



S U A D O W R U N



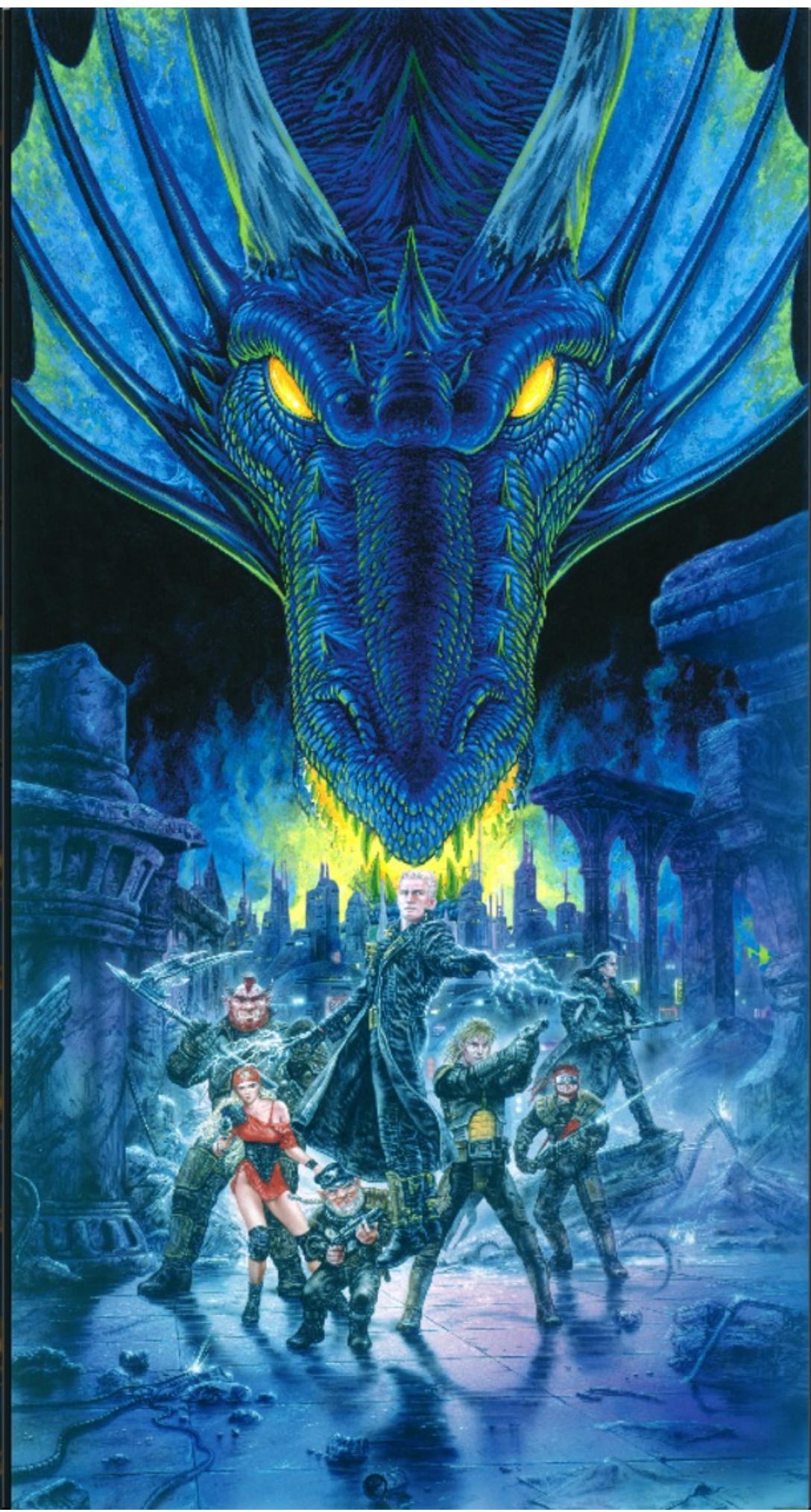
PREFACE TO THE TEXT

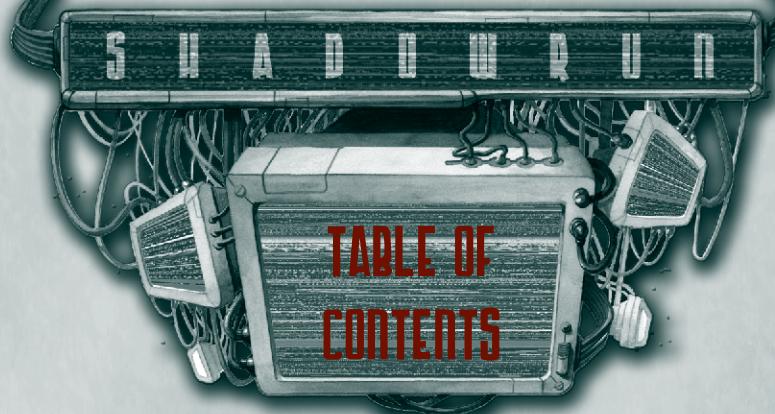
20 years of active existence has created a rich, compelling universe called **Shadowrun**. The **Shadowrun** universe has its own history, science, races and politics. The information herein has been collected and compiled from dozens of novels, source and rule books and adventure titles totaling well over six million words. To make all this information easy to read, the WizKids team has broken down the global concepts into easy to read chapters, so the reader can go directly to a subject of particular interest.

Please enjoy the amazing blend of a magical and

technologic future world we call







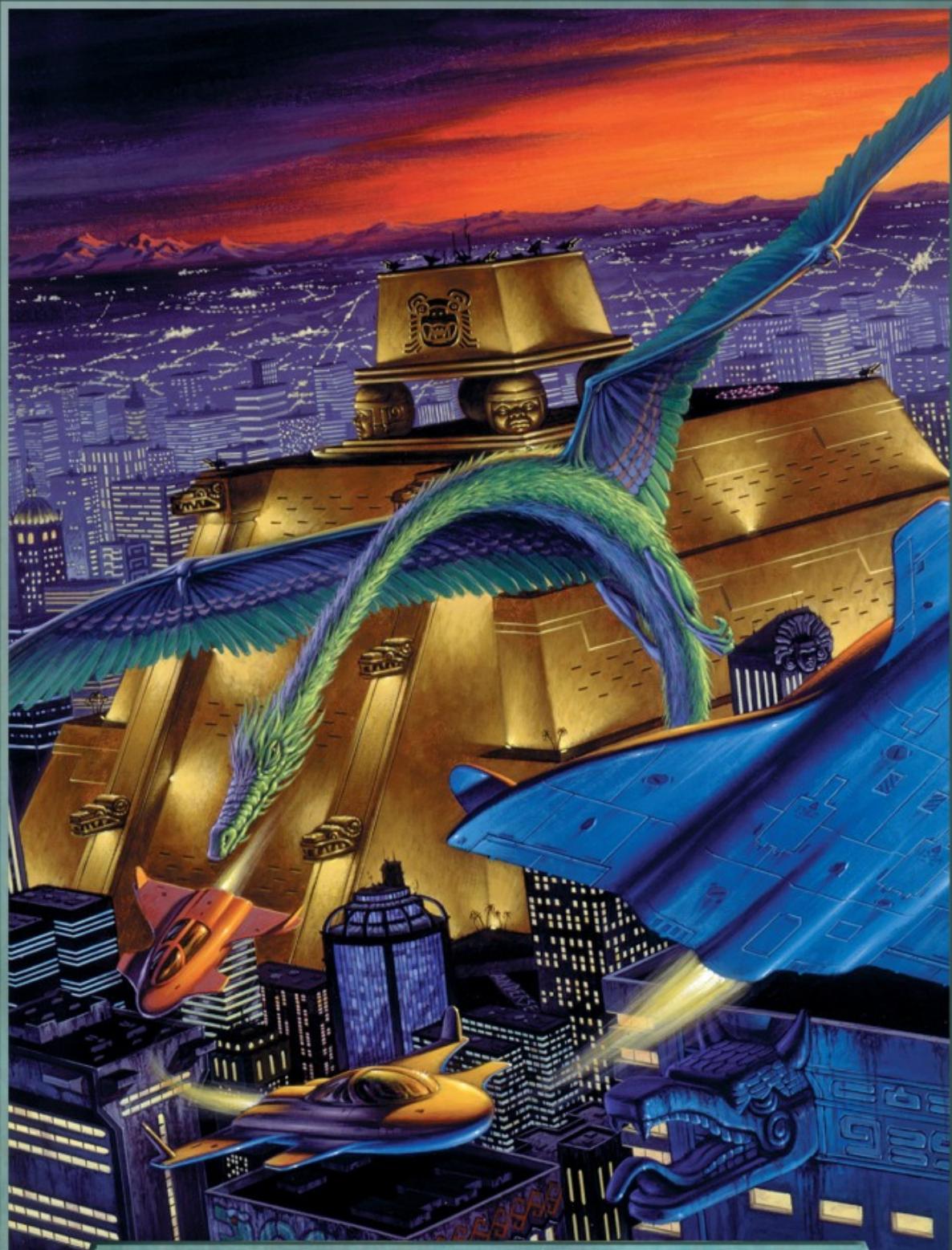
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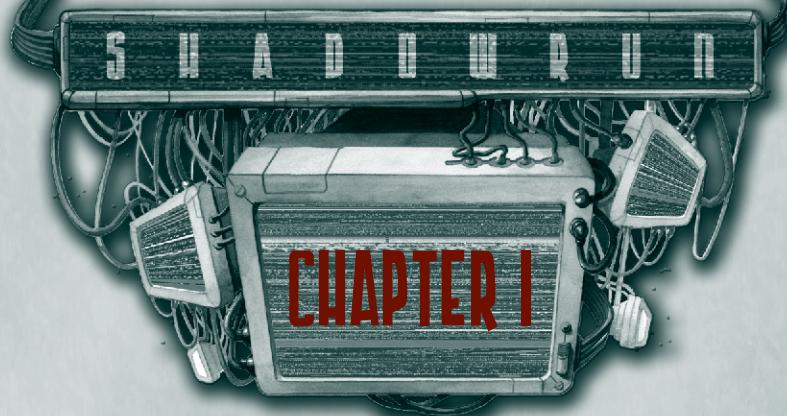




AZTLAN

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THE WORLD OF SHADOWRUN

WELCOME TO THE SHADOWS

Watch your back. Shoot straight. Conserve ammo. And never, ever, cut a deal with a dragon.

—*Street proverb*

The year is 2063. The world is changed—some say Awakened.

A long lull in the mystical energies of the universe has subsided, and magic has returned to the world. Elves, dwarfs, orks and trolls have thrown off their human guises and assumed their true forms. Many experts claim that Earth has gone through several such incarnations of waxing and waning magic. These different eras are called "worlds." The Sixth World, the newest age of magic, has just begun. Creatures in the wild have changed as well, transforming into beasts of myth and legend. The many traditions of magic have come back to life, and shamans and mages have carved out a place for themselves in the new world. Many aspects of the Awakening remain mysteries, but society fights on to assimilate the ways of magic into a world dominated by technology.

The decades that followed the Awakening were years of panic and turmoil, as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse seemed to race across the Earth. Cultures that had never lost touch with their mystical pasts began to use magic against the great nations that had long oppressed them. The vast global telecommunications network collapsed under an assault by a mysterious computer virus. Dragons soared into the skies. Epidemics and famine ravaged the world's population. Clashes between newly Awakened races and the rest of humanity became common. All central authority crumbled, and the world began to spiral into the abyss.

But man and his kin are hardy creatures. Out of the devastation and chaos, a fragile new social order slowly emerged. Advanced simulated sensory technology (simsense) helped eradicate the last vestiges of the computer virus and replaced the old telecommunications network with the new virtual-reality world of the Matrix. Amerindians, elves, orks and dwarfs formed new nations. While environmental degradation and

pollution have made many areas uninhabitable, eco-groups wage war on polluters, and Awakened powers use incredible magics to heal the Earth. Central governments have balkanized into smaller nations and city-states, as fear of the world's changes drives wedges between peoples of different backgrounds. Vast metropolitan sprawls known as metroplexes cover the landscape; these urban jungles have swallowed whole regions. Police departments unable to contain crime waves and civil unrest have been privatized or their work contracted out to corporations.

Megacorporations, a law unto themselves, have become the new superpowers. The entire planet speaks their language; the nuyen has become the global monetary standard. The megacorps play a deadly game, paying pawns in the shadows to help them get an edge on the competition—legally or otherwise. Meanwhile, executives and wage slaves hole up in their corporate enclaves, safe behind layers of security and indoctrination. Outside the walls of these arcologies and gated communities, whole stretches of the sprawls have become ungovernable. Gangs rule the streets; the forgotten masses suffer, lacking even a System Identification Number (SIN) to give them any rights. These outcasts, dissidents and rebels live off the dregs of society, squatting in long-abandoned buildings, surviving through crime and predatory instincts. Many band together, some for survival and some to wield their own twisted forms of power.

Just as the second half of the 20th century saw enormous technological advances, so has the 21st century continued to make technological leaps beyond what was thought possible. The greatest advances of this century have been made in the computer sciences and metahuman-computer interconnectivity. These advances are best represented by the Matrix, a globe-spanning virtual society of users and computer systems.

The difficulty of metahuman survival in the harsh 21st century has led to the development of new forms of technology that make it possible for metahumanity to perform the many complex jobs required in this modern age. This new technology is collectively called cybertechnology.

Metahumanity has turned its collective eyes back toward space; the number of space habitats orbiting the Earth is proof of the great advances in the space sciences.

Leaps continue to be made in more mundane fields as well, such as transportation and entertainment. Hovercraft technology has become affordable and commonplace, while live and recorded entertainments have become a 3-D experience called trideo and simsense.

Technology, too, has changed people. No longer satisfied with being merely flesh, many have turned to the artificial enhancements of cyberware to make themselves more than human. Some acquire implants that allow them to interface directly with machines, like deckers who run the Matrix with a cyberdeck and programs or riggers who jack into vehicles or security systems and become one with them. Others seek to push the limits of their physical capabilities, testing themselves on the streets against other technologically enhanced warriors. The human of 2063 is stronger, smarter and faster than his predecessors.

In the world of 2063, the metroplexes are monsters that cast long shadows. And in the cracks between the giant corporate structures, shadowrunners find their homes. Entire societies live and die in a black-market underworld, exploited and abused, yet powerful in their own way. The Mafia, Yakuza and other crime syndicates

have grown explosively as their networks provide anything that people want to buy. Shadowrunners are the professionals of this culture, where self-sufficiency is vital. When the megacorps want a job done but don't want to dirty their hands, they turn to the only people who can pull it off: the shadowrunners. Though only the most confidential government or corporate databases even know of a shadowrunner's existence, the demand for his or her services is high. Below is a list of archetypal shadowrunners and their skills.

- ★ Deckers can slide like a whisper through the databases of giant corporations, spiriting away the only thing of real value—information.
- ★ Street samurai are enforcers for hire whose combat skills and reflexes make them the ultimate urban predators.
- ★ Riggers can manipulate vehicles and drones for a variety of purposes.
- ★ Magicians, those rare folk who possess the gift of wielding and shaping the magical energies that now surround the Earth, are sought after to spy on the competition, sling spells against an enemy, commit magical sabotage, and any other purpose that their employers can dream up.

All these individuals sell their skills to survive, taking on the tasks too illegal or dangerous for others to dare.



THE RACES OF SHADOWRUN

Magic is most obviously displayed in Shadowrun by the four subgroups of *Homo sapiens* besides the predominant *Homo sapiens sapiens*: elf (*Homo sapiens nobilis*), dwarf (*Homo sapiens pumilionis*), ork (*Homo sapiens robustus*) and troll (*Homo sapiens ingentis*). Non-humans are known as metahumans, while the five subgroups as a whole (including humans) are known as metahumanity. All are human beings—at least according to the geneticists. Racists say differently.

In the early 2060s, humans are still the most populous race on the planet. Each of the other races is represented about equally, but they are scattered unevenly across the globe. In some places, humans are an extreme minority, but those tend to be areas where other races have gathered for safety, protection and isolation.

Using humans as the standard, the following are general definitions of the other races:

Dwarfs are harder, stronger and more willful—i.e., stubborn—than humans. They also have thermographic vision, which allows them to see radiated infrared (heat) energy simultaneously with the normal light spectrum. They move more slowly than the other races, but they are also more resistant to disease. And yes, they are short.

Elves are more agile and tend to be more classically charismatic than humans. They also have low-light vision, which enables them to see clearly in near-total darkness.

