Stephen Esdale	Willy Kaceres
Olivier Jobin	Robert Luis Villafane	Steven Byrd	Wynand CJ Hart
Oriol Farrus	Robert Mohl	storyncode	Xarknor
Ozzy	Robert Morris	Szarkel	Xylemicarious
Patrick Sandoval	Robert Wyatt	T. Ludemann	Yannick Gueye
Paul Hayes	Rodolfo Schmauk	T.Bardoux, Negotiator with abnormal entities	Ziv Ragowsky
Pavel Jagen	Rodrigo "Sinistro" Molina	Tara Werner	
Pedro Felipe Ajzenberg	Romain Moreau	Tenno Mao V	

INVISIBLE COLLEGE

"Happy Day"	Aaron Bolyard	Seguer Vicente	Agent J Haddix
"Hiryo, Kitsune Legend"	Aaron Foster	Adrienne C.	Agent Linirlan
"Irrefutably" Thor Thorson Jr	Aaron Morgan	Afgar	Agent NAGY
2 + 2 = 5 for large values of 2	Adam & Amanda Fry	Agent Artie Hamlin http://opx-finalfrontier.wikidot.com	Agent Soldo
307 RPG Patrick Cossel	Adam Debus	Agent Dorian Osbourne	Agent Strange
A. Leslie	Adam Graham	Agent I\$kra	Agent T
A. M. Goodnight	Adam S.		Alan McNevin
	Adrià "Yggdrasil#942"		Alan-Michael Havens

Aldo "Kwako" Montoya Reynaga	Cumberland Azouth	Cass O'Roarke Catherine Modine	Connor Fraser
Alec McClain	Badger	Cathi Gertz	Conor Tuohy
Alejandro Rodriguez	Balevala	Cedric Delobelle - Anarkia	Cory Hodge
Alessandro Ravelli	BangoSkank the Malkavian	Charis Siozios	Coyotekin
Alexander Brown	Baroness Katharina Victoria	Charles Crowe	Craig Gaddis
Alexander Head	Gabriella Rehm	Charles L'Espérance	Craig Nuckles
Alexandr Trifan	Barra Sargtlin	Charles Siegel	Craig Page
Alexis, Jeremy, & Lorelei	basara	Charlie "PookaKnight"	Cy.Maggran
Alice Peng	Benn Mer	Cantrell	" CyberDyne Systems
Alonso O. Rubio	Benoit Devost	Chazz of the Story Told	Mike Dawson
AlQuick The Amazing	Benton M	Che Webster	Employee # T-70800"
Ana Imschenetsky	Bernd Linke	Chris "CAB47ATTACKS"	Cydrake
Ancellius	Bert Sanders	Byers	D. B. Rosengard
Andrea-Massimo Valcher	Bertrand Kuentzler	Chris Cowger	D. Strode
Andrei Antonio Gonzalez Reyes	Bill Shaffer	Chris Czerniak	D.T.Lee
Andrei C.S.	Billy Trobbiani	Chris Landmark	Damon T. Wilson
Andrés Montañez	Björn "the Engineer" S	Chris McGuire	Dan Keller
Andrew Franklin	Blake Deakins	Chris P4b3r0pt1c	Daniel "Dukal" Bell
Andrew Goode	Blake Elder	Chris Stevenson	Daniel "He Who Hunts the Moon" Weber
Andrew Laliberte	Boris Choteau	Chris W	Daniel "Sir Whiteout" Guariento
Andrew Oldenson	Brannen	Christopher Greer of InFurNo Gaming	Daniel Deschenes
Andrew W. Jones	Brett Arrowflight	Christian Emminger	Daniel Gochnauer
Andy "Andreas Rayne" Dodd	Brian D. Nazaryk	Christian Fernandez-Duque	Daniel Ley
Andy Blanchard	Brian Griffith	Christian J. Müller	Daniel Peterson
Andy Kwong	Brian Johnson	Christian Walters	Daniel, Trista and Eleanor Robichaud
Angelborn	Brian Quinn	Christina Martin, CEO Sound Security	DannyK
Angelo Pileggi	Brian Rivers	Christopher "Diablerist" Lenaris	Dante Laughing-Coyote
Anthony Blea	Brian Weir	Christopher Blake	Darksheer
Anthony C.	Brook Freeman	Christopher Brereton	Darkshmoo
Anthony Howell	Bryan Pearson	Christopher Campione	Darragh Creedon
Anthony Ingrao	Bryan W.	Christopher Gunning	Dashekita N Brooks
Anthony J. Pirri	Bryce A. Lynch	Christopher Hart	Dave Jones
Anthony Rybarczyk	Bryce Perry	Christopher J. Lees	David Brekelmans
Archaicwonder	Brynn Morrigan Pollard	Christopher Moreno	David Bresson
Arden Mors	C Soria	Christopher R. Wain	David 'dj' Coleman
Arkhaam	C. "Maleclypse" Smith	Christopher Schetzle	David E. Dalton
Arnodd "Hrafn" Heirksson	C. Lavin	CJ Olsen	David Edwards - "sOulhakr"
Arthur "Torakhan" Dreese	C. Martin Coulter	Claus Larsen	David Fuller
Ashen Hawke	Cameron Johnson	Clinton Williams	David Futterer
Astrid and Larry Dean	Captain Cyril Thunder, SoE, Sky Cavalry	Cody Black	David Homola
Astrid Portner	Carl Paquin	Cody L. Dobbs	David Lee Terhune
Autochthonia Malcolm	Carolyn Neumann		