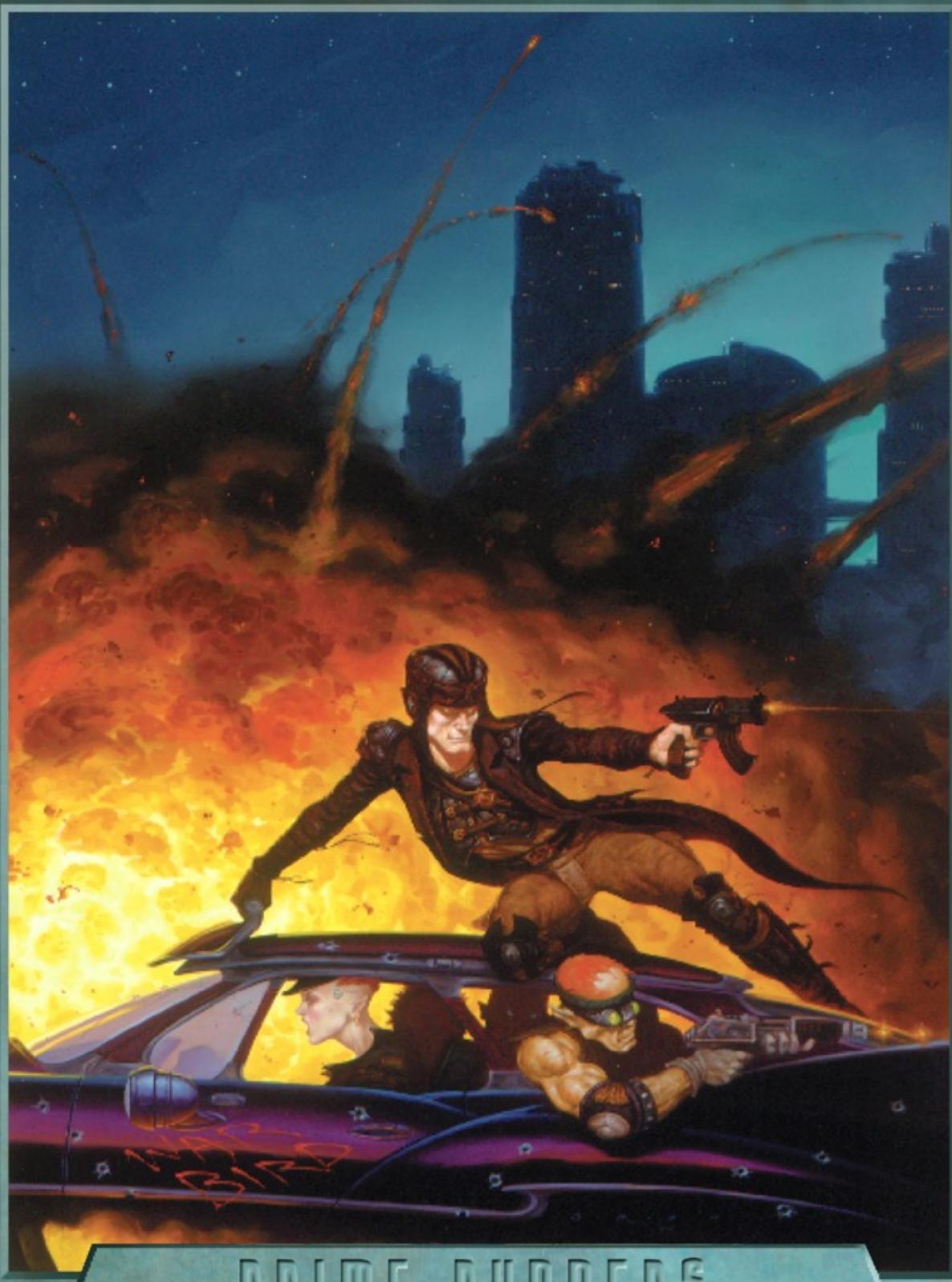
Orks are much tougher, stronger and less charismatic; they also seem on average to be less acute, or intelligent, than humans. They too have low-light vision.

Trolls are big and nasty. They are a lot tougher, slower, stronger, less charismatic, less acute and less willful than humans. They have thermographic vision, long arms that give them an advantage in hand-to-hand combat, and extremely tough skin with bony deposits that makes them more resistant to damage.

RUNNING IN THE SHADOWS

It is said in the business circles of the mid-21st century that shadowrunners are vital to modern society, and oddly enough, it's true. Shadowrunners are vital, specifically to modern corporate society. Despite the romantic image of a lone hero up against the capitalist corporate empire, in reality shadowrunners exist only because the corporations need them.

The fact is, everything in the 21st century is tagged, cataloged and cross-indexed within a micron of its life. The Matrix knows all, and few escape the reach of its informational tendrils. With the right search programs, you can find out anything about anyone. Shadowrunners, however, are ghosts in the information machine, SINless individuals who have skills the corps need. Shadowrunners are vital because they are deniable assets: invisible, untraceable. As far as society is concerned, shadowrunners don't exist, so they can freely do the corps' dirty work.



PRIME PUNTERS

RULES OF THE GAME

There is a delicate balance between corporate need and corporate greed. Runners walk that line every day. One step too far in the wrong direction, and a corporation might decide the runners are worth more dead than alive. If runners were nothing more than a constant threat to corporate security, the corps would wipe them out in a second. But the corps need runners, so they observe certain unwritten rules when it comes to hiring and using those who live in the shadows. There's no profit in wiping out a useful asset. Good runners know the rules of the corporate chess game and how to play by them. Bad runners usually end up dead.

COMPANY MEN

While most shadowrunners are freelance operatives, working for the highest bidder and living hand-to-mouth, some in the shadows choose a different path. They become full-time employees of a particular corporation. Known as company men or "Mr. Johnsons"—along with many other, more colorful names—corporate shadowrunners provide their patrons with dependable shadow-assets the corp can call on at any time.

There are many benefits to working for one corp: regular pay, new gear when you need it, a roof over your head and the backing of a corporate patron. Sometimes company men get their hands on gear that the rest of the world doesn't even know exists yet. Corporate employers expect the best from their professional shadowrunners and provide the best for them to make it happen. Perhaps the most important benefit of being a company man is knowing where you stand. In the shifting alliances of the shadows, you may work for one corp one week and its archrival the next. In a situation like that, it's difficult to know who your friends are. Working for one corporation, the company man has a better idea of who his friends and enemies are at any given time.

Corporate-retained shadowrunners are seen by some as violating the much-cherished image of the shadowrunner as a romantic rebel mercenary, fighting corporate oppression and taking from the rich in Robin Hood fashion to give to the poor—namely, himself. Company men are often shunned by freelance shadowrunners who subscribe to the "sellout" theory.

THE LIFE OF MR. JOHNSON

"Mr. Johnson" generally has the shortest life expectancy of any corporate employee. From the corp's point of view, he knows too much about the company's dirty laundry and black ops to be entirely safe. From the shadowrunner's point of view, he's an untrustworthy corporate shill who's probably burned at least a few runners in his day. So the question is, who in his right mind becomes a Mr. Johnson? Basically, Mr. Johnsons come in two types: the professional Johnson (a corporate fixer or a freelancer working for a corp) and the amateur.

The amateur Mr. Johnson is someone in need of shadowrunners for a particular job—usually a corporate exec with some resources at his or her disposal. Amateur Johnsons don't work with runners on a regular basis, and

for various reasons of their own they have chosen not to go through the standard channels available to them. It might be a secret project that the Johnson can't trust anyone else with or a personal agenda that doesn't necessarily mesh with the corp's plans (or at least with the plans of the Johnson's immediate superiors). These guys are Johnsons because they don't have a choice. Their runs can get tricky, because they often involve intercorp politics or other personal agendas.

Amateur Johnsons also include various non-corporate folk who aren't used to hiring or working with shadowrunners. You can usually tell an amateur Johnson right away: they tend to be nervous, flustered and unfamiliar with the unwritten rules of the shadows. Most amateur Johnsons work through fixers and middlemen, and their inquiries are often clumsy. Still, some corporate execs who have never worked with shadowrunners before carry themselves like professional Johnsons. A lot of the skills used in the boardroom apply equally well to dealing with the shadows.

The professional Johnson is the type shadowrunners deal with most of the time: corporate agents whose business is hiring shadowrunners. Generally, professional Johnsons are on the fast track to corporate power, and their connections with the shadows are their key to the top. They have dirt on everyone in the company, and they're more than willing to use their contacts and knowledge of the shadows to protect themselves and advance their own cause. Keep an eye on these folks, because they often end up in a corner office using the power they've accumulated. It can be good to know a former Johnson who owes you a favor, and bad to know one with a grudge against you.

Contrary to popular belief, the professional Johnson's job is not hiring shadowrunners to set them up for a fall or otherwise sell them out. Yes, Johnsons lie. Any Johnson who tells you the whole truth is either crazy or desperate. However, a Johnson who makes a habit of setting up shadowrunners isn't going to be a Johnson for long. A successful Mr. Johnson needs a good reputation to attract and keep quality shadow-talent, just like a fixer needs a solid reputation to maintain his network of contacts. A Johnson who sets up a team of runners either doesn't care about his reputation—possibly because he plans to get out of the shadow-business—or doesn't know about the double-cross any more than the runners do. Corporate higher-ups have been known to set up Johnsons just like Johnsons are said to set up runners.

THE GREAT DRAGONS OF THE WORLD

Hestaby

Lair: Mt. Shasta, California Free State

Female dragons are renowned for their strength and cunning, and Hestaby is a prime mover and shaker behind the scenes. For many years, Hestaby has claimed Mt. Shasta in the California Free State as her domain and protected the surrounding land against anyone who would try to take it.

Lofwyr

Lair: Saeder-Krupp Headquarters, Rhine-Rhur Megaplex, German Alliance

Widely considered the most powerful creature in the Sixth World, even by his fellow dragons, Lofwyr adapted quickly to the modern world and shrewdly invested his vast sums of wealth into a corporation. Saeder-Krupp Heavy Industries has become the largest, wealthiest and most powerful megacorporation in the world.

Ghostwalker

Lair: Denver, Front Range Free Zone

The great dragon Ghostwalker is Lofwyr's peer in terms of age and experience, though Ghostwalker is not as familiar with the modern world, having only recently returned from a long sojourn in the higher astral planes. His first action upon awakening was to lay claim to his old domain, which includes the Denver Front Range Free Zone. Having seen the great dragon's power, the other nations had little choice but to agree.

HISTORICAL EVENTS IN SHADOWRUN

1990s: Hacker groups dedicated to exposing security holes and flaws in the Internet became more proactive. Other groups form as well, using similar techniques but bound together by social or political agendas, or simply for their own gain. Viruses begin to proliferate across the Internet.

1999: The U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of Seretech Corporation's right to maintain an armed force for the protection of its personnel and property, effectively legitimizing private corp armies.

2001: The U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of Shiawase Corporation's right to extraterritoriality, thus giving Shiawase and other multinational corporations the same rights and privileges as foreign governments.

2002: The first optical chip that can stand up to electromagnetic pulse effects is constructed.

2003: A flash flood in the North Sea region of Germany spreads a deluge of toxic water everywhere. Hamburg is flooded in sewage, and several nuclear plants require emergency shutdowns.

2004: In Great Britain, a nuclear meltdown in Kent creates a local irradiated zone and kills more than 6,000 people.



TIP TAIRNGIRE

Rhonabwy

Lair: Llandovery, Wales

Rhonabwy is a great dragon who lairs in a region of Wales, a domain he claimed shortly after his awakening. Rather than buying a megacorporation outright, Rhonabwy is a shadow-investor, owning shares in numerous corporations and business interests. Rhonabwy is a collector with a vast hoard. Legend has it that he has a rival, a sea dragon that dwells in Cardigan Bay; he is also rumored to have ties with certain legends about King Arthur.

Celedyr

Lair: Caerleon, Wales

Rhonabwy's fellow Welsh dragon is Celedyr, who lairs at Caerleon in southeastern Wales. Communication and languages fascinate Celedyr, making him a natural ally for Transys Neuronet Communications. Celedyr has a somewhat kinder attitude toward the young races than Rhonabwy, though he's quite ruthless when it comes to protecting his own interests.

Aden

Lair: Mt. Ararat, Turkey

The great dragon Aden is best known for his devastating attack on the city of Tehran after its ruling ayatollah declared a jihad against the Awakened. Aden systematically destroyed the city and then retreated to his lair high atop Mt. Ararat in neighboring Turkey. Aden is a sirrush, a variety of eastern dragon found in the Middle East and Asia Minor. Something of a contemplative, Aden prefers the solitude of his lair and rarely concerns himself with the affairs of others.

2005: A major earthquake rocks New York City, killing 200,000 and doing billions ofuyen in damage. The corps rebuild the city in exchange for certain concessions that leave the tycoons effectively in charge.

2005-2006: In 2005, backed by Japanese corporate interests, South Korea declares war on North Korea. By the end of the year North Korea is overrun. Emboldened by the success of the Korean Conflict, Japan soon proclaims itself the Japanese Imperial State.

2006: The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization succeeds in cloning live samples of the extinct Tasmanian tiger from frozen tissue samples.

2008: A meteor collides with the Mir I space platform (recently sold by the Russians to the Harris-3M corporation), killing two of the crew outright. The rest die later when Harris-3M fails to launch a rescue mission.

2009: In a clash known as the Lone Eagle incident, Native American freedom fighters capture a missile silo in northwest Montana and threaten to launch the missiles unless the U.S. government and the corps return all Indian land.

2009-2010: In response to the Lone Eagle incident, the U.S. Congress passes the Re-Education and Relocation Act in late 2009. The Act calls for the confinement of anyone connected in any way to the Sovereign American Indian Movement. Canada's Parliament passes the Nepean Act, legalizing internment camps for Native Americans. Throughout 2010, thousands of Native Americans are shipped off to "re-education centers." Many never return.

Hualpa

Lair: Somewhere in Amazonia

The great dragon Hualpa is something of an enigma, even by dragon standards. He is perhaps the most prominent feathered serpent in the world, having led a coalition of Awakened forces (including several other dragons) to overthrow the government of Brazil and establish the nation of Amazonia. Though not the first dragon to attack a sovereign nation, Hualpa was the first to establish one of his own and, thus far, has been the most successful at it.

Lung

Lair: T'ai Shan, central China

Lung is primarily consumed by an age-old struggle with his rival, the great dragon Ryumyo. The two have been fighting a proxy war against each other since the dawn of the Sixth World (and for some time before that, in a previous Age). Recently, both have moved to positions of greater prominence in Asia as their conflict has escalated.

Ryumyo

Lair: Unknown, presumably somewhere in Japan

Ryumyo, Lung's fellow eastern dragon and rival, is at least as mysterious as Lung. He has only been seen in public a handful of times, and hardly at all in recent years. Ryumyo's power base is concentrated in Japan, where he originally enjoyed considerable influence with the Yakuza (and, through them, several Japanese megacorporations). Ryumyo has long been a shadow-power in Japan, pulling strings behind the scenes and arranging matters to suit his various schemes.

2010: Virally Induced Toxic Allergy Syndrome (VITAS) is the world's new Black Death. The global plague kills 25 percent of the world's population in one year.

2011: The Awakening begins. The term UGE (Unexplained Genetic Expression) enters the popular lexicon, as elven and dwarven children are born to human parents.

2012: The great dragon Dunkelzahn makes his first appearance near Cherry Creek Lake in Denver. The resulting interview gives the world its first clue about the extent of the rise of magic that came to be called the Awakening.

2012-2018: The Native American Nations (NAN) use magic as their primary weapon against the American and Canadian military in what comes to be called the North American Indian War. The havoc reaches its height on August 17, 2017, when Mt. Hood, Mt. Rainier, Mt. St. Helens and Mt. Adams all erupt in cataclysmic fury.

2015: The Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone wins its independence from China, thanks to Triad and corporate backing.

2015-2016: The orbit of the U.S. space station Freedom begins to decay. Scientists predict that it will burn up in Earth's atmosphere within two years. In 2016, Ares Industries purchases NASA from the United States government, stabilizes Freedom's orbit and begins expanding the station's facilities.

2018: The Treaty of Denver acknowledges the sovereignty of the NAN over most of western North America. Provisions include the establishment and maintenance of cities like Seattle as extraterritorial extensions of various governments and the retention of most of California by the United States. Denver becomes the "Treaty City," under joint administration by the signing parties.

OTHER DRAGONS

Alamais is Lofwyr's brother, another great western dragon. Alamais has not adapted to the modern world as well as his brother has and remains jealous of Lofwyr's success. He despises Lofwyr's corporate wheeling and dealing as "weak" and beneath a great dragon. Instead, he manipulates various radical policlubs and terrorist groups to further his own goals, which include keeping the nations of Europe divided, where Lofwyr would unite them under Saeder-Krupp's logo.

Mujaji, the "Rain Queen" of Africa, is a great feathered serpent with a lair near the Cape of Good Hope. She tends to keep to her own affairs.

Arleesh is another female great feathered serpent, but she is more active in mortal affairs than Mujaji. Fairly young by dragon standards, Arleesh is devoted to protecting the world against Awakened threats of which the young races are as yet unaware and unprepared to handle.

Masaru is a great eastern dragon associated with rebel factions in the Philippines. He's also fairly young by great dragon standards and fiercely dedicated to his ideals, which primarily involve protecting "his" islands from outsiders (including the Empire of Japan).

Sirrung the "Destroyer" is something of a draconic terrorist, a great dragon who has supported Awakened causes by striking against government and even civilian targets. Sirrung was last seen publicly as part of the coalition that overthrew the Brazilian government and established Amazonia. His current whereabouts are unknown.

Dr. Hosato Hikita creates the first-generation ASIST (Artificial Sensory Induction System Technology), making simsense a reality.

2019: Transys Corporation announces the successful implantation of the first cyberlimb in a human being, a virtuoso violinist who lost her left hand in a freak accident while debarking from a bullet train.

2020: In response to a jihad declared against the emerging metahuman races by Iran's ruling ayatollah, the dragon Aden demolishes the city of Tehran.

The World Bank, suffering from financial problems, is replaced by Global Financial Services, a Zurich-based financial corporation. Ares Industries unveils its new space platform, Apollo.

2021: Spontaneous UGE occurs around the world as adults and teens across the planet transform into new metahuman races, dubbed "orks" and "trolls." The event is called Goblinization.

2022: Cuba, Jamaica, Grenada, Bermuda and the Virgin Islands form the Caribbean League.

The Commonwealth of Australia enters into a mutual support pact with New Zealand, forming the Australia and New Zealand Allied Confederation (ANZAC).

2024: The first cyberterminals are created. These huge isolation chambers are the grandfathers of the modern cyberdeck.

The U.S. presidential election is held over the Internet for the first time, using the experimental "remote-vote" system.

2025: UCLA establishes the first undergraduate program in occult studies.

Cyberware comes to professional sports: the first cybermodified players enter the NFL. Their teams lose.

2026-2029: Sony Cybersystems, Fuchi Industrial Electronics and RCA-Unisys all develop prototype cyberterminals that allow users to interface with the world data network via the central nervous system.

2028: A major earthquake rocks Los Angeles, destroying LAX.

The U.S. government creates Echo Mirage, a "cybercommando" group intended to take advantage of cyberterminal technology.

2029: A computer virus unlike any seen before crashes the international computer network, causing widespread chaos as air-traffic control, communications, financial and other critical systems are irretrievably lost. This is referred to as the Crash of '29, or just "The Crash." Echo Mirage is called into action.

2030: The remnants of the Canadian and U.S. governments form the United Canadian and American States (UCAS).

A Mafia-Yakuza war breaks out in Seattle when the leaders of both syndicates are assassinated. After many deaths, the worn-out organizations call a truce.

2031: Echo Mirage eradicates the last trace of the computer virus that caused the Crash.

2032: The Corporate Court spearheads the megacorps' efforts to rebuild the grid, creating a fully immersive VR-based network that becomes known as the Matrix.

The oyabun, or leader, of the Yakuza in Chiba, Japan, sends Korean crime bosses to rebuild the Seattle organizations.

2032-2033: The Corporate Court takes over Global Financial Services. It moves GFS to the Zurich-Orbital Habitat and renames it the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank.

2033: Damien Knight executes the Nanosecond Buyout, gaining 22 percent of Ares Macrotechnology stock in sixty-three seconds, thereby demonstrating the unprecedented capabilities of the Matrix.

2034: Boston-based Matrix Systems releases the first gray-market cyberdeck, called the Portal.

The Confederation of American States (CAS) peacefully secedes from UCAS.

South Florida Joins the Caribbean League.

2036: Fuchi Industrial becomes the first major corp to market its own third-generation cyberdeck, the desktop CDT-1000.

The UCAS passes the 14th Amendment, which establishes the System Identification Number (SIN) and requires all citizens to register. Anyone not possessing a SIN is designated a "probationary citizen" with sharply curtailed rights. The rest of the world's nations, with very few exceptions, soon follow suit.

2037: Fuchi releases RealSense™ technology, introducing emotive signal processing into commercial simsense recording. The Denver Data Haven goes online, becoming the largest data haven (Matrix data storage site) in existence.

New and improved simsense gear can broadcast emotive signals. Say hello to chipheads and BTL dealers. If it's Better-Than-Life, it's got to be good!

2038: During the chaos of the Euro-Wars, the megacorps buy a city and enough land to create a small country, the Free State of Konigsberg, which has since developed into a sophisticated haven.

2039: In Charleston, South Carolina, a serial killer is captured after the detective-mage handling the case studies one of the victims' ghosts. The ghost's actions reveal sources of evidence that lead to the murderer's arrest and conviction.

On the night of February 7, which becomes known as the Night of Rage, hundreds of metahumans are massacred in warehouse fires after being rounded up by the Seattle Metroplex Guard.

Fuchi sponsors the Universal Matrix Specifications Conference in Tokyo. More than 7,000 humans and metahumans meet for three months to determine the details of Matrix programming. The Universal Matrix Standards (UMS) are adopted worldwide.

2040: Construction begins on the Renraku Arcology in Seattle.

2041: EuroAir Flight 329 from London to Atlanta is destroyed over the Atlantic. A garbled last transmission and recovered tapes indicate that the aircraft was attacked by a dragon (later tentatively identified as the great dragon Sirrurg), and that one heroic passenger held off the beast with sorcery for several minutes before the plane was demolished.

2042: The Korean Yakuza bosses in Seattle suffer through a bloody conflict. Most of the Koreans are killed; the survivors later form the Seoulpa Rings criminal organization. The great dragon Dunkelzahn launches Wyrm Talk, a semi-annual vid program. Topics range from celebrity interviews to insightful commentaries on culture and society.

2044: Hanzo Shotozumi is appointed head of the Seattle Yakuza. His strong-arm tactics spark renewed hostilities between the Yakuza and the Mafia. Don James O'Malley comes out of retirement to deal with the new Yakuza threat.

2046: The California Free State and Los Angeles bigwigs decide they don't want to deal with each other any longer, and LA becomes a free city largely controlled by corporate interests.

Three megacorporations—Aztechnology, Shiawase and Universal Omnitech—announce that they have fully decoded the non-magical segments of the human/metahuman genome.

2048: The Corporate Court censors Aztlan with extreme prejudice after the Aztlan government nationalizes all foreign businesses. Operation Reciprocity, a combined corporate military strike on Aztechnology troops in Ensenada, settles the issue, and international corporations are compensated for their losses.

2049: Renraku unveils the first semi-autonomous knowbot (SK), an expert system program with a sophisticated holographic neural network.

2050: The seventh-generation cyberdeck is produced and mass-marketed, now keyboard-sized and portable.

2052: The 2XS—a much more potent and addictive chip than the average BTL—hits the streets. This chip addicts the body through its effects on the mind.

The Virtual Stock Exchange in Chiba, Japan, crashes in the middle of trading.

2054: A team of scholars and archaeologists reports a major find 130 miles off the coast of Crete. The expedition discovers a treasure trove of artifacts at the historical location of the island of Thera, which may be the source of the myth of Atlantis. Experts dismiss allegations that the artifacts are magical in nature.

2055: Otaku (also known as the children of the Matrix), children who can mentally access the Matrix without technological devices, first begin to appear.

2056: The great dragon Dunkelzahn wins the UCAS presidential election.

2057: An elf decker calling himself Leonardo begins a series of successful runs and blackmail threats against Renraku. He eventually cuts a deal with the megacorp, exchanging financing for his technical breakthroughs. Renraku leaps ahead of its competitors.

The assassination of the dragon Dunkelzahn following his inauguration as the president of UCAS sends shockwaves around the globe. The contents of his will shatter the carefully maintained balance of power among the world's corporations. Nadja Daviar, Dunkelzahn's assistant, is made vice president to the president elect. Under her leadership, the 14th Amendment is changed to assign non-metahumans and other probationary citizens legal SIDs when vouched for by a current UCAS citizen.

2058: Don O'Malley is shot dead outside his Seattle home, spawning an all-out mob war as Mafia, Yakuza, Triads and Seoulpa Rings go at one another's throats.

2058-2059: The bequests of Dunkelzahn's will set off a power struggle within the Fuchi Corporation that results in the dissolution of Fuchi. Richard Villiers, once owner of a third of Fuchi, creates Novatech Incorporated.

2059: The artificial intelligence (AI) named Deus seizes control of the Seattle Renraku Arcology, closing it to the outside world.

2061: The Year of the Comet, as Halley's Comet passes by the Earth. Also the 50th anniversary of the Awakening. In December, the great dragon Ghostwalker emerges from Dunkelzahn's Rift in Washington FDC.

2062: Ghostwalker meets with the Council of Denver and assumes control of the city. Aztlan is expelled, its sector is given to the CAS, and the Zone Defense Force is created.

THE ECONOMY OF SHADOWRUN

Over the centuries, metahumanity has used all kinds of objects for money: beads, gold, jewels, cattle, grain and paper, among others. In 2063, it's all electrons. This is not to say that cash is no longer used, especially for small day-to-day expenditures like tips. However, for larger purchases, bills and so on, electronic transactions are the standard.

To get technical, the nuyen is the universal unit of currency used in transactions. It exists primarily in electronic form and is issued and backed by the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank, the worldwide financial authority. Nuyen are accepted everywhere, by corporations and governments alike. Some nations also issue their own currency, which is accepted within their borders and must be exchanged when entering another country. The only other type of currency in widespread use is corpscrip, issued by a corporation and only good within that corp and its holdings. All of these are available in physical form and electronic form, the latter accessed by means of credsticks.

A credstick is a pen-sized tube that serves as a simultaneous ID and credit card. It also functions as a house key, emergency medical and contact information source, and driver's license. To access a personal bank account, a person inserts the credstick into a credstick reader, selects the desired transaction (which is verified by the ID in the credstick), and then removes the credstick from the reader. Every register in a store or restaurant, every bus, every pay phone and every vending machine has a built-in credstick reader along with slots to accept cash or coins.



The final place in which credsticks are used is the Matrix. The 1990s saw the birth of e-commerce. In 2063, it's just commerce. Every brick-and-mortar store of any size that wants to stay in business has a Matrix counterpart, and many businesses exist only in the Matrix, without any physical storefront. Most manufacturers are also retailers, and most retailers hold on to their customers through their wide range of products or special services. However, they all

have the credstick in common. Any home telecom unit, pocket secretary or general-use cyberterminal used to access the Matrix has a built-in credstick reader. Going shopping is as simple as surfing the Matrix, finding what you want, slotting your credstick (to use the vernacular) and making the purchase.

THE MEGACORPORATIONS

A corporation is a legal entity empowered to act with the rights and obligations of a person. They earn money, own property and have liabilities. If Mitsuhamas new program cooks your brain cells and you live to tell about it, the employees, executives and shareholders of Mitsuhamas aren't liable for what happened to you—Mitsuhamas, the corporate "individual," is liable. That's pretty much all a corporation does. There's no limit on the size of a corp; one person or a thousand can create a corporation.

A multinational corporation owns property in more than one nation. Multinationals are traditionally big-time corps, but they don't have to be. Technically, a corporation with offices in Seattle (in the UCAS) and Vancouver (in the Salish-Shidhe nation) is a multinational, even if that's the total extent of its business. Still, most multinational corporations are big—not megacorps, but with annual revenues in the millions of nuyen. Some of them even hire shadowrunners, but they don't operate at the same level as the big boys.

A megacorp is a giant multinational with annual revenues in the billions of nuyen. Megacorps make up only a tiny percentage of the world's corporations, but they control the vast majority of wealth, resources and market share. More important, megacorps benefit from corporate extraterritoriality, meaning they're considered the equivalent of a national entity, entitled to their own laws, citizens, currencies, militaries and other tools of power.

Most extraterritorial corps have their own sets of laws, as well as guidelines for enforcing them. These laws often vary from location to location and sometimes even from month to month.

Employees who break minor laws might face retribution such as salary cuts, forced labor or a similar slap on the wrist. Any more serious infraction generally results in worse punishment. Most corps don't bother wasting money on prisons, though they sometimes contract out to penal institutions.



MEGACORP SCRIP

Another benefit the corps receive from extraterritoriality is the ability to issue their own currency, called corporate scrip, or corpscrip. While corpscrip is sometimes used for internal corporate financial transactions, it is primarily used to pay employees and thus further tie them to the corp. Like national currencies, corporate scrip has no value outside the domain of the corp that issues it. In order to undermine black market corpscrip transactions, the Corporate Court has also ruled that corpscrip may only be owned and used by an employee of the issuing corp.

By their own standards, not every megacorp was created equal. The ten largest megacorporations, or the Big Ten, as they are known, are the sharks among the megacorporate minnows. They're the largest and most powerful corporations on Earth: more influential than some nations, wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, and ruthless to the core. Right now, the Big Ten control more resources than all the other corporations in the world put together.

CORPORATE STATUS

Corporate status is the "power rating" of a corporation. The rating is adjusted and awarded by the Corporate Court, using a rating system of unrated, A, AA and AAA.

Unrated—National Corporations: These corporations are barely a blip on the world economic screen, with a presence in only one country or sometimes only one city. Some of these corps are granted privileges by the local government that aren't extended to average citizens, such as permission to protect their assets and operations with lethal force. Despite their status, many of these businesses are nothing to laugh at. In smaller countries, they may hold considerable economic and even political or military sway.

A—Multinationals: Also known as third-tier corps, this category includes multinational companies that are just starting to make global waves. They have yet to distinguish themselves as major players and are not granted extraterritoriality until they prove they can hold their own. A-level corps are in the unenviable position of being big enough to draw the attention of hungry megacorps but weak enough that resistance is futile. Larger megas constantly prey on A-level multinationals, taking over profitable divisions, stealing research, or luring away promising scientists and managers. Lots of nationals become A-rated corps, only to get gobbled up before they can reach the next tier.

Tan Tien (China), Warpdrive Systems (Denver FRFZ) and Telestrain Industries (Tir Tairngire) are examples of A-level corps.

AA—Extraterritorial Megacorps: The second-tier megas are overgrown multinationals that have exhibited enough business acumen, stability and promise to earn extraterritorial status. Large enough to strain an expert accounting program, they can usually go toe-to-toe with the Big Ten and survive, perhaps even unbloodied.

Well-known AA megas include Transys Neuronet (UCAS), Lone Star (UCAS), Yakashima (Empire of Japan) and Zeta-ImpChem (Germanic Alliance).

AAA—Prime Megacorporate Status: These are the Big Ten that every gutter punk can name.

Their power literally extends across the globe. These corporate entities own facilities and subsidiaries around the world; control space launching platforms in Florida and Texas; and run chains of retail stores, car manufacturers, industrial plants, security companies, electronics firms, aerospace plants and even their own space stations. AAAs employ tens of millions of people, directly or indirectly.

The Big Ten are Ares, Aztechnology, Cross, Mitsuhamra, Novatech, Renraku, Saeder-Krupp, Shiawase, Wuxing and Yamatetsu.

MEGACORPORATE OWNERSHIP

Whoever controls the most shares controls the corp. Corporate power players struggle to acquire a majority of shares to consolidate their power or at least to control a sizable minority so they can withstand other factions and alliances within the corporation. Internal corporate struggles tend to take two forms: competition between subsidiaries or divisions, and fights between major shareholders.

CORPORATE TAKEOVERS

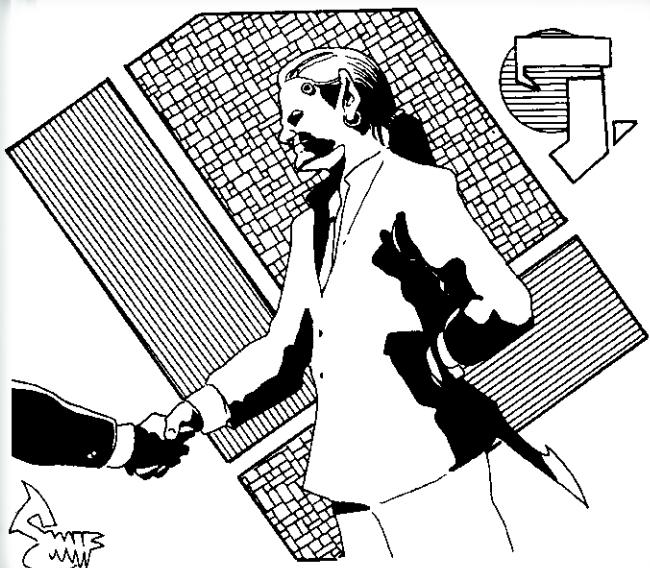
There are two ways to compete in the corporate world: do a better job of attracting and keeping customers than your competitors, or take away your competitors' ability to compete with you. In other words, if you can't beat 'em, buy 'em.

In the basic hostile takeover, Corp A drives down the value of Corp B's stock to the point that Corp A can buy it cheap and gain control over Corp B. Then Corp B is no longer a competitor, because Corp A runs the show.

How does a corp drive down a rival's stock value? By hiring a team to do a shadowrun. A corporation can try to weaken a rival using traditional market techniques: advertising, superior products and so forth. In Shadowrun, however, these techniques are expensive and time-consuming. It's far more cost-effective to make a rival corporation look bad through sabotage and blackmail. Hire some shadowrunners to arrange a few "tragic accidents" involving your competitor's product, and their market share will plummet. Or hire runners to gather some juicy blackmail on a major shareholder to encourage him or her to sell out at a "reasonable price."

THE BALANCE OF CORPORATE POWER

There are ten corporate monoliths, each more powerful than any nation. Each one has a gross yearly product that rivals or exceeds that of any major industrialized country. They don't just drive the economy; in many



nations, they are the economy. If they ceased operations in selected areas, they could cause small nations to collapse overnight without taking significant losses. Their economic impact is so widespread that a single change in operations on their part can affect the economies of twenty or thirty nations.

The assets of the Big Ten are off almost any scale you could name, accounting for at least a quarter of the world's wealth. (In all likelihood, this figure is much higher if you estimate secret funds and hidden ownership.) Besides their financial stability (each owns numerous banks) and stranglehold over a high percentage of world resources (from food to fuel to state-of-the-art tech toys), the Big Ten each encompass a number of near-perfect

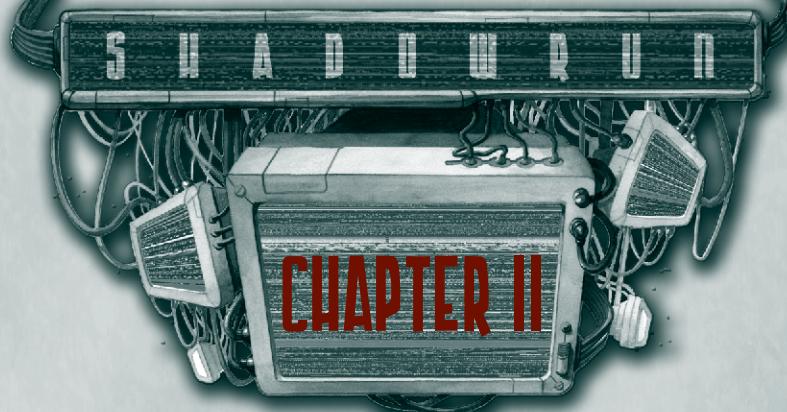
monopolies. For just about any industry, every step of the process is in their hands, from harvesting resources to producing and distributing goods to the waiting hordes.

Most of the gadgets and state-of-the-art tech toys used for criminal activities were invented by megacorporate think tanks, engineers and factories. Megacorps jealously hold on to the world's best and brightest scientific research minds, at least until shadowrunners extract them for another megacorp. If megacorps didn't provide the raw processing power that is the backbone of the Matrix, shadowrunners couldn't hack into their hosts and steal info from their impressive databases.

Very little happens in the world today unless the megacorps allow it to happen. And even if something occasionally eludes their grasp, the public is only likely to hear about it through the illegal transmissions of a trideo pirate; the megacorps control the media outlets and crucial data services. They dictate social trends through advertising and marketing and by carefully funding certain societal elements. If they face opposition from the civil sector, they buy it, hire runners to crush it or gradually influence public opinion until it ceases to be a threat. Even powerful nations rarely cause the corps trouble—they know better than to mess with their main suppliers of military hardware.