David McFall	Eric Manschot	GH Trace Webster III	Jakob Maretti Bengtsen
David Rose Fraser	Erica Anne Chatham	Gianluca Guazzo	Kiilerich
David Starner	Erik Daguerre	Giulio Borelli, Barbara Castellani	Jamal L Wilkins
David Tveraas	Erik Mederos	Glen Barrett	James "Speaks-with-Pups" Wagner
Davis Phelps Jr	Ernesto Yip Valentín, Diego "Edge" Cota, Neto "Ager", Wally, Nerio the Magnificent	GNT-0000	James Dyer
Deimos, Scourge of the Panopticon	Ernie LaFountain	Gordon Gordon Gordon	James Klement
Derek Grimm	Erol Mazhar "Agent#809"	Greg Roy	James L. Bell
Derek Guder	Aksoy (on behalf of Anadolu Hikâye Anlatıcıları)	Gregory Tipton PMHNP-BC	James Piper
Derek Stoelting	Erus Umbros	Guenhwyvar	James Surano
Devin & Linny	Ervè Aimaro	Guillaume "Gilyu" Mercier	James T
Dizzy Flores	Ethan Wilk	Guillaume Paci	James Von Couwenberg
Doc Burns	Evo Shandor	H. Uhlig	Jamie Wilkinson, MS LPCC NCC
Doc Saturn	Executive Director Rob Wieland	H.E.A.L. Duchenne	Jan "Helm" Richter
Doctor Alfons Von Grawitz Ph.D.	Ezekiel McGee	Håkan Ståby	Jared Bravewater
Doctor Marigold Farmer	Fabian A. Lopez (Kórzyn iz Adbán)	Harrison G Outram	Jared Shaver
Dolce Miryam	Feian	Heather Rasinski	Jared Wadsworth
Dominic Cossel	Felix Daniels	Henry Kay	Jaron Kaplan-Parr
Don Luciano Franchetti	Felix Shafir	He-Zin Kwon	Jarrod Williams
Donnie "Lord Aludian" Roos, Jr.	Fianchetto	Hobbie Koban Regan	Jasmin Hardt
Dorian Take	Field Agent Parnell	Hopesend	Jason Berteotti
Doug M.	Flavio "Hermetic Spy" Hough	Hotblood	Jason Dickerson
Dr. Apathy	Flávio Moreira Vieira	HPLusticraft	Jason Duncan
Dr. Bang	Fluffy jr	Hugo Richard	Jason Freston
Dr. Charles Wulff, MD	Forrest Lee Spilker	Hyunsoo Kim	Jason R Goodwin
Dr. Everynne Winters	Fox Procenko	Iain MacPhee	Jason Schindler
dr. Gideon Pyro, Electrodyne Engineer	Fr. KZ	Iairos Pelagios	Javier M. Ramirez Morante
Dr. Viktor Dannik, Progenitor, DSI Supervisor	Franco Frare	Ian Sargeant	Jay A Miller
Dragos Faolan	Frank Marcelli	Ian Smith	Jay K Krank
Drew "Industrial Scribe" Scarr	Frank McCormick	Ignatius Montenegro	Jayashi Devyani
Dustin K.	Fraser Imrie	Iker Marín Estébanez	JAYSON "the14thguest" TURNER
Dustin McPherson	Frédéri "Volk Kommissar Friedrich" POCHARD	Illustrious Chris Cline	Jean-Baptiste Vlassoff
Dusty Youngs	G. Hurtubise	Incandescent Dragon Creations	Jeff Dieterle
D'Yale A.	Gabriel B. P. Costa	Isaac Carr	Jeff Ewing
Dylan Guerrero	Gamerz Nexus	Ivo de Mooij	Jeff Palmer
E.A. Embree	Garet Charnaw	J Morgan	Jen1701D
Ed Moretti	Gary Berg	J Sunsurn	Jeremy D Walker
Eder "JSS Smith" Barbosa	Geoffrey Rabe	J. J. O'Brien	Jeremiah L. Schwennen
Eleanore "CMDR Starshine" Shon	Geoffroy Heussler	J. Perez	Jeremy Bouthot
Elias Lozornio "El Mago"	George Taher	Jacob T. Durr	Jeremy Brown
Elijah B. Dixon III		Jacques Barcia	Jesper Aagaard Petersen
		Jaime J. Sandoval V.	Jim Groves
		Jaime M Garmendia III	