Considering their worldwide presence, extraterritoriality and sheer power, each of the Big Ten might be viewed as a "meta-nation." Each counts enough "corporate citizens" to support that claim, many of whom live in a corporate society distinct enough to be considered a separate culture. Hundreds of thousands of workers have lived their entire lives within a megacorp. They were born in a corp hospital, raised in a corp enclave, "educated" in a corp school and have become faithful corporate slaves, toiling away in service to the corporate empire.

Why, then, do nations still exist? First, they act as a shield—the first line of defense between the corps and the unruly masses. Governments, in many cases, present a friendly front for corporate power, as they pretend to be duly elected representatives of the public will. They serve to misdirect attacks, distract the citizenry and provide necessary scapegoats. Second, most governments still perform a number of social necessities that most corps don't want to bother with. As long as governments continue to clean the sewers, pave the roads and push the SINless out of sight, the corps can focus their energies on more profitable pursuits.



SHADOWRUN ATLAS

THE WORLD

Picture the world as a piece of fine china, a big dinner plate carefully tempered by centuries of conflict, diplomacy and culture. That's the world in 2001.

Now hold the plate out at arm's length, drop it and watch it shatter into a million tiny shards. That's the world in 2063.

The Awakening of magic, with its attendant Goblinization, riots and unrest, has been felt on every continent. Tribalism, regionalism and the rise of the megacorporations have demolished many of the old nation-states and transformed the remainder into new and interesting shapes. Often local authorities (or corporate interests) take priority over any organized hierarchy. Here is a brief tour of the world:

North America: The rising power of the Native American Nations has destroyed the United States and Canada of the 20th century, while Mexico has been transformed into a twisted melding of magical and corporate power. See "The New North America" below for details.

South America: The southern continent is dominated by the nation of Amazonia, home to Awakened creatures led by the dragon Hualpa. The northern border is the site of a low-level war between Amazonia and Aztlan, in which the conflict that engulfed Central America has now spilled into South America.

Africa: The mother continent has descended into local tribalism. Most of the nations that existed at the beginning of the century are gone (or at least renamed several times), and their successor states flicker in and out of existence like icons on a faulty datapad. Some semi-permanent states have established themselves in the far north and south and along the Ivory and Gold Coasts, but for the most part the pirate-haunted coastline hides a wilderness filled with Awakened paracreatures.

Europe: Most of continental Europe has broken into hundreds of small city-states that squabble with one another while competing for corporate largesse. Environmental disasters, corporate excesses and the recent Euro-Wars have left a patchwork of sprawls and wastelands from the Atlantic to the Urals.

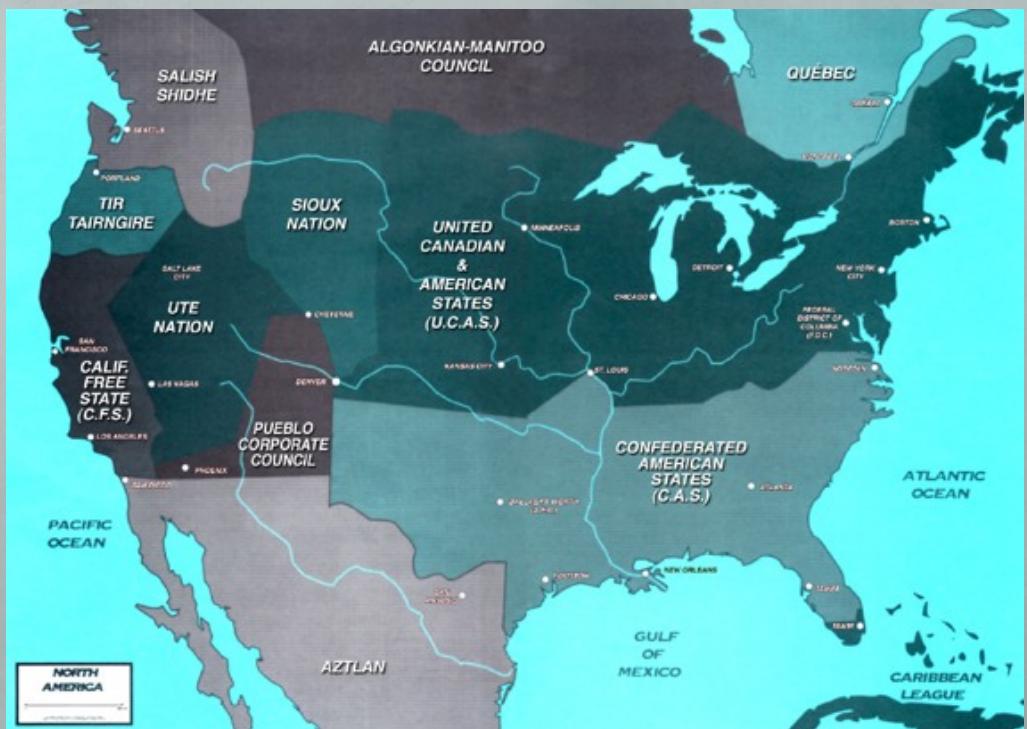
Asia: China has become a balkanized wilderness. Russia has lost most of Siberia to awakened paracreatures and the Trans-Polar Aleut nation. Arabia is united under a religious leader who has just returned from the dead. Japan has seen its star rise and fade; it recently pulled its overseas troops back to the home islands from Peru and the Philippines and attempted to pull them out of California. Most important, the various internal conflicts provide opportunities for runners, as all sides look for outside help.

Australia: Mostly intact as a nation, Australia has been besieged by savage magical mana storms since the Awakening. Sydney, bearing the brunt of a permanent storm, has sheared off to form an independent city-state.

Antarctica: Situated at the bottom of the world, far from national claims, and rich in resources, Antarctica has become the site of a new Resource Rush on behalf of the megacorporations. Only the inhospitable climate and the few natives stand in the way of the corps doing to the last continent what they've done to the rest of the world.

Space: Exploitation goes into orbit, as a large number of megacorporations have launched their own space stations, including Ares, Novatech, Saeder-Krupp, Yamatetsu and Aztechnology in low Earth orbit, as well as stations at the Lagrange Points (the gravitationally neutral points created by the balance of the moon and Earth's mutual gravitational pulls) and initial exploitation of the moon. These open up new theaters for corporate operations and conflicts.

THE NEW NORTH AMERICA



The Awakening has transformed the nations of North America just as it transformed their peoples. The three great nations of the North American continent—Canada, the United States and Mexico—have fragmented and morphed into new and sometimes strange forms.

The most sweeping change was the defeat of the traditional nations by the Sovereign Tribal Council (STC). The success of the Ghost Dance (the great gathering of magical energy for the purpose of war by the Amerindian tribes) forced the extant governments to concede to the STC's demands, resulting in the Treaty of Denver.

The treaty returned most of western North America to the tribes and created the Native American Nations (NAN). In the chaos that followed, other parts of the original nations seceded, were conquered or otherwise transformed into their present state. The process is ongoing—the Pueblo Corporate Council recently conquered Los Angeles, and Tsimshian and the Salish-Shidhe Council (SSC) just fought a nasty border war.

The following are brief snapshots of the existing nations of North America. There are exceptions to every rule, and broad descriptions do not include every native of these nations. However, they do give a sense of each nation's sense of identity, strong points and opportunities for shadowrunners.

GETTING THERE AND BACK AGAIN: TRANSPORTATION AND SHIPPING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The interstate highway system of the United States and Canada is a thing of the past. The UCAS and CAS have managed to keep the basic infrastructure of the highway system intact, but the quality, comfort level and number of interstate highways are, respectively, poor, minimal and few. In the NAN and other new nations of North America, the oversight of roads and highways is left to regional and civic leaders.

This has led to the invention and promotion of hovercraft that ignore the rough terrain, gliding smoothly from place to place. Hover technology is used primarily for cross-country shipping and luxury transportation. This is not to say that wheeled vehicles are a thing of the past. The traditional automobiles of the 20th century survive as luxury items and status symbols. The common man uses two- and four-wheeled transportation, based on motorcycle and ATV designs, or (more likely) public transit. Hover technology is the greatest advance made in vehicles, but the greatest advance in driving and piloting has actually been made with the drivers and pilots.

Using cybertechnology, elite drivers and pilots, called "riggers," can jack into their car or other vehicle using an implant much like a datajack, called a vehicle control rig. Just as deckers are the elite of cyberspace, riggers are the masters of the highway. Riggers can become their vehicle, driving or piloting in ways no non-rigger could imagine. Riggers are literally able to feel the tires on the road or the air currents over metal wings. This "oneness" with their ride allows a response time that is instinctive and immediate.



TROLL RIGGER

NATION: UNITED CANADIAN AND AMERICAN STATES (UCAS)

The United Canadian and American States are the fragmented remains of the old United States and Canada after the creation of the Native American Nations and the secession of the CAS and Quebec. Badly battered by the trials and tribulations of the new century, the UCAS holds firmly to the dream of an era when its predecessor nations were world powers and its cities were hubs of commerce and industry. Now the UCAS is dominated by a handful of megacorporations and plagued by a variety of ills.

Federal District of Columbia: Known as the DeeCee Sprawl, the District is the seat of UCAS government (much as it was in the old United States). Security is high in DeeCee (as befits the center of a national government), and the city is home to the New Dawn Grand Lodge, one of the most powerful magical orders in the UCAS. DeeCee is also home to the Watergate hotel, best known as the site of President Dunkelzahn's assassination.

Boston: Also called the Hub of the Universe, Boston is the home of much corporate and magical power. The East Coast Stock Exchange is located here, as is the renowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Thaumaturgy.

New York City: The Rotten Apple was crippled by an earthquake in 2005 and has been rebuilt by the megacorps that now control it. It is a city of huge skyscrapers and arcologies overshadowing concrete canyons. Corporate-monitored passcards are required to access every home, business and theater.

Chicago: Currently a lawless urban wasteland inhabited by squatters, looters, gangs and metahumans unwanted even in their own communities.

St. Louis: A "gateway city" on the UCAS/CAS border, Saint Louie is a hub for smuggling and espionage between the two nations.

Seattle: The only holding of the UCAS that is not part of the contiguous nation, Seattle is the home of numerous shadowrunners and one of the most vibrant cities on the planet. It hosts regional headquarters for nearly every AAA megacorporation.

NATION: CONFEDERATION OF AMERICAN STATES (CAS)

The states of the original Confederacy, plus portions of Oklahoma and Missouri, successfully seceded from the UCAS in 2034 to form the Confederation of American States. Strongly isolationist for most of its history, it has recently emerged as the "true" heir of the United States—a powerful industrial state independent of the corporate control that has taken over much of the UCAS.

Atlanta: The capital of the CAS, Atlanta is the home of the Center of Disease Control (CDC). The city has a dual nature: it is the hub for deal-making in the CAS but is plagued by a high urban crime rate.

New Orleans: The Crescent City is noted for its criminal gangs (called krewes), organized crime families, smuggling and use of voodoo magic. Recent government actions against magicians who animate the dead have brought reprisals from the local hougangs (voodoo sorcerers).

Austin: Texas lost most of its southwest portion in a war with the nation of Aztlan (during which it seceded from the CAS, tried to join the UCAS, and finally returned to the CAS). Situated on the border between the CAS and Aztlan, Austin is a heavily militarized, heavily political city divided by the Colorado River. Agents of both governments and numerous other factions duel in the shadows of the city, making it similar to Berlin in the 1950s.

NATION: ALGONKIAN-MANITOU COUNCIL (AMC)

One of the northern Native American Nations, the AMC's government has been dominated by the Algonkian tribe, in cahoots with Aztechnology (which bailed the nation out of its financial problems in the 2050s). A strong elven tribe, the Manitou, has declared independence, shearing off the northern quarter of the nation for themselves. In addition to their metahuman background, the Manitou are virulently anti-technology, causing further conflict with local corporations.

Thunder Bay: The AMC port on Lake Superior, Thunder Bay is the crossroads for a number of northern smuggling routes. The black market thrives here.

NATION: ATHABASKAN COUNCIL

A vast, wild land rich in resources, Athabaska ranges from the corporate offices in Anchorage and Edmonton to the sasquatch-haunted mountains and lakes. Its people are linked by a highly developed Matrix, backed by satellite links and redundant systems. A combination of high-tech and wilderness, Athabaska is a battleground between eco-activists and corporate developers/exploiters.

NATION: TRANS-POLAR ALEUT

A nation that rings the top of the world and claims territory in North America, Asia and Europe, Trans-Polar Aleut is a wide, empty land, one of the last frontiers of the 21st century. Its sense of national identity is still fragile, in that local and tribal authorities often take precedence over the national government. As a result, the nation has seen a series of hot spots and power plays as various foreign governments, corporate interests and powerful individuals vie for control in localized areas.

NATION: CALIFORNIA FREE STATE (CFS)

A nation that is coming apart at the seams, the California Free State started badly and went downhill from there. After California threatened to secede from the UCAS to gain political concessions, the UCAS called its bluff, kicked it out of the Union and withdrew all political and military support. Since then, the CFS has been staggering, trying to maintain its political coherence in the face of hostile neighbors. Of late,

that coherence has evaporated. Aztlan controls San Diego, the Pueblo Corporate Council has seized Los Angeles and the Mojave Desert, and the dragon Hestaby, who controls the northernmost section, has joined Tir Tairngire, setting off a border war. The heart of the beleaguered state, however, was already dominated by forces of Imperial Japan and is now under the iron rule of rebel commander Keiji Saito.

California Protectorate: The nascent, vulnerable CFS appealed to Japan for protection soon after its expulsion from the UCAS. Japanese forces landed in San Francisco to "protect Japanese interests" and remained there, creating the California Protectorate, effectively a nation within the nation. Recent events in Japan prompted the Imperial throne to begin recalling all overseas units. The local governor, Keiji Saito, refused and has established his own government, expanding the borders outward to Sacramento. Ruling with an iron fist, the rabidly anti-metahuman Saito is trying to remake San Francisco and the Central Valley as his own personal fiefdom.

Mojave Desert: This barren, sandy desert is rich in mana, spirits and magical materials. As a result, it is under siege by several sides: the PPC, the Utes, the native Anasazi tribes, Aztlan (through its corporate parent Aztechnology), other megacorps, independent prospectors, and the extremely powerful native spirit and elemental population.

NATION: DENVER

Denver is known as the Treaty City, an independent nation-state created when the United States and Canada surrendered to the Sovereign Tribal Council and the Native American Nations formed. The city itself is divided into sectors under the control of the signing nations of the Treaty. As an "International City," Denver is a hotbed of espionage, and its chunk of the Matrix sees particularly robust hacker and runner activity.

Recently the government was seized by Ghostwalker, a previously unknown dragon who emerged from Dunkelzahn's Rift in DeeCee. The dragon has taken over the Council of Denver, in the process making it a more effective and powerful operation.

NATION: PUEBLO CORPORATE COUNCIL (PCC)

Sprawled across the Southwest from Santa Fe to LA, the PCC is a melding of tribal ways with modern technology. The entire nation is its own corporation, ruled by a board of directors, with its citizens as shareholders. External corporations license the right to set up shop in the PCC. This gives the nation a business-friendly attitude without allowing its government to be dominated by megacorporations. The Pueblo Grid is one of the most advanced in North America.

The not-so-secret masters of the PCC are the Kachina Society, originally a tribal heritage organization that has evolved into a de facto religious organization with tremendous influence over the ruling class. There is rumored to be an inner faction called the Soyoko (named after a mythological monster), which in turn controls the Kachina Society.

Santa Fe: The Wall Street of the Southwest, Santa Fe is both the capital of and the center of economic power in the PCC. Most of the power brokers and players in the Council can be found here.

Los Angeles: Recently “acquired” by the PCC, LA has fallen on hard times, dominated by gangs and organized crime and written off by the rest of California. The purpose of the invasion was to dominate the simsense industry through Hollywood and gain access to the mana-rich magical environment of the Mojave Desert. While the PCC’s occupation of LA has drawn only harsh words from the CAS, the Utes and Aztlan, the struggle for control of the Mojave has bogged down in a multifactional battle.

NATION: SALISH-SHIDHE COUNCIL (SSC)

A large Native American/elven nation surrounding the Seattle Metroplex, the SSC has kept most of its power within its tribes rather than form a centralized government. The component tribes pursue their own

agendas, but in general they are pro-environmental, anti-megacorp and pro-metahuman.

Given its decentralized government and wide-open spaces, smuggling is a major economic and recreational activity in the SSC. The Council lands are along a number of major smuggling routes, and local tribes often benefit from quasi-legal trading across their borders.

Most recently, the SSC has gotten involved in a brief border war with the nation of Tsimshian. The reasons for the war are obscure, and though a ceasefire is currently holding, tensions between the two sides are high.

Vancouver: A slightly smaller, slightly rainier Seattle, Vancouver is the SSC’s gateway to the Pacific Ocean. It is the largest city in the SSC, and as such it is a hub of smuggler, gang and organized criminal activity.



Boise: Situated where the SSC, the Ute Nation and Tir Tairngire come together, Boise is a regular meeting-ground for smugglers as well as a gateway for refugees leaving Tir and runners moving in.

NATION: TIR TAIRNGIRE

Tir Tairngire ("The Land of Promise") is a young nation south of Seattle that seeks to present itself as an efficient, successful metahuman society. Dominated by proud elven princes, the Tir has suffered from economic isolation and an increasingly repressive government. Refugees (elven and otherwise) have begun straggling into neighboring areas, and shadowrunning is on the rise, as the government has been forced to relax its borders and allow in outside, non-metahuman trade.

Tir Tairngire has been set up as a class-based society that harks back to medieval feudalism. The lowest rank is the classless Irenis (similar to the SINless elsewhere), with the official citizens starting at the gentry and rising through chivalry and noble classes to the royal ranks of Princes. Advancement is possible, but the lower ranks are by and large expected to know their place and accept their fates. Many are not cooperative, however, and rebellion bubbles beneath the tranquil surface of Tir Tairngire.

The Princes of Tir Tairngire have recently added the dragon Hestaby to their ruling council. Hestaby has brought a good slice of Northern California with her and exacerbated tensions between the Tir and the CFS.

Portland: The entry point to the Tir, Portland is a walled city under martial law. Crippled by poor economic decisions (most shipping heads north to Seattle) and saddled with a high crime rate and frequent gang violence, the city has become a hotbed of rebel sentiment against the ruling class.

NATION: TSIMSHIAN

Located north of the Salish-Shidhe Council, Tsimshian, while technically a democracy, has been ruled for its entire history by a single leader: Great Chief Deborah Jim. In order to keep her country going, she has opened it to extensive megacorp influence and exploited its national resources to a degree that would make a UCAS banker blanch. This, in addition to an almost xenophobic attitude toward other ethnicities (even other Native American tribes), has made Tsimshian a near-outlaw state in North America.

Tsimshian is a police state with a sky-high crime rate and institutionalized discrimination against non-native Amerindians, Anglos and metahumans. Its repressive policies and exploitative resource looting have created a strong internal resistance movement, which has survived despite frequent raids and purges. Most recently, a border war erupted with the neighboring SSC, but both sides are currently respecting the uneasy ceasefire.

NATION: SIOUX NATION

The Sioux Nation is a polyglot of tribal organizations, including the Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, Blackfoot, Arapaho, Crow, Seminole, Cree, Cheyenne, Ojibwa, Mohawk,

Apache and Navajo. Born out of the Treaty of Denver, the Sioux Nation often acts as the "local cop" for conflicts among the NAN. Some of the other nations see this attitude as patronizing, but they cannot argue with the effectiveness of the Sioux, both in intelligence gathering and military force.

The Sioux are heavily militarized, with mandatory military service for almost all their citizens. In addition, the Sioux have their own special forces, nicknamed the Wildcats, acknowledged as one of the most highly trained and effective military forces in the world. Their skills extend to the net as well with the Matrix Warband, an elite decker and computer intelligence unit.

Cheyenne: The capital of the Sioux Nation, Cheyenne is also the home base of the Sovereign Tribal Council (STC) of the Native American Nations and the high-tech University of Cheyenne. This combination makes the city a center of political, technological and corporate intrigue, under the auspices of the heavily armed Sioux National Police.

Devil's Tower: A mystical and sacred site among the Lakota, this tower of volcanic rock is the site of the annual Sun Dance. A powerful hub of mana energies, the tower itself grew in height from 262 meters to 356 meters without any other local seismic activity being registered.

Black Hills, Yellowstone and the Badlands: These wild territories are home to fantastic creatures, great natural beauty and powerful spirits. Talislegging (illegal traffic in magical equipment and artifacts) is common throughout this area.

NATION: THE REPUBLIC OF QUEBEC

Always an outpost of French society on an English-dominated continent, Quebec finally seceded from Canada in the early 21st century to form its own nation, heralding the later breakup of Canada and the United States. Fairly isolationist (French was for many years the only legal business language), a change in government has brought about a more liberal attitude toward dealing with outsiders, particularly anglophiles.

Quebec has its own "pet megacorporation" in Cross Applied Technologies Corporation (or, rather, CATCo has its own pet country in Quebec). Cross has been a major supporter of the isolationist government, and the recent shift to a more open attitude is seen by some as an attempt to bring Quebec closer to the rest of the nations of North America, to Cross's benefit. Cross wields a great deal of power in the country and maintains one of the prime information agencies on the planet: the Seraphim.

Quebec offers the traditional venues of intrigue and espionage for shadowrunners. In addition, it supports a strong bounty-hunting trade in paranormal animals. The current government (though more liberal than before) believes that Awakened creatures are a danger to the ecosystem and offers bounties on them. Creatures normally hunted include devil rats, vampires and sasquatch.

Quebec City Metroplex: The center of government, Quebec City is a mixture of ancient structures and modern power bases. It is home to twelve Enterprise Zones (effectively reservations for extranational corporations) and a center for cybernetic electronics.

NATION: UTE NATION

Sitting astride the arid Great Basin, the Ute Nation is a struggling country plagued by poverty, waste, bureaucracy and discrimination. Economically throttled by its own mismanagement, the Ute Nation has been so badly bungled that even large megacorps think twice before setting down roots there. Its electronic democracy results in continual plebiscites with widely varying and often contradictory results. In addition, the Utes have prickly (if not outright hostile) relationships with most of their neighbors.

Salt Lake City: Early in the Ute Nation's history, non-Native Americans were driven off most of the land. One of the exceptions was Salt Lake City, which was established as an Anglo reservation under the control of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Salt Lake City is also a magic-depleted area, making it a good site for corporate headquarters.

Las Vegas: The other side of the coin from Salt Lake City, Vegas has made its name as a self-proclaimed den of sin and villainy. It is controlled by powerful casino corporations, which provide a large boost to the Ute bureaucracy in the form of graft.

Grand Canyon: The most powerful of a number of magical sites within the Ute Nation (the others being the Painted Desert, the Grand Staircase Escalante area and the Petrified Forest), the canyon has great historical and spiritual significance to the Native American Nations.

NATION: AZTLAN

A powerhouse to the south, Aztlán is larger than the country of Mexico that it replaced, having swallowed parts of Texas, California, the American Southwest, all of the Central American countries and parts of South America, and it shows no signs of slowing despite a costly guerrilla war in the Yucatan. Aztlán is effectively a wholly owned subsidiary of Aztechnology.

Aztlán ranges from the heavily polluted Tenochtitlan to the wilds of revolutionary Yucatan, and from San Diego to near-puppet governments in South America. It is the home of a pantheistic faith that venerates ancient Aztec deities and practices a unique and deadly form of spell casting known as blood magic. Ruthless, heartless and relentless, the secret masters of Aztlán do not tolerate opposition, trespassers or fools gladly and have the muscle to enforce their will.

Tenochtitlan: A huge sprawl of 17 million people, the former Mexico City is the political heart of Aztlán and Aztechnology. A cornucopia of towering corporate structures, stepped pyramids and substandard shanties that are shaken by earthquakes on a regular basis, Tenochtitlan survives under a thick ceiling of pollution (Los Humos Grande). Breather devices are an absolute requirement here.

Yucatan: The current ground zero of a "hot" revolution between indigenous peoples and Aztechnology, the Yucatan is the site of magical massacres and bloodthirsty raids. Both sides have put their humanity on the sidelines—Aztechnology in order to control this magical territory, and the rebels to render the area ungovernable by a central authority.

NATION: THE CARIBBEAN LEAGUE

Not truly a nation but rather a gathering of independent states that makes the tribes of the Trans-Polar Aleuts look like a model of solidarity, the Caribbean League is a hotbed of smuggling, piracy, black marketing and a variety of other illegal and quasi-legal operations. Each island has its own independent government.

NATION: KINGDOM OF HAWAII

The island nation of Hawaii seceded from the Union during the independence movements of the 2030s and has since steered an independent course. They are heavily influenced by Japanese-based corporations but have avoided the fate of occupied California.

THE SEATTLE METROPLEX

The Seattle Metroplex is a large city located in the northwest corner of what once was the United States of America. It is a sprawling jumble of metropolitan communities, industrial wastelands and concrete highways bracketed by Puget Sound and the Cascade Mountains and is one of the great hubs of shadowrun operations in the world.

Seattle is officially a part of the United Canadian and American States (UCAS), though the nearest UCAS territory is two thousand miles away. Various (sometimes hostile) states lie between Seattle and the rest of the UCAS. The resulting isolation makes Seattle in reality a semi-independent state where local figures, gangs, criminal organizations, corporations and rival nations have more influence than the distant government in DeeCee.

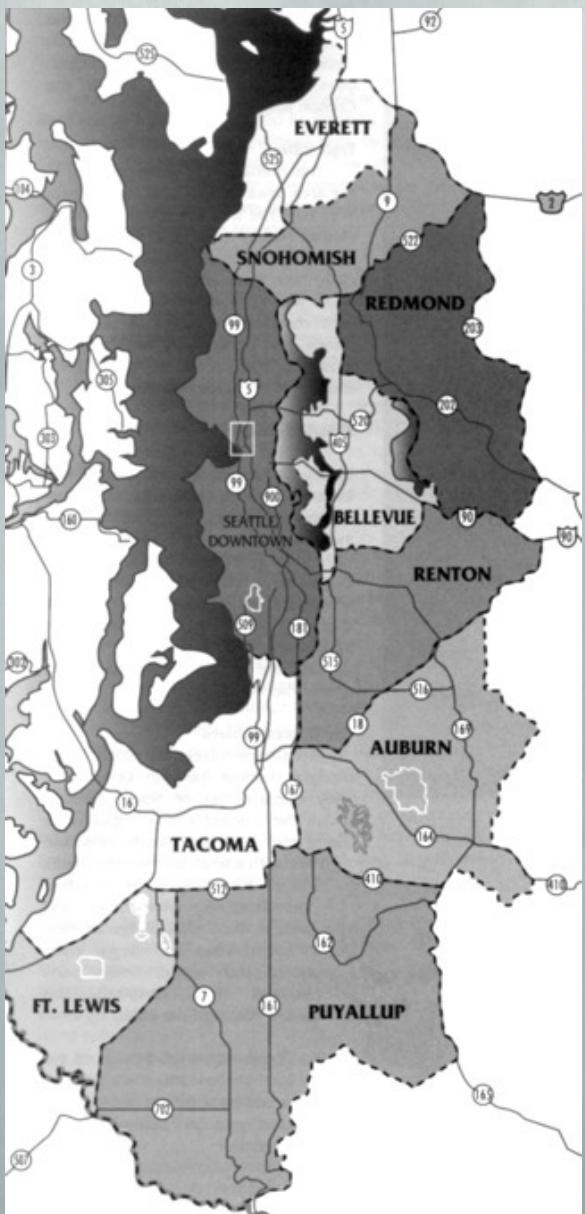
Seattle has a population of more than three million, but only 63 percent of that population is human. The remainder of the population is metahuman—predominantly elves and orks, with sizable numbers of dwarfs and trolls. About half of the population is affiliated with one of the large megacorporations.



The remainder struggles to get by through temporary positions, McJobs, criminal activity and "gray area" operations. Shadowrunners fall into this last category.

The open nature of Seattle makes the metropolis ideal for shadowrunning. Corporations (and even members within the same corporation) are always contesting for power. Gangs fight over turf. Criminal organizations battle for control of extralegal materials. Magicians contend over schools of thought. Operatives of foreign nations are continually searching for information. Seattle is gifted (or cursed) with a high level of technology as well as a wealth of magical traditions and practitioners. It is, in the parlance of the shadowrunners, "a target-rich environment."

THE LAY OF THE LAND



The Seattle Metroplex is a relatively narrow chunk of highly urbanized property surrounded by the wilder, more natural lands of the Salish-Shidhe Council. The forced containment of its physical sprawl has caused it to overdevelop the land that it occupies, transforming it into a forty-mile-long city, stretching from its southern border beyond Tacoma up to its northern limits at Everett.

Seattle is divided into ten districts, each with slightly different flavors, attractions and levels of risk. All are heavily populated, and all have opportunities for hungry runners looking for a big hit.

Seattle's downtown is the heart of the city, straddling the isthmus between Puget Sound on the west and Lake Washington on the east. Its skyline is dominated by corporate towers and arcology pyramids, and its nightlife throbs to the beat of hot downtown clubs like the Club Penumbra. However, the tall buildings of the downtown cast deep shadows, and through the shadows move all manner of threats and opportunities.

Bellevue, downtown's little brother, is located to the east of downtown, across Lake Washington. It too is dominated by its corporations, along with the residences of those who work for them. It's a neighborhood that is big on intrigue but takes a very dim view of the excessive use of firepower.

Redmond is also known as the Redmond Barrens. Once one of the most prosperous regions in the Seattle area, it is now a wasteland dominated by rival gangs and starving natives. Its industry destroyed by the Crash of '29, it has seen riots, a spaceplane crash and a nuclear meltdown. Its inhabitants (mostly human as opposed to metahuman) are willing to knife you for a trinket. It is not a place to make money, but if a runner is hunting for some piece of illicit tech, Redmond is the place to make the contact.

Snohomish, to the north of downtown, is some of the only appreciable green space left in the metroplex. It is dominated by sprawling agricorp farms and aquaculture facilities and is often the target of ecological attacks. The community also has strong anti-metahuman and anti-Native American sentiments.

Everett is the metroplex's northernmost district, a bustling community of new corporate development and old rivalries. It is a major port, the base for the Everett Naval Shipyards and the dry docks for Federated-Boeing. It hopes to rival Bellevue and Tacoma as a major district in the area and is a good place for runners seeking new clients.

Renton, just south of Bellevue and downtown, is on the surface a quiet bedroom community for the surrounding regions, a land of malls and housing complexes. Beneath its tranquil exterior, however, strong anti-metahuman sentiments thrive, and rival gangs rule the night.

Auburn is a blue-collar neighborhood between Renton and Puyallup, known as a strong manufacturing area. The criminal syndicates are powerful in Auburn, particularly the Mafia and Yakuza.

Tacoma is a muscular community sprawled along the Sound south of downtown, the home of major factories as well as corporate headquarters. It is a transportation hub for the city at large. It is also the site of intense syndicate activity, as the Mafia and Yakuza vie for control of its lucrative operations.

Ft. Lewis, tucked in the southwest corner of the metroplex, has honest-to-goodness forests. It is a military post for the UCAS and boasts a strong military presence. Those making runs in the area are advised to be cautious—the national government, though distant, takes a dim view of trespassers.

Puyallup, at the south end of the Seattle Metroplex, is a blasted urban nightmare similar to Redmond. Unlike Redmond, however, most of the population is metahuman, and the wild area is dominated by numerous gangs. Far from the oversight of corporations, it is an excellent place to set up meetings, but the locals are likely to be searching for their next gig as well and don't look kindly on outsiders.

CLIENTS IN SEATTLE

Shadowrunners thrive in Seattle because of the large number of organizations and individuals that need their services, recognize their abilities and encourage their flexible moral judgment. Clients are generally called "Mr. Johnson," regardless of their gender, race or affiliation. As long as their money is good, they are welcome customers. In Seattle, the major groups that Mr. Johnsons rep for include:



MEET MR. JOHNSON

Corporations

Corporations rule in 2063. Law enforcement is a service only for those who can afford it (Seattle itself has a contract with the Texas-based Lone Star Security Corporation). Someone who has access to the deep pockets of a major megacorp can write their own check. The most profitable shadowruns are usually contracted by, and often targeted against, corporations.

The major corporations of Seattle are Ares Macrotechnology (munitions and security), Aztechnology (magical technology), Cross Applied Technologies (electronic hardware), Mitsuhamo Computer Technology, Novatech, Renraku Corporation, Saeder-Krupp (owned by a dragon), Shiawase Corporation (cyberware and biotech), Wuxing and Yamatetsu. Each of these has its own strengths and weaknesses, but all are trying to get an edge on the others. Shadowrunners often burgle technology, extract talent and sabotage corporate interests in the ruthless battleground of 21st-century business.

Criminal Organizations

Other powerful organizations choose not to have a company logo and a corporate headquarters. Criminal organizations prey on human vices and governmental limitations, catering to weaknesses and smuggling in forbidden items. The largest of these organizations—the American Mafia, the Japanese Yakuza, the Chinese Triads and the Korean Seoulpa Rings—all vie for control of a steady stream of revenue from extortion, blackmail, vice and trade in illegal (and addictive) simsense chips. While these organizations have their own manpower, they frequently turn to shadowrunners for their specialty expertise and to keep their own hands clean.

Gangs

The large criminal organizations care about the bottom line and cash flow. Gangs, on the other hand, concern themselves with turf, honor and raw power. Some gangs exist to shake down the locals, some to protect a particular group or location, and others merely for the thrill of it. Large gangs include the Ancients (an elf-dominated gang), the Cutters (a corporate-friendly gang) and the Merlyns (a magical gang with Mafia connections). Smaller gangs control more regional areas, like the 405 Hellhounds or the Leather Devils out of Bellevue. While the gangs have their own sense of family loyalty, they will often call on shadowrunners in particularly nasty situations that cannot be solved with a few well-placed punches.

Ecology

The Seattle Metroplex is a highly urbanized zone where corporations are allowed relatively free rein. As a result, environmental regulations are usually ignored unless someone is in a position to enforce compliance. Shadowrunners are often hired to serve as that force, either with a carrot (information the corporation wants to keep hidden) or a stick (sabotage for the nastier polluters). The corporations, of course, hire their own shadowrunners to deal with these eco-warriors.

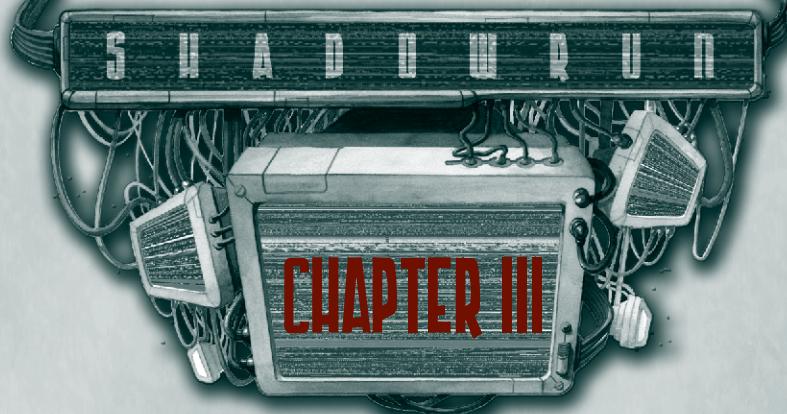
Magic

Magic thrives in Seattle, but numerous rival schools contend with one another, and the discussions are not always peaceful. Hermetic mages argue with shamans, magical schools regularly split and re-form, and everyone hates the toxic shamans and their deadly agenda. Not all shadowruns have technological objectives, and magic can prove as lethal as a bullet.