J-M DeFoggi	Kate Gryn	Mackenzie Belmont	Michael Catrow
Joe "The Librarian"	Katya Boestad	Magnus Skallagrimsson	Michael Kanaris
Giammarco	Keegan Clements-Housser	Marc Bevan	Michael Laitinen
Joe Arnaud	Keegan Sullivan	Marci DeLeon	Michael Merlin K
Joe Edge	Keeper of the Titanium Spork	Mark Cockerham	Michael Moore
Joe Huntz	Keith E. Hartman	Mark D. Faulkner	Michael Newton Moore
John & Kimberly Poole	Kernel	Mark Hobson	Michael Parker
John Bartley	Kevin "Three Times the Man"	Mark Kenney	Michael Pietrelli
John Bravos	Warmerdam	Mark Thompson	Michael Snapp
John Doe	Kevin C. Carpenter	Mark W Roy	Michael Sutkus, II
John K Morris	Kevin Caldwell	Markus Adair	Michael T. Rowlands
John K. Brown	Kevin Miller	Marsha "Mags The Axe" White	Michael V. Roberts
John Lambert	Kilo	Martin "Grizzly" Lagace	Michał Dąbrowski
John Morel	Kim Grønvig Hansen	Martin A McDowell	Michele Speroni
John Morris	Kimberly Godwin	Martin Vestager Ottesen	Michele Terenzi
John Murmello	KJL	Mathieu Guittard	Michelle Mamer
John Phillips	Kristin Gulling-Smith	Matt "Barnebus" Hufstetler	Mike "DaiTengu" Miller
John R. Trapasso	Kristoffer Haug Gran, The Spiciest Spyman	Matt "Chaser" Niccum	Mike "Kogenta Frost" Kromarek
John Rachwal	Kristopher Deters	Matt Timm	Mizuho Shiraishi
Johnathan Fii	Kyle Henderson	Matthew Blanski	Mk1 Chaser
Jon Weber	Kyle Walker	Matthew Broome	Moe Gray
Jon Wees	Lady A	Matthew Cramsie	Mona "The Vampire" Moonlight
Jonah "The Operative" Reeves	Landry Mauborgne	Matthew D. Melvin	Morgan Rose
Jonathan Grimm	Lars Bergendahl	Matthew Finco	Mouseychan
Jonathan Head	Lars Holgaard	Matthew Gorsky	Mr. Hedge
Jonathan Tanner	Lawrence Cicchetti	Matthew Lynn	Mychal S. Capozzi
Jonci Aguillard	Lee Moneta-Koehler	Matthew McGuire	N.Koumoundouros
Joseph Lonergan	Legosforthewin	Matthew Roberts	Nathan Henderson
Josh Moberly	Leland Saunders	Matthew Sanderson	Nathaniel C. Bailey
Joshua McKenna	Leonard Helding	Matthew Smithwick	Necrogranic
Joshua Pevner	Liam Murray	Matthew Wasiak	Neil Borden
JP Sugarbroad	Lifestealer	Matthew Webb	Neil Coaxum
Justin & Jennifer Smith-Pulsipher	Lisa "Dr. Cthulhupunk" Padol	Matthias Pettersson	Nejlah AlRahab
Justin C' de Baca	Lord Caochail	Matthieu "Archane" Nogues	Nicholas A Tan
Kaelten	Lord Fox-Huntington	Max Peters	Nicholas and Kelley Radcliffe
Kai Schiefer	Lorenzo Irizarry - Covert Librarian	Maxim "Samuel Morgan" Parisée	Nicholas Cler
Kaitlynn Renata Brennan	Lucas van Toren	May Cybele Mabie	Nicholas D Dragisic
Karl Fiebiger	Luke Katafiasz	Melissa Williams	Nick Burtner
Karl Fournier	Luke Maclean	Metaphysica	Nick Nigro
Karl Hagen Mann	M. Boucher	Mette Arenkiel	Nigel "Nubz" Sanford
Karl Sell	M. Gonzalez-Trelles	Michael Bowman	Nigel Wright
Karpomatic	M.Berar	Michael Burns	Nikhil D. Majumdar