Espionage

Seattle is far from UCAS territory, surrounded by other relatively young nations that have filled out the fractured remains of the United States and Canada. Some are Native American in outlook (such as the Tsimshian), some are metahuman (such as the elven nation of Tir Tairngire), and some are a combination of the two (like the Salish-Shidhe Council). UCAS has its own presence, particularly in Fort Lewis. In addition, there are agents of more distant nations like Imperial Japan, China and the California Free State, all of whom have an interest in the goings-on in Seattle. All monitor the local political situation (and each other) and, if given half a chance, will gladly trip each other up. Enter the shadowrunner.





SHADOWRUN TECHNOLOGY

CYBERTECHNOLOGY

In 2063, survival in the shadows makes demands on the metahuman body that it was not designed to meet, such as protecting internal organs from bullets or interfacing directly with a computer. Moving at lightning speed is not something an ordinary metahuman needs to do, but in Shadowrun, such abilities are considered necessary in many walks of life. Fortunately for those who feel the need, advances of science allow the metahuman body to surpass its limitations by merging man with machine, a process called cybertechnology. This process takes metahumanity into territory where the body was never intended to go.

While magic might be considered metahumanity's greatest gift, cyberware is its greatest achievement. While only a privileged few can use magic, anyone can be implanted with cyberware.

CYBERWARE DEFINED

Cyberware, at its simplest, is an implanted technological device that can be manipulated by the metahuman body. Cyberware covers everything from enhancements such as datajacks (brain-to-computer implants surgically inserted through the skull) and bone lacing (infusing the metahuman skeleton with impact-resistant metals) to devices that compensate for disabilities or injuries that would otherwise be crippling.

SEATTLE HOT SPOTS

Seattle is a city of shadows, of back alleys and warehouses and corporate parks, where deals go down, reps are made and destroyed, and the losers' blood is washed off the concrete. It is also a place of light and activity, of spectacles and sights, of corporate spires and pyramids, the bleeding edge of the mid-21st century. Here are several of the main hot spots and important sites in Seattle for the sightseer, tourist and nascent shadowrunner.

- 1) The Renraku Arcology: Dominating the Seattle skyline, this huge, squat pyramid was built on the oldest part of the original city by the Renraku megacorp. Billed as a self-contained "city within a city," the arcology was to meet all the needs of its inhabitants with computerized comfort. In 2059, mere weeks after the ribbon was cut to officially open the structure, the arcology went into a complete lockdown, sealing 100,000 inhabitants within. The survivors spoke of a terrifying ordeal in which the technology came alive, torturing and killing thousands of residents during the months they were trapped.



- 2) Space Needle: The remnant of a World's Fair from just over a century ago, the Needle anchors the opposite end of downtown Seattle from the Renraku Arcology and is one of the symbols of the city. It is home to the Eye of the Needle, a rotating restaurant at its 185-meter-tall peak. The Eye is noted for its excellent food, discreet staff, and anti-surveillance gear and wards, making it a good choice for a high-powered meeting. It is owned by a dwarf named Gynt.
- 3) Dante's Inferno: The hottest nightclub in downtown Seattle, the Inferno is dominated by nine huge glass dance floors spiraling down to its lowest level. This is the trendiest spot in Seattle, the lair of the beautiful people and a regular site for buying and selling smuggled chips, hacker passwords, and similarly illegal and quasi-legal deals.
- 4) Club Penumbra: A favorite club among shadowrunners, this is the meeting place for runners and their clients. Loud and brash, with plenty of back rooms and secure tables, the Club Penumbra is known for its lunar-surface dance floor and its star-studded walls.
- 5) The Ork Underground: An extensive complex of underground tunnels and communities, this city beneath the city stretches from Everett through downtown and reaches Tacoma and Puyallup. It was originally settled by orks and dwarfs after the Night of Rage in 2039, but the dwarfs were expelled about twenty years ago; the Underground at present is home to orks and trolls.

Cyberware comes in many forms and consists of many components, such as plastic derivatives, ceramics and non-corrosive (as well as non-magnetic and even non-conductive) metal, insulated micro-fiber-optic lines, microelectronics, microcomputers, micro-optical processors, microgyroscopes and engines, electronically stimulated polymers, and artificial muscles called myomers.

INTERCONNECTIVITY

Cyberware devices can be linked using an input/output transfer device, which allows the cyberware to exchange data. Datajacks and similar devices that provide a Direct Neural Interface (DNI) fill this role. Such devices can also transfer data to and from external devices. Matrixware is the narrowest branch of cyberware but the most commonly implanted, consisting primarily of datajacks and cerebral cyberdecks. A few definitions and explanations are needed for this section:

Cyberdeck vs.

Cyberterminal: A cyberdeck is a hot microcomputer used by deckers for illegal Matrix access or by security deckers, whereas a cyberterminal is a computer used for safe, legal Matrix access and work. A terminal is much slower than a cyberdeck, and the two are never confused.

Datajack: The almost universal mark of the cyber-conscious user, standard datajacks allow input and output to certain pieces of cyberware and gear. Datajacks allow the user to cybersneti-

- 6) The Body Mall: In the wreckage of Redmond, the Body Mall is an abandoned hospital taken over by quasi-legal medical practitioners. Now a collection of chop shops, body clinics and similar operations, the Body Mall offers good medical services and cyberware at low prices.
- 7) The Skeleton: Redmond's best nightclub, the Skeleton is known for breaking hot acts and for a large number of wealthy young people from Bellevue and safer neighborhoods "slumming" in the dangerous Barrens. Good work can be found here both preying on and protecting the kids.
- 8) The Crash Zone: The site of a recent spaceplane disaster, the Crash Zone is dominated by former prisoners of a now-destroyed reformatory. It is a wild area ruled by a heavily cybered human named King Chrome.
- 9) Glow City: The site of a partial nuclear meltdown, its power plant is still in operation, but the surrounding area has been settled by squatters heavily mutated by the radiation.
- 10) The Crime Mall: An abandoned three-story mall on the outskirts of Puyallup, the Crime Mall is a black-market bazaar for drugs, chips, electronics, grayware, cyberware, weapons and mystic talismans.
- 11) Council Island: Formerly Mercer Island, this slip of land in the middle of Lake Washington was ceded to the Salish-Shidhe Council by the Treaty of Denver. Most of the 19th- and 20th-century buildings have been torn down and replaced with more traditional Amerindian-style structures. It serves as the Council's embassy in Seattle and as a hub of shamanic research and development.

skillsoft user has access to new and useful abilities; how he or she uses them is up to the individual. Unless stored in a cranial memory storage device, the knowledge is lost when the skillsoft is removed. Skillsofts are usually sold encased in five-centimeter-long cylinders to protect the chip until it is inserted into a jack. All softs can be downloaded into headware memory through a datajack.

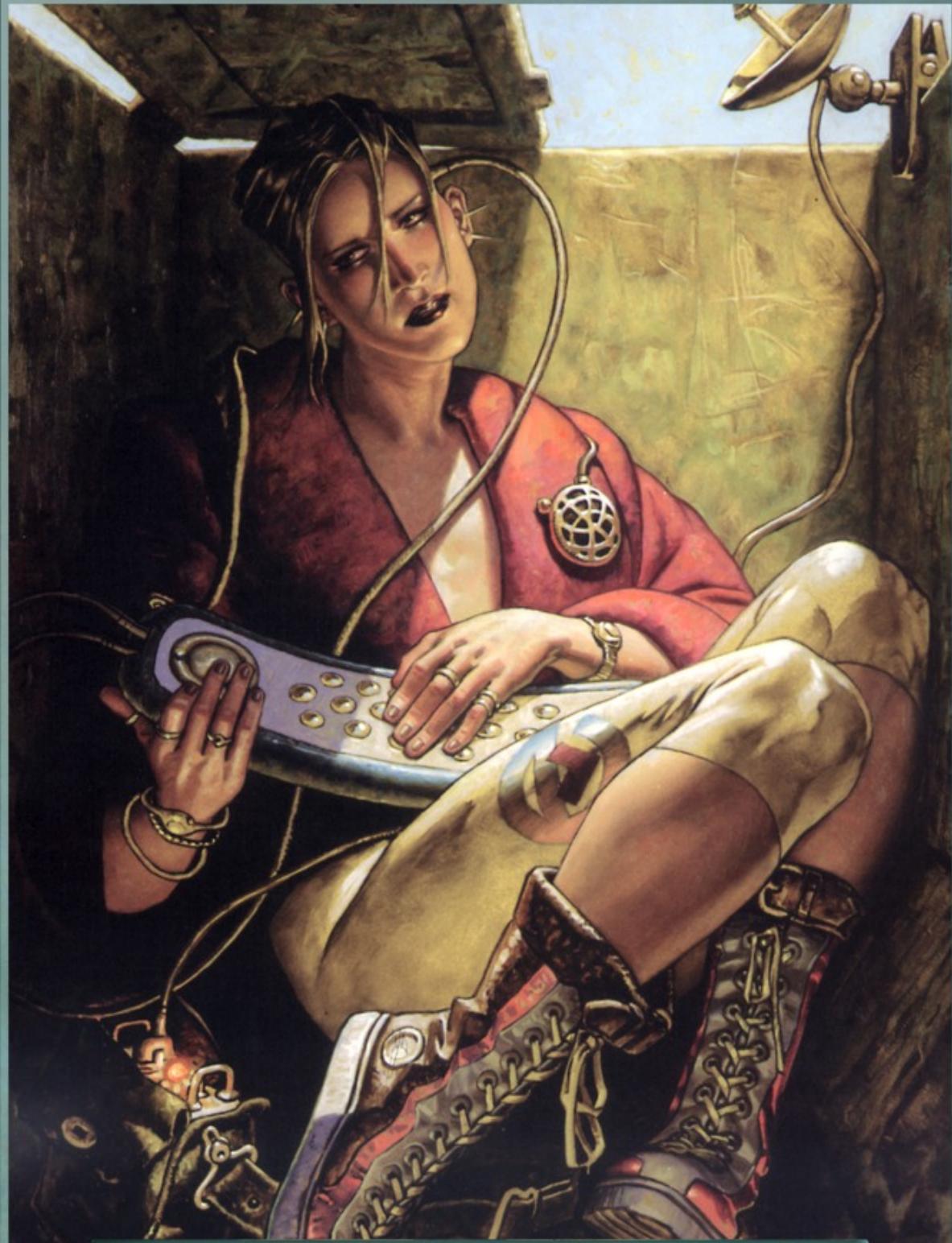
Direct Neural Interface (DNI): Most cyberware is either connected directly to the brain or wired into the nervous system, creating a direct neural link that allows the implant to be controlled using mental commands, usually a physiological impulse of some kind. In other words, the act of extending a retractable hand blade is as easy and unconscious as flexing a muscle; the user does not need to issue a deliberate "open" command to the hand blade.

cally interface with properly equipped gear such as cyberdecks, remote-control decks and vehicles with datajack ports, so that the user can manipulate them, issue commands and so forth.

Deckers usually implant datajacks in their temples to access higher-brain functions, while riggers, the truckers and pilots of the 21st century, usually have them behind and below the ears, where they access the lower brain. It is not unusual to have more than one datajack.

Datajacks allow the user to mentally access memory devices. Collections of programmable data, called "skillsofts," can also be downloaded into headware memory through a datajack.

Skillsofts: A skillsoft is memory on a chip. When used in conjunction with the proper headware and bodyware, skillsofts allow users to know and do things they never learned in the normal fashion, such as touring Paris or driving a Formula 1 racecar. Because a skillsoft's "memory imaging" encoding differs radically from any actual memories or learned experiences the user may already have, the skillsoft and/or skillwire system must override the user's own reflexes, abilities and memories, forcing a reliance on the encoded capabilities of the skillsoft. A



DECKER IN A DUMPSTER

IMPLANTING CYBERWARE

In Shadowrun, "If you can imagine it, we can implant it."

Though the natural metahuman body is incapable of meeting the demands of the 21st century, it still represents a marvel of construction and performance. Tampering with the machine that is the body by adding to, removing from or otherwise altering it using cyberware is guaranteed to make the original machine run and/or look differently.

Cyberware radically alters the original flesh body, and such alterations take a toll. Some might consider it "just a datajack," but that relatively unobtrusive piece of cyberware changes how the brain operates and how the body protects itself.

The intrinsic change in the metahuman body that occurs with the implanting of cyberware is that body's ability to affect or be affected by magic. The inherent connection a metahuman has to magic is called essence. Essence is defined as a body's life force, its cohesive and holistic strength. For each piece of cyberware implanted, the metahuman loses essence. Needless to say, very few mages have cyberware.

Essence loss is not simply a result of removing flesh: people who lose limbs or organs but do not replace them with cyberware do not lose essence. The loss of essence is a result of connecting a machine to the brain using microsurgery and nanotechnology and tricking the brain into accepting that machine as a part of the body. By doing so, you have changed the fundamental nature of the body—you gain an operational advantage, but you are no longer the person you once were.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

The human body is complex and intricate—a machine made of organic materials and compounds. Naturally, corporations and scientists are continually trying to improve it through biotechnology, bionics and bioengineering.

The use of biotechnology—bioware—can help an individual perform far beyond his or her original limitations. While cyberware is machinery, artificial and invasive, bioware is subtle and of the flesh.

BIOWARE DEFINED

Bioware augments body functions and must be integrated into the body's own workings as if it were a natural feature. Essentially, doctors replace organs and tissue with other organic parts—a difficult process to design and execute. While a cybertechnician can forcibly alter or replace whole parts of the body, a biotechnician cannot. Changing the fine balance of organic systems is a tricky business that can result in unforeseen complications and drastic side effects.

CYBERMANCY

In the world of Shadowrun, the concepts that allow cybermancy to exist remain locked away behind closed doors in black corporate clinics. In the shadows, cybermancy is mostly a rumor, a tall tale used to scare other runners or embellish a story told over drinks. Stories of dead-eyed cyberzombies rank alongside the yarn about the shadowrunning dragon or the spirit of the Matrix. Very few know the true facts, and even fewer understand their implications. Cybermancy is Shadowrun's first tentative step toward a true blend of man and machine.

Bioware is undetectable except by an intensive medical examination. Casual searches, X-ray scans and the like cannot discern the difference between an augmented organ and the original. However, additional glands and organs can be detected by examining X-ray film. Apart from exploratory surgery, the only way to determine whether an individual has undergone biological modification is through metabolic analysis, such as urinalysis or sophisticated blood tests.

Perhaps bioware's greatest advantage is its capacity for self-repair. Once implanted, bioware can call on the body's natural repair mechanisms to fix itself if it is damaged. Implanting Bioware does not require the neural changes that most cyberware does, nor is its impact upon the body's integrity as drastic. Bioware does not cause its owner to lose essence.

Bio-implants can be installed in any metahuman with a matching blood type, and sometimes metatype or gender. Usually grown through advanced methods in a generic "organ donor," the implants are designed to be smoothly integrated into the body, though they are not tailored for any one body in particular. Installation usually requires a battery of immunosuppressive treatments designed to persuade the body to accept the implant as part of itself. Cyberware and bioware can be integrated in the same body, though a few select implants are incompatible.



NANOTECHNOLOGY

Cyberware, or at least the cyber/flesh interfaces, would not exist without nanites. Nanotechnology has been around in various guises since the late 20th century. Still, these creations—invisible to the human and metahuman eye—were largely disregarded until very recently, when a series of startling advances was made. As a result, nanotech has become one of the hottest research topics in the Awakened world.

Nanotechnology has entered a period of exponential growth, fueled at least in part by the revolutionary technologies developed by the neo-artificial intelligence (AI) called Deus. Deus raised the bar on nanotechnical effects thanks to its lack of human restraint. The AI effectively became the archetypal "mad scientist," taking the limits of nanotechnology to wild and unpredictable heights. Tragically, the "mad" part of "mad scientist" overtook Deus, and the AI had to be destroyed.

SIMSENSE

Artificial Sensory Induction System Technology (ASIST) hit the scene in 2018, introduced by Dr. Hosato Hikita of ESP Systems in Chicago. ASIST is a crucial component of simsense, or "simulated sensory technology," which allows a person to experience something that happened or is happening to someone else. Simsense is used in cyberdecks, rigging, skillsofts, medware and other tech.

While using simsense, an individual believes he or she is actually there, experiencing everything the target per-

son experienced. When combined with expert systems, devices that incorporate simsense can adjust bodily movement and response times.

BETTER-THAN-LIFE CHIPS

Better-Than-Life chips (BTLs) are illegal “drugs.” Highly addictive, these chips serve no productive purpose, as they continually loop high-amplitude ASIST outputs with direct stimulation of response centers in the limbic area, the “pleasure center” of the brain. Because the peak controls have been cut out of a BTL, the sensation is significantly more intense and addictive than a standard simchip.

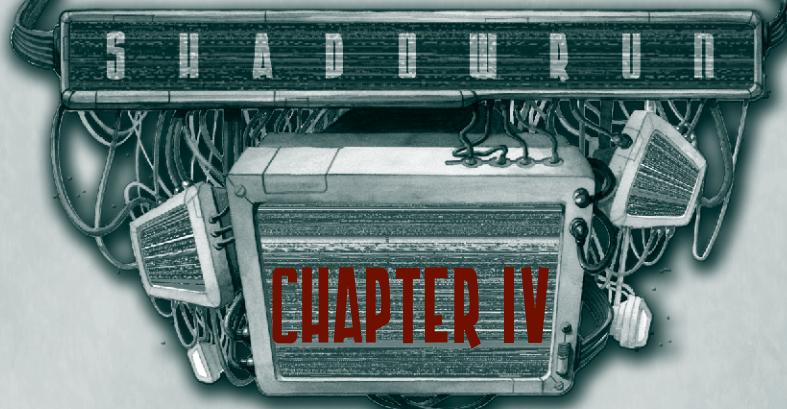
Many different types of BTLs are available on the world’s black market. They come in several different formats, and the BTL programs themselves can be modified with options, just like a decker utility or a skillsoft.

On the street, numerous slang terms are used to signify BTLs and their users: beetles, playback, zombie chips, mindbenders, trancers and so forth.

BANNED TECHNOLOGY

There are some things technology simply can’t do. These things are banned in the Shadowrun universe:

- ★ Bringing back the dead
- ★ Teleporting
- ★ Genetically changing a metahuman’s race or sex
- ★ “Curing” metahumanity
- ★ Time travel
- ★ Complete cloning of persons; so far only organs and other bits can be cloned



THE MATRIX

The Matrix is an interlocking system of computers, called hosts, linked together by grids—the world telecommunications network. Most computer systems throughout the world are accessible via the Matrix, assuming you have authorized passcodes or can hack your way in. A Matrix user can theoretically connect to a host on the other side of the planet within seconds.

The human mind cannot directly comprehend the flow of data in the Matrix. If users were restricted to old-tech tools—command lines, file names, programs in clumsy procedural languages—



MATRIX JARGON

Access Control Index Files Slave (ACIFS)—

the rating format used when describing the system rating of any host.

Artificial Sensory Induction System

Technology (ASIST)—hardware and programs that allow one to directly experience the senses of another (simsense).

Cyberdeck—a hot microcomputer used by deckers for illegal Matrix access and by security deckers.

Cyberterminal—a computer used for safe, legal Matrix access and work; much slower than a cyberdeck.

Decker—a hacker, an illegal user of the Matrix.

Direct Neural Interface (DNI)—the ability to interface neural impulses with a computer system, thus allowing a user to interact with and control a computer system directly with his brain.

Grid—a series of interlocking computer systems (hosts).

Host—a single computer system.

Icon—any object a user sees in the Matrix.

Intrusion Countermeasures (IC)—

any software program installed in a computer system (host) with the express purpose of protecting that system from access by unauthorized users.

Jackpoints—any physical location that provides access to the Matrix.

Local Telecommunications Grid (LTG)—

a grid covering a small area (neighborhoods, cities, etc.); numerous LTGs connect to a single RTG.

the system would be unmanageable. For example, a user who wanted to read a computer file in 2003 would type in some wearisome command, find the file in a window, or access the desired information in some other equally clumsy manner. Artificial Sensory Induction System Technology (ASIST), however, opened up the possibilities of Direct Neural Interface (DNI) access to computers, and the Matrix was born. Everything in the Matrix—physical components, programs, even actions such as copying files—is graphically represented by an icon. In 2063, the user takes a microsecond-long trip through a computer-generated landscape to find a file. The interface routines he uses may look like clerical workers, or a huge library, or simply dazzling patterns of energy. If the user is authorized to view a file, he finds it right where he expects to. He sees the file and touches it, and the data downloads into his cyberterminal.

Users no longer need to remember codes, command sets or file names. If they want something, they go get it. If they want to program a process for a laboratory or an assembly line, they mentally perform the motions involved or build a model using virtual components, and the computer learns from them. Twenty-first-century chemists, for example, build molecules according to formulae as if they were using children's building blocks. The computer then translates these actions into a program that will perform the process in the real world.

Of course, shadowrunners who have their own reasons for being inside a computer system can take advantage of the same technological advances. The same Matrix gear that makes a wage slave's job simpler also gives power to deckers. These renegade users can slip into a computer system and use the icons to their own ends.

IT'S A MATRIX WORLD AFTER ALL

The Matrix is the infrastructure. It's what's behind the "interface." It is literally everywhere and runs everything, and yet it's as close as anything non-magical can come to being invisible.

People don't think about how the power grid works when they plug in a hair dryer or drive their car to work; they just use it. It's the same with the Matrix: they make phone calls, send email, ask their car for directions and perform a million other little tasks, never thinking about how the connections are made or how the data is transferred. Almost every place on the planet is connected to someplace else via the Matrix: phone calls to videoconferencing, credstick transfers to security systems ... any time information moves anywhere in the world of 2063, it does so over the Matrix.

By the late 1990s, electronic devices such as pagers and cell phones had already moved down from the ranks of the tech elite into the pockets and belt loops of the busy middle class. Everyone from salesmen working out of their cars to parents trying to juggle grocery shopping with picking up their kids at track practice took advantage of the convenience these devices offered. It only took a little cultural adjustment for that convenience to become mandatory. Phone numbers became associated with people instead of addresses, and they combined with email to create one do-it-all way of contacting anyone you wanted to talk with. As people got used to that state of constant "connectedness," they began demanding more information in a timelier manner, and the marketing gurus responded. In 2063, there are pagers the size of a credstick that let you read—or listen to—everything from email to the latest headlines, as well as wrist phones that you wear instead of a watch. Both receive their data via the Matrix.

Master Persona Control Program (MPCP)—the master operating system of a cyberdeck.

Matrix—the world telecommunications network.

Node—part of a host, such as a subsystem, usually represented by a virtual landscape.

Persona—a decker's icon.

Persona Program—One of the four programs (Body, Evasion, Masking or Sensors) that define a persona's "abilities" while the user surfs the Matrix.

Private Locale Telecommunications

Grid (PLTG)—any grid the general public cannot access.

Regional Telecommunications Grid

(RTG)—the largest type of grid, covering entire countries.

Sculpted System—Matrix hosts with detailed, non-standard iconography, usually encompassing a particular metaphor—for example, a Chinese castle.

Security Decker—a decker employed by a corporation or law-enforcement agency to protect certain Matrix areas from deckers.

Simsense—hardware and programs that enable a person to directly experience something that happened or is happening to someone else.

Subsystem—the five operational aspects of any grid or host.

System Access Nodes (SANs)—the icon connection between host computers or grids to other host computers or grids.

Tortoise—decker slang for cyberterminals.

Universal Matrix Standards (UMS)—the standard iconography that is currently falling out of fashion in the Matrix.

Any home in 2063 that boasts even a modest income has some form of cyberterminal. The cyberterminal takes care of the computing needs of the household, as well as any form of communication: television/trideo, email, phone and simsense. To put it in technical terms, the cyberterminal serves as the portal for all data transfer to and from the home. The simsense channel provider, the phone company, the messaging service—all converge on this one box in the modern living room. Depending on their subscriptions, the average metahuman can even do library research and visit online malls or corporate ad-spaces through friendly icon-based menus. The broadcast and simsense stations send their signals over the Matrix to those telecom boxes whose hardware addresses appear in their subscription databases.

BUSINESS AND THE MATRIX

The Matrix has transformed business in the Sixth World. It introduced companies to a whole new way to cut overhead, increase productivity, lower operating costs and raise profits. The business world has embraced the Matrix, forever changing the working experience.

Virtual offices are one of the best examples of businesses using the Matrix to its utmost. A virtual office is a computer-generated construct of a physical office. The employees connect through their cyberterminals at home, work their shifts and then log out. This has obvious benefits for both the employer and the employee. Employees don't have to commute, arrange for lunches or maintain a professional wardrobe. Employers cut down on the time lost to socializing between employees and reduce their overhead. When you add up the cost of the desks office workers use, the chairs they sit on and the vidphones that you can't seem to keep them from using, not to mention the electricity to provide them with light, heat and air conditioning, a business using a virtual office can reduce overhead by some 10 percent in the short term and 20 percent over the long haul. A "virtual" employee can still write up proposals, design new products, send and receive faxes and interoffice memos, attend meetings and so forth. Ultimately, the benefits are substantial.

However, this doesn't mean that office buildings and production plants are standing empty. You still need technicians on site, both for the facility and the computer systems. Given the number of virtual employees who are relying on the host computer, a serious software or hardware problem can cost hundreds of thousands of nuyen for every hour that workers are sitting idle. As a result, the number of technicians on site has doubled and in some cases even tripled. Corporations have also addressed the problem by implementing secondary backup hosts and archives.

MATRIX CULTURE

The cybered metahumans who haunt the Matrix have developed a genuine culture that goes far beyond the chat rooms of the early 21st century. Except for basic hygiene and sustenance, there is no reason for anyone to leave the Matrix, and a world culture has evolved.

CULTURE SHOCK IN 3-D

At the turn of the century, one of the biggest concerns regarding the Internet was the amount of time people seemed to be spending on it, to the exclusion of other activities that were regarded as healthy and normal. Online games, chat rooms, themed text-based environments ... these were just a few of the available entertainments people had access to. And compared with what was to come, they hadn't seen anything yet.

In 2063 there are a myriad of sim-based and trid-based entertainments available whose addictive powers blow anything previously imagined out of the water. Escapism and the tools to make it happen are at an all-time high in the Sixth World, thanks to the Matrix. However, it says something about the degree to which the Matrix has been incorporated into society that such activities, even given their addictive qualities, are not feared but embraced. The world of the Matrix is real enough that immersing oneself in the Matrix is viewed as a common, everyday occurrence.

TRIDEO AND MUSIC

Some of the entertainments available haven't changed substantially in decades. Chief among these are forms of recorded entertainment. Digital music, usually with a trideo visual feed, and trideo, (video with 21st century tech and 3-d depth and content), or simsense films are the most popular recorded entertainment on the Matrix. These are available with a standard account or through a pay channel. At last count, there were more than a hundred thousand different channels on the Matrix.

SIMSENSE RECORDINGS

Simsense entertainment is in a class by itself. The movement from trideo to sim was a giant leap in recording technology, allowing one to record not only a visual image but also the sensory and emotional input associated with it. Needless to say, this form of entertainment has become extremely popular.

The rise of sim technology has also brought new life to sporting events and pornography. The chance to experience the power and emotion of your favorite urban brawl player or a cliff diver from Aztlan is a strong draw, as are the obvious opportunities afforded by the (illegal) full-sensory-immersion pornography films. The ability to get the sensations without any of the risks is a rush for many people, so sales of such films have skyrocketed, questions of legality notwithstanding.

ONLINE GAMES AND VR SETTINGS

For those to whom a preprogrammed sim flick is boring, there are the interactive possibilities of online games. These are almost always sim-enabled, and being jacked in gives you a definite advantage. Most of these are combat-based games with a variety of settings, and they're pretty popular among the young single male demographic. For those who don't enjoy shoot-'em-ups, there are also virtual reality (VR) settings. These are sculpted environments that are modeled on a theme, often a historical period or a popular film or fiction setting. The participants act out the lives of personas they create, with the possibilities limited only by the environment.

VR worlds can also be set in the modern day. Virtual bars are a popular setting, with "food" and "drink" available via the wonders of sim technology. These have become the lonely Matrix addict's dating service, and more than one couple has met in a VR bar. The possibilities of sim and VR settings have also given rise to virtual bordellos. The cottage industry of Matrix prostitution is a growing one, and due to the fact that their sites are invariably on private hosts, the legal issues have been tricky to sort out. Still, virtual sex has become commonplace since the turn of the century, although it remains a poor substitute for actual human contact. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect that one of metahumanity's most basic urges would not find an outlet on the Matrix, especially as it grows to mirror the real world in greater and greater detail.

CHILDREN'S AREAS

The last area of Matrix entertainment belongs to children. The education of children has passed to a significant degree into the realm of the cyberterminal. Matrix education programs, focusing on reading comprehension, mathematics, computer and technical skills, and hand-eye coordination, are considered a necessity by every school. Many "spare-time" entertainments lean heavily on these aspects as well. There are clubs and hosts set up especially for children, and the average child is involved with them to a moderate degree.

ACCESSING THE MATRIX

To connect to the Matrix, people use cybernetic interface devices known as cyberdecks and cyberterminals. All such devices have a fiber-optic cable with a standard data plug like those found on home telecom systems. The deck or terminal connects to its user either via an electrode net that slips over the head or with a direct cybernetic interface via a datajack. Some netheads still use some form of keyboard, but many prefer running with a pure cybernetic hookup.

Once activated, the deck or terminal overrides most of the user's own sensory information and replaces it with an electronic simulation of the Matrix. The simsense signal translates the complex code structures of the actual Matrix into graphical icons. After a second of disorientation, the decker (that is, the icon of the decker character) appears in the Matrix at the point where the cyberdeck tapped in. If he enters from an illegal tap in the back room at Matchstick's Bar & Grill, the decker's image will appear in the telecom line that serves that joint.



THE MATRIX

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Legitimate users have registered cyberterminals that identify themselves to the Matrix at every step. But deckers remain anonymous, and when everything goes right they can dance through the secrets of the Matrix, laughing at security measures. Of course, when things go wrong, they can die in the Matrix as well.

JACKPOINTS

Jackpoints consist of the physical connections deckers use to access the Matrix. Jackpoints normally fall into two categories: legal and illegal. A legal-access jackpoint represents access from a legally registered telecom.

An illegal-access jackpoint represents access from either an illegal telecom connection (meaning some unscrupulous soul has boosted service from the phone company) or a dataline tap, an illegal junction box hooked directly into a fiber-optic trunk. The illegal-access jackpoint is the most common jackpoint used by deckers.

ICONS

Every object a user sees in the Matrix is an icon. Users have special icons called personas. When speaking about a decker's persona, often it is his/her icon, or on-line identity, that is being referred to. Icons also represent programs, IC, nodes and so forth.

As real as the experience seems, a decker never physically enters the Matrix. His body remains at the jackpoint, where the cyberdeck connects to the Matrix. The deck feeds the decker an ASIST signal, in the same way a simsense set makes him think he is somewhere else. That somewhere else is the Matrix.

Everything in the Matrix has a symbolic representation. Computer systems, when viewed from the outside, often look like buildings, mountains or other large structures. Inside, they may use a variety of imagery to represent different functions. Most computer systems in 2063 are custom-designed "sculpted systems," using detailed metaphors and images to represent the workings of the systems. The central metaphor of a sculpted system defines the virtual reality of that system. For example, the Mitsuhamada Pagoda contains virtual villages where application icons toil patiently in the rice paddies of a cybernetic medieval Japanese milieu, and sensitive data is stored in castles defended by samurai IC. When on a system, usually everything a decker does or senses is filtered through the system's central metaphor.

Data also have their own representations, as do the systems that guard the data. The data might appear as floating cubes filled with swirling numbers, while a giant snake (representing a security program) coils around them, awaiting an unwary intruder. Other types of programs have their own representations. Logging on to a host may be presented as walking through a doorway, or being sucked through a great neon tube. Programs used by deckers have similar representations. An attack program can look like anything from a knife to a rocket launcher. A shield program might look like a traditional shield or perhaps an energy field that rises up to protect the decker.

HOSTS

Hosts are the computer systems that serve as the backbone of the Sixth World's information society. Billions of nuyen and inestimable megapulses of data flow through these systems daily. Hosts are the vaults where these secret jewels are stored, serving as databanks, research file storage, libraries, virtual shopping malls, chat rooms, virtual arcades, private meeting sites, bulletin boards, local networks, archives, banks and so forth.

OFF-LINE HOSTS

Not all hosts are connected to the Matrix. Many highly paranoid, ultra-secure sites specifically avoid Matrix connections due to the threat of intrusion by unauthorized deckers. The only way for a decker to access such a host is by jacking in directly at the physical location of the host. For example, to access an off-line host containing highly sensitive research data for the Saeder-Krupp megacorp, the decker would have to physically penetrate the research facility and find a jackpoint by which she could directly access the paydata.

and best-running icon possible. These components generate the decker's persona and define the decker's performance in the Matrix.

CYBERTERMINALS

Not everyone in the Matrix is using a cyberdeck. In fact, most Matrix users jack in through a cyberterminal, as decks are quite expensive and the corps don't just hand them out to every keypuncher and clerk. Cyberterminals are known by deckers as "tortoises" for their lack of speed and finesse.

And what does the decker's icon look like? Anything he wants: a man wearing a suit of knightly or technological armor, a being made of pure light, a glowing white ball, or a demon from some obscure corner of hell; it doesn't matter. In the Matrix, everything can look like anything.

Many programs and their icons may be hidden from a decker. The icon is "there," but the decker does not see it because it is inactive or because her deck's sensor programs are not good enough to detect it. For example, certain security programs (intrusion countermeasures, or IC) are often hidden or portrayed as innocuous icons until the decker triggers them. Deckers can also take advantage of this disguise game by using masking programs to make their personas invisible or make them look like authorized programs or processes.

CYBERDECKS

Cyberdecks are the tools that deckers use to interface with the Matrix. In a nutshell, a cyberdeck is an extremely powerful microcomputer cranking out enough processing power to implement the ASIST interface, converting the decker's neural impulses into holographic command instructions. All decks consist of certain components, fine-tuned by the decker to present the best-looking

TRIGGERING IC

IC (pronounced "Ice") stands for "intrusion countermeasures." Some IC simply impedes the decker, perhaps attempting to get a network ID on him. Other programs are designed to crash his icon off the Matrix. Still others go after his deck. Finally, there's black IC—which flat out tries to kill him.

TYPES OF IC

There are four specific types of intrusion countermeasures. Below is a short description of each type of IC. IC was created in the early 21st century when corporations realized how easily Echo Mirage could hack into any system they wished, after the elite team of deckers destroyed the grid-crashing virus in 2031. It is rumored that some surviving members of Echo Mirage wrote their own tickets, creating the first several generations of computer intrusion countermeasures. IC is denoted by a color rating system that equates to the potential deadliness of its defenses.

White: White IC is only programmed to attack a decker's on-line icon and cannot permanently damage the decker or his deck.

Gray: Gray IC is designed to target the decker's cyberdeck and utilities, which can result in permanent damage to the cyberdeck.

Trace: A unique hybrid of White and Gray IC programs, Trace IC is designed to locate the decker and notify the proper authorities. This is the top end of IC available to most companies.

Black: Black IC is specifically programmed to attack the decker himself, creating dangerous biofeedback between the decker and his cyberdeck, possibly leading to permanent physical and psychological damage or even death. Only A+ corporations and nations have this dangerous form of IC.

A cyberterminal is simply a keyboard with a flat viewing screen and a set of electrodes or a datajack plug. Some have antiquated paraphernalia such as full-size monitors, VR gloves and goggles, or even a mouse or joystick.

These terminals have roughly the same functions as cyberdecks, but no cyberterminal has the capabilities of a top-quality cyberdeck. Cyberterminals cannot be modified to have the neuron-breaking speed necessary to shadowrun. Deckers are criminals and can't afford to be slowed by a cyberterminal. On the positive side, tortoise users cannot be hurt by black IC or dump shock, and cyberterminals generally cost one-tenth as much as an equivalent cyberdeck.