Niki Giokas	Quaqotik	Savan "Ashwathama" Gupta	Steve Wolfy Scott
Nikika Giovanni	R C Kim	Scott Gillilan	Steven Alban
Nimrod Jones	R. Crawford	Scott McFarlane	Steven Collins
Nina Blain	R. Sean Callahan	Seamus Mahoney	Stuart Armstrong
NixElleborus Mahaema	Random Error	Sean Hamilton	Sunney57
NJ Glassford	Ray Vecchio	Sean McCarthy	Supplementary Archivist Bee
Noble Thayer Graves, Clan Tremere	Red Kujala	Sean McG	Sylvain "OgGy" Tanguy
Noskavian	Remi Letourneau	Sean Michael Gallagher	Synapse
Nox Durand	Rev. Phillip Malerich	Sean O'Neill	T Beck
Nube Negra	Reza S. Adams	Sean 'Onibear' Davis	T.H. Cooke
Odanuki	Ricardo "Sardonis" Penteado. I would rather be listed as a Black (Or Grey) Suit, though. =)	Sean Smith	Tarik Horton
Odidikillu	Rich Bream	Seana McGuinness	Tec the Rogue
Oliver Haase	Richard "EllwynX" Ayars	Second Star to the Right Corps	Ted Pertzborn
Ollie & Maddie	Richard "Vidlian" Greene	Seo Gyeong-joon	Tethriel
Olympic Cards and Comics	Richard deMorris	Septymes	Thaine Hepler
P. Roffel	Richard Forster	Seth D Johnson	The Bear Is Driving
Palpacwel	Richard Lee	Sethreich Ardestahdt	The Roosevelt Group
Panu "Possessed" Laukkonen	Richard Libera	Shan "Landback" Morris	The Tate Fitzgerald Foundation
Pat Doherty	Richard Troester	Shane "Asharon" Sylvia	Thomas Bither
Patrick Boyle	Rob Bessey	Shane Forbes	Thomas Devine
Patrick Buchanan	Robbie Soussan	Shaun D. Burton	Thomas J. Egan
Patrick Carrick	Robert Biskin	Shawn P	Thomas Maund
Patrick Chapman	Robert Gilson	Shawn Pace	Thomas W. Taylor
Patrick Dunn	Robert Lundgren	Shawn Roberts	Tiago Barão
Patrick Hutchison	Roberto Hoyle	Shea Anderson	Tibor Durgonics
Patrick Rinesin	Rodd Clossen	Sifu Dustin Rahn	Tifereth
Patrick VanDusen	Rodolphe Duhil	Simon Flatliner Jones	Tiffany Korta
Paul "Anorak" Record	Rodrigo Moreira Fagundes	Sir Chris	Tim "Danger" Hall
Paul Bellitto	Ronald Conner	Sir Gor	Tim Czarnecki
Paul Gilbert	Ross Ramsay	Somalucard	Tim Mushel
Paul H Hubbard	RtG Gary	Special Agent Eric Smailys	Timothy & Mitzi Gousie
Paul Lukianchuk	Ryan Porter	Special Agent Norman Mal	Todd Hill
Paul Stefko	Ryan Summers	Stalks-the-Reef	Tom Moss
Pawel Daruk	S. Briggs	Standa Bear	Tommy Svensson
Peter Carr	S. Silva-Miramont	Star Eagle	Tony Adkins
Peter D Engebos	S.Martin	Stefano Monachesi	Tony Patterson
Peter De Kinder	Salem Pulsifer	Stephen "Quantumboost" Smith	Tracy Pinkerton
Peter Merkel	Sam Hing	Stephen R. Post	Travis Bryant
Peter Patrnčiak	Samedarkclouds	Stephen Shulusky	Trish Pettinati
Phil Masters	Samir El Aouar	Steve Farmer	Tristan Sammons
Pip Padden	Sandra Damiana Swan	Steve Flores	Troy Lenze
pshep666		Steve L.	Ty Larson

Tyler "Walrock" Reed	William Peter Montague, Ph.D., M.D., D.D.	Chris & JoAnn Alexander	Liliana S. - Syndicate
Tyler J Cvetan	William Smith, The Nightmare King	Comptroller E. Ferrer	Mike Nudd
U2mad	WOLVERTRON	Daniel J. Gebel	Pau Aragonés Illanas
Unbreakable Jane Jones	Wormwood	Danny Cuppen	Philippe "Levi"
Urgewurm	Xander Barth	David "Wush" Santiago	Professor Harold Kently, High Scientist
V. Kioustelidis	Yiodan	David Zurhaar	Rafat Pośnik
V.Kärkkäinen	Yodo	Devin Poor	Rigel V. -Void Engineer
Val Wikblad	Yohan Odivart	Doc Eternal	Russell "Operative Troll" Fox
Vincent "d1g1c0nd@" Arebalo	Yoo, Seung Hyun	Evangeline Black	Sam Young
Vincent Longobardi	Zardoz	Ignacio J Gallegos	Six
Vincent Shadowlight	Zeb Hammond	Iteration X	Spyder na Taliesin
Virgoze	Zetos	Ivo Goudzwaard	Stephen Joseph Ellis
Vistani Radanavic	"Mr. Anybody"	J. Alan Lawson	Stuart "Pattern Spider" Adam
Vito F. Chiarella	Agent Mark Collins	Jacek Duch Danilczuk	TechnocratJT
waelcyrge	"Anastasios "Cipher" Barbisis	Jay Thornton	Thomas Klein
Walter B. Schirmacher	Sophie Vidali	Jennifer	To_Bouri_tou_Void_Engineer
Warren P Nelson	Marinos Louros"	Jesse Cowell	Vegard Kivle
Wes C.	Anatole Serial	Joachim Randa	Warren
Will Inskip	Andrew Cummings, Proctor of NM-001.88.2	John Trenton	William Overstreet
William "Raparth" Franks, Oracle of Dimensional Science	Batro	jtk18	Xiu Tong
William G Tinnin-Timm	BioMechanist	Kelly J Clark	
		Kerry Birmingham	

IVORY TOWER

A k e p h a l o S	Dataweaver	Jon R. De Gopegi	Regina "Onyx" O'Reilly
Adam 'Beyonce' Lowe	Dr. Maxwell Ziegler, PhD Hyperdimensional Physics	Jörg Fick	Robert Riley
Adam Doochin	Elyezer Costa	Justin Bromberg	Ryan Evans
Andrew "Inf0squ1t0"	Emilio J. "Krusmir" Sanchez-Sierra	Justin Buckley	Ryan-O, Lord of the Thunderbats
Mcmenemy	Eric Rainey	Lance "Ailon Rouge" Carter	Sagittarius A*
Anton A. Adam	Götz Weinreich	M.Pittman	Scott "Operator" Berger
B. Doyle	Herman Hassel — di Magvillus	Marcos Slomp	Scott Kelly
Bentley W. Chism	Jared Oliver Tibbs	Mat O'Blenis	Scott P
Brian Bartholomew	Jason and Heather Santo, Seers of Kronos	Matt Breece	Shawn "Q-02" Bowman
Bugmaster	jason e. bean	Matthew Golden	Terry from Mage the Podcast
Chip Warden	Jeff Robinson	Michael Scheu	The Magnificent Melvin Davis!!
"Christopher Robin Morris Phillips, perennis	Jessica Lilith Darke	Natali Sahir Gerani	Thierry De Gagné
Philosophiae Candidatum, bani Bonisagus"	John Robertson	Neil "Polk" Stevens	Tyler Sherkin
Cintain 昆遊龍		Nicolas Villatte	Zachery Naldret
Cynthia Jerkins		Park Sun-young	
		Patric Thomas	

TECHNOCRACY

RELOADED

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature:
Demeanor:
Essence:

Affiliation:
Sect:
Concept:

Attributes

Physical

Strength _____ ●0000
 Dexterity _____ ●0000
 Stamina _____ ●0000

Social

Charisma _____ ●0000
 Manipulation _____ ●0000
 Appearance _____ ●0000

Mental

Perception _____ ●0000
 Intelligence _____ ●0000
 Wits _____ ●0000

Abilities

Talents

Alertness _____ 00000
 Art _____ 00000
 Athletics _____ 00000
 Awareness _____ 00000
 Brawl _____ 00000
 Empathy _____ 00000
 Expression _____ 00000
 Intimidation _____ 00000
 Leadership _____ 00000
 Streetwise _____ 00000
 Subterfuge _____ 00000

Skills

Crafts _____ 00000
 Drive _____ 00000
 Etiquette _____ 00000
 Firearms _____ 00000
 Martial Arts _____ 00000
 Meditation _____ 00000
 Melee _____ 00000
 Research _____ 00000
 Stealth _____ 00000
 Survival _____ 00000
 Technology _____ 00000

Knowledges

Academics _____ 00000
 Computer _____ 00000
 Cosmology _____ 00000
 Enigmas _____ 00000
 Esoterica _____ 00000
 Investigation _____ 00000
 Law _____ 00000
 Medicine _____ 00000
 Occult _____ 00000
 Politics _____ 00000
 Science _____ 00000

Spheres

Data _____ 00000
 Dimensional Science _____ 00000
 Entropy _____ 00000

Forces _____ 00000
 Life _____ 00000
 Matter _____ 00000

Mind _____ 00000
 Primal Utility _____ 00000
 Time _____ 00000

Advantages

Backgrounds

_____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000

Enlightenment

● O O O O O O O O O

Other Traits

_____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000
 _____ 00000

Primal Energy



Health

Bruised	-0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated		<input type="checkbox"/>

Experience

TECHNOCRACY

RELOADED



Welcome to the Future

As the third decade of the 21st century dawns, the Technocratic Union stands on the cutting edge of a future imperiled. As science and technology draw humanity closer than ever before, certain factions within the Masses display gross negligence, undermining the Union's work and endangering the world for shortsighted gains. Despite global telecommunications, new frontiers in virtually every field of study, and an understanding of the universe only dreamed of by earlier generations, humanity faces threats on all sides.

Can You Save It?

Climate change threatens to destroy life as we know it. Religious fundamentalism breeds terror around the globe. Diseases, once eradicated in the developed world through vaccination, have returned due to antivaxxer movements. Totalitarian, nationalist governments rise as the Masses succumb to fear of the other. The world stands on the brink of destruction, and it is up to the agents and operatives of the Technocratic Union to save it...or be its ultimate destruction.

Technocracy Reloaded peels back the curtain and examines the role of the Technocracy in Mage 20th Anniversary Edition. The various *Future Fates* presented in Mage 20 are examined and this book introduces a few of its own. This book provides a detailed look at life within the Technocracy, expanded information on the Conventions, a wealth of equipment, Adjustments, and Procedures, a breakdown of the various shadow conspiracies and factions within the Technocratic Union, and tips for running your own Technocracy Chronicle.



20th ANNIVERSARY EDITION
MAGE
THE ASCENSION