ACCESSORIES

Cyberdecks and cyberterminals frequently come with accessories such as off-line storage or a vidscreen display so others can shoulder-surf the Matrix from the decker's point of view. Hitcher jacks, whether electrodes or datajack feeds, allow others to "jack in" and attach directly to the decker's icon. Hitchers cannot manipulate or affect the decker's persona in any way; they are merely along for the ride. Hitchers are also protected from nasty IC side effects, in the same way as cyberterminal users. Many people find it annoying to hitch, as they cannot control the movements or perspective of the decker.

Movement in the Matrix

Movement in the Matrix is virtually instantaneous unless the decker is engaged in combat, attempting to deal with IC, performing system operations, transferring data or loading programs. In the Matrix, data is transmitted at megabauds and system response is measured in microseconds. Only when dealing with something that requires real attention does the action slow down to the point that the decker can notice time passing.

When moving in the Matrix, distance is entirely relative, a matter of commline connections, available memory in subsystems, and switching systems and transmission rates. Sure, the decker can float leisurely from point to point, but why crawl when you can zoom? Perception is everything.

Keep in mind that characters experience time somewhat subjectively in the Matrix. The apparent time experienced when moving through the Matrix may seem much longer to the user than the actual time that passed outside the Matrix. For example, a decker who makes a single system operation to find a file may experience it as a walk down a long hallway lined with books, which ends when he finds the icon he wants. He may feel as if he has spent several minutes or even hours searching, when actually only a few seconds of real time have elapsed.

CYBERCOMBAT

Only the best deckers engage and evade IC in the Matrix. This is called cybercombat. Cybercombat in the Matrix follows much the same sequence of events as it does in the world of the living. IC and the decker swing blades and shoot guns as the Matrix interprets their electronic attacks and defenses as physical combat. Only the most serious and deadliest deckers engage in cybercombat against other deckers. There are a handful of cyberassassins that roam the Matrix, and their names are whispered with genuine fear.



EXITING THE MATRIX

A decker can leave the Matrix at any time by jacking out: pulling the plug that connects his datajack to the deck. Keep in mind that the decker's Matrix image, his persona, is only a program. The persona does not really go anywhere and has no independent consciousness. Despite decker legends, one cannot get "trapped" in the Matrix. A decker kicked out of the Matrix involuntarily has been dumped. The rapid cutoff of the deck's simsense signal can cause the decker to experience mild disorientation and a momentary fugue state called dump shock. Cyberterminal users do not experience dump shock, as they are not jacked into the Matrix.

LIFE IN THE MATRIX

Inside a grid, distances appear vast and scales enormous, although there is no "real" distance involved.

Inside hosts, distances and space can appear infinite or cramped, depending on the prevailing metaphor. In technical terms, the question is whether the persona (remember, it's only a program) is able to access the data space of other programs or the controllers for hardware elements in a system. In an odd way, distance is relative to the amount of time (generally measured in nanoseconds) that it takes the deck to access the hardware of the next node.



THE OTAKU

The Matrix teems with message archives and chat logs filled with tales of ghosts in the machine, unstoppable core-war viruses, and other mysteries and dangers of the cyber-world. Many of these stories are no more than fictions and rumors created to frighten newbies and burnish the reputations of the Matrix elite. But among the megapulses of legends, one stands out: the stories of the otaku, the so-called children of the Matrix.

At first, rumors of the otaku were considered hardly credible. Few were ready to believe in these children, said to possess the ability to journey through the Matrix without cyberdecks, commanding it with their wills alone. As more and more accounts of these mysterious figures filtered in, however, the debate over the otaku began to grow in the shadow community. Before long, the otaku began speaking for themselves, evoking amazement and

intense curiosity. However, it quickly became clear that these otaku postings raised even more questions than they answered, for the otaku's views about their abilities and origins are layered in mysticism and youthful idealism, and the worldviews of individual otaku frequently conflict with or even contradict each other.

In recent years, the stories about otaku have taken an ominous turn. Once portrayed as harmless curiosities, the otaku are acquiring a darker image, fueled by rumors of their religious infighting and cult-like devotion to alleged artificial intelligences. Increasingly, the otaku are no longer viewed as innocent, bright-eyed children but as battle-scarred, fanatical and dangerous individuals.



SHADOWRUNNING IN THE MATRIX

For as long as there have been computer networks, there have been nodes dedicated to promoting free thought, breaking the rules, and providing havens for radicals and hackers. Despite extensive government and corporate attempts to shut down such sites for piracy, subversive activities and a slew of other charges, they have survived.

When the Treaty of Denver signed over the site of the old U.S. Air Force Academy to the Pueblo Corporate Council, the PCC cleaned it out, locked it up and forgot about it. Shortly afterward, a well-equipped, well-financed and extremely Matrix-savvy group infiltrated the site and made it the home base for a major undertaking.

Over a twenty-year period, the surviving fragments of abandoned military networks worldwide were secretly and extensively reconstructed and tied together, effectively creating a massive infrastructure that could conceivably host an entire grid, distinct from the Matrix. In the mid-2030s, this grid went active, the host for the data-haven core assembled on the academy grounds. Thus the Nexus was born, complete with its own physical private grid.

One of the first nodes appended to this grid was Shadowland, a renegade Seattle-based site that began as a pirate bulletin-board system (BBS) in the previous century. Though Shadowland lacked the technical resources and massive archives of the Nexus, it was popular with the black market and information underground. Those in the know could access the Nexus through Shadowland, and the Nexus's wealth of data was made available to Shadowland's sysops. A partnership quickly formed.

SHADOWLAND NODES

Shadowland is infamous as a clearinghouse for shadow-market information. Shadowland nodes also offer other services as if they were a legal Matrix Service Provider, from chat rooms and message boards to anonymous forwarding services.

Shadowland nodes are spread across the world, appearing in most major North American cities as well as overseas in the following locales: Seattle, New York, Boston, New Orleans, Atlanta, FDC, Oakland, LA, Dallas, Halifax, Denver, Quebec City, Vancouver, Cheyenne, Las Vegas, Havana, Merseysprawl (U.K.), Frankfurt, Sicily, Kuwait, Okinawa, Honshu, Seoul, Sidney, Guam and Hawaii. This list is by no means complete.

INSIDE SHADOWLAND

The interiors of Shadowland nodes tend to look fairly mundane, as time and resources are devoted to archiving data rather than sculpting the system. Most hosts are sculpted as high-tech rooms appealing to technophiles. Mileage may vary from host to host or from node to node.

Shadowland nodes include several areas where personas can socialize, similar to the virtual bars hosted at many other nodes. These establishments are all run by the Shadowland sysops, and while they're full-fledged parts of the nodes, they're treated as separate entities inside each node. Translated, this means that just because deckers have access to Shadowland itself, they do not have carte blanche to act however they please in these venues.

There are several of these Matrix hangouts, some more famous than others. A favorite social gathering spot is Abraxis on Shadowland Seattle. Abraxis appears as a multilevel nightclub with a vaguely industrial theme, though it varies slightly on the whim of the designers. Each table consists of a big gear connected to the floor with a single bolt (yes, the table can be spun to raise and lower it), the multiple bars are constructed of scaffolding, and the elevator to the second and third floors is a clunky freight lift.

The atmosphere of Abraxis is pretty relaxed, as deckers mingle with corporate folk who mingle with street samurai who can barely log on to the 'Land. It's not really designed for business, though the odd deal goes down from time to time. It's intended purely as a gathering place, a spot where normally paranoid and unfriendly shadow-ops types can hang without worrying about packing a gun.

DATA HAVENS

In the simplest sense of the term, a data haven is a system dedicated to storing as much information as possible. No records are maintained regarding the sources of the data, which are typically of a sensitive nature. In most cases, the data have been stolen from a corporation or private entity, and their availability usually constitutes a financial loss, security risk or operational concern to the legal owner of said data.

Under most international, national and corporate laws, the information and services provided by data havens are illegal. Aside from trafficking in stolen and proprietary information, data havens regularly violate copyright, trademark and distribution licensing laws, and they frequently aid and abet numerous other criminal activities. Despite this, data havens generally operate free of legal prosecution; their value as a resource for organized criminal concerns ensures that they are well protected, and they possess ample funds to ensure their security. Additionally, data havens regularly attract powerful benefactors who provide financial, technical and security assets in exchange for privileged access to the haven's information stores.

FINDING A DATA HAVEN

Data havens are universally connected to the Matrix, but their operators typically employ elaborate precautions to obscure their presence from corporate and government authorities and other unwelcome visitors. In many data havens, access is granted only to those individuals "in the know"—people with a reputation in the shadowrunner subculture. However, a skilled undercover operative can usually gain access to such havens through a combination of well-timed charisma and selective bribes.

The clientele attracted to data havens is unsavory at best and includes some of the most dangerous Matrix criminals in the corporate datasphere. Consequently, when entering a data haven, caution should be observed at all times, as these cybercriminals commonly keep a wide range of scams and con games up their virtual sleeves.

Data havens are an element of the global criminal subculture that has become virtually impossible to eliminate.

PAYDATA

Virtually all host systems contain datafiles of one kind or another. The vast majority of these files offer nothing of relevance to shadowrunners, consisting of meaningless databases, personal mail, graphics files and other worthless information. Every once in a while, though, a system will contain the proverbial nugget of gold, an answer to a crucial question or data that will fetch a high price on the black market. This information is called paydata.

Paydata can be anything: new R&D toys from the big brains upstairs, business plans that are worth big nuyen to inside traders or competitors, incriminating information useful in blackmail—anything with value to someone has a place on the black market.

FENCING PAYDATA

The street price of even the most basic paydata is quite valuable. The price paid to the shadowrunner varies, however, as paydata must be fenced like any other stolen property.

Runners must move fast when selling stolen paydata. The needs of the black market change very quickly indeed, and today's nova-hot datafiles are tomorrow's worthless paper.

RIGGERS AND THE MATRIX

Riggers, the truckers, pilots and professional transporters of Shadowrun, also use datajacks to interact with machines, but the nature of rigging makes them an entirely different animal from standard deckers. Because rigging focuses on knee-jerk instinctive reactions, riggers are impeded by the intense cerebral concentration necessary for decking. Due to this programming, and the datajack's location in their skulls, riggers don't navigate the web as well as they use their rigs.

In 2063, magic (and the people who work it) is as common as great software and computer programmers were in the late 20th century. Americans and the rest of the world reacted to the presence of magic just as the world responded to the amazing technological advances of the previous century: initial fascination and awe replaced eventually by a sense of social commonality. Magic is a part of life and has been for decades. That's not to say the average citizen understands how it works, but everyone accepts its existence. Society adapted to the presence of magic, metahumans and creatures out of myth and moved on, as it always does. In fact, the generation of 2063 can hardly imagine a world without magic. The following chapter describes how society has incorporated magic into the various facets of everyday life.

SHADOWRUN

CHAPTER V

THE MAGIC OF SHADOWRUN



MAGIC AND MAGES

What is magic?

Ask any ten magicians that question, and you're likely to get at least thirteen different answers. Magic is a highly personal and individualistic art, like painting or music. A mage can come from any of the hundreds of different magical traditions found in the Sixth World. Every person who learns magic has an individual style, in the same way that all musicians learn the same scales and notes but create unique sounds. That style is influenced by the person's background, culture, training and traditions, but it is ultimately an expression of the individual's relationship with magic. There are as many ways of interacting with magic as there are practitioners of the Art.

There are hundreds of magical traditions, but at the most basic level all magicians use the same skills. A Fireball spell cast by a Native American shaman has the same effect as one cast by an urban street mage, a Celtic druid or a Taoist sorcerer, even though the appearance of the spell and the rituals used to cast it may differ. Different traditions summon different types of spirits, but all spirits follow the same rules for interacting with beings in the physical world.

All this said, Shadowrun magic users fall into three broad categories: wage mage, academic and shadowrunner. The "wage mage" is the most common type of magic user, ranging from a simple dabbler who helps with corporate security to a master of the art who discovers or creates new items or products of magical power. These greater mages are the ones most likely to encounter shadowrunners, either as a powerful opponent or as a client who needs help escaping the clutches of his corporate masters.

If the wage mage is a specialist, the shadowrunner is a jack of all trades, and the next most likely magic user you will encounter. To run in the shadows, you must be ready for anything. Mages in the shadows may have a personal specialty—combat, astral perception, fetish creation—but they also have a number of spells that are essential in the deadly business of shadowrunning.

A very few magical runners who survive their career in the shadows enter academia upon retirement. Their ability to master many different types of magic makes them an excellent prospect for teaching the magical arts. Their extreme rarity has led the universities, who desperately need professors of the thaumaturgical arts, to ignore the eccentricities that shadowrunners bring to the ivory halls of learning.

THE YOUNG AND THE SINLESS

Magical ability usually manifests at or just before puberty—between the ages of ten and twelve for most humans, but as early as eight for some metahumans. Reported cases of younger children becoming magically active are rare.

Some gifted children first display their powers spontaneously under stress. An angry child may hurl a low-power spell, or the "invisible friend" of another may suddenly become visible. Other children discover their abilities in the rough-and-tumble of childhood games or junior athletics.

Children in the NAN tribes, in corporate communities and in most modern cultures are watched closely for early signs of magical talent. Those possessing it are treasured and trained in the use of magic, usually as apprentices to tribal shamans or through schools and universities offering programs in hermetic studies. The motives for providing this training vary widely. Tribal cultures, as a rule, respect magical ability and want to see it properly channeled. The corporations are chronically short of magicians and look forward to acquiring a good, loyal wage mage at the end of the training.

Many SINless, (those without a UCAS System Identification Number), Awakened magic users are recruited by corporate or government interests, who are always short of magical talent. Promises of security, education and a fat paycheck lure many away from their urban homes to corporate enclaves or government training programs, where they sign away their freedom. Other magicians and adepts born into life on the streets choose to use their talent on their own turf, seeking training from other street magicians or teaching themselves using pirated grimoires and pure inspiration. Still others work the fringes of the shadows in one capacity or another, are snapped up by organized crime, or join gangs. The rest become local mojo-men and wise-women, using their gifts to benefit their community. The smallest percentage become shadowrunners.

RELIGION IN THE SIXTH WORLD

The initial reaction of most major religions to the Awakening was one of profound shock. Though some churches thought the Apocalypse had come, most faiths eventually found a way to incorporate magic into their creeds.

Christianity, in particular, had to struggle with the resurgence of magic. For centuries, many Christian churches taught that magic was a tool of the devil. In 2024, however, Pope John XXV issued a historic papal letter, *In Imago Dei* ("In the Image of God"), which set forth the following statements as official Church doctrine:

- ★ Metahumans are possessed of souls and capable of salvation. Discrimination against metahumans is not Christian.
- ★ Magical abilities are not, by their nature, evil. Rather, like any other human ability, they may be used for good or evil.
- ★ Spirits are living manifestations of nature. Thus, conjuring is not in itself evil.

In the Islamic world, the return of magic recalled the days of Moorish legend, when Arab magicians and al-chemists dominated the world of magic. Today, the arcane arts are accepted and studied widely by Muslims. Though some prejudice exists against metahumans in Sunni-dominated areas, it is more social than religious. The more conservative Shiite sect of Islam maintains that the Qu'ran forbids the practice of magic, and it remains a capital crime in Shiite-controlled areas.

Neo-pagan religions, such as Wicca (witchcraft), druidism, Native American spirituality and similar faiths espousing a belief in magic, experienced a resurgence following the Awakening. Pagan theologies are nearly all pro-Awakened and pro-metahuman, typically with a strong eco-activist streak.

Despite the many powers it bestows, magic has done nothing to settle such questions of religious faith as life after death, the existence or nonexistence of a god or gods, or free will versus predestination.

THE LAW

The revolutionary nature of magic made the creation of legislation to deal with it inevitable. So far, the United Canadian and American States (UCAS) and the Confederation of American States (CAS) have passed laws concerning the results of magical acts. Bills to regulate the Art itself have continually failed to pass or been struck down by the courts as illegal and unconstitutional, but the following major points are now firmly established in common law:

- ★ A felony committed using magic is always considered a premeditated act. Killing a person with magic is considered first-degree murder, unless the accused can prove self-defense or other mitigating circumstances.
- ★ Criminal acts committed by a spirit are the responsibility of the magician who summoned the spirit, regardless of whether the spirit was under the summoner's control at the time.
- ★ Because both the UCAS and CAS retain major elements of the former U.S. Bill of Rights in their legal systems, magical methods such as mind probes and aura reading cannot be used to produce evidence, as this violates the Fifth Amendment prohibition against self-incrimination. However, reading astral signatures (the residue left behind when magic is used) has achieved the same status as fingerprinting or DNA testing in forensic science.
- ★ Currently, any "dangerous" spell, spirit, focus or other magical effect is legally regulated in the UCAS and CAS, though permits may be acquired to use such magic.

In civil law, a debate rages over spell copyright. Under present statutes, the designer of a spell may copyright the spell formula and receive payment or royalties for its sales. In practice, this law is used to prosecute those who pirate formulas. However, the anti-piracy tool used by most spell developers, especially in the corporate sector, is secrecy. Spell data are simply not published. There is a thriving industrial espionage business dealing in magical secrets.

BUSINESS AND MAGIC

Magic finds direct applications only at the extreme ends of the business spectrum. Magic is a mainstay of such relatively trivial industries as fashion and entertainment. These may represent large and profitable markets, but the presence of magicians in beauty salons or working on special effects in trideo has not exactly transformed the global economy. At the other end of the spectrum, magic is a key part of the most complex and expensive high-tech research and development.

The rituals involved require a delicate melding of magic and scientific theory that only a handful of theoretical occultists can comprehend, much less use. Quite frankly, some companies can replace their CEO more easily than one of these talented magic users. These personnel are prime candidates for extraction runs, the only way many of them can leave their employer in a world defined by megacorporations.

WARDS

Wards are magical barriers in astral space and are a common passive security measure. Because the creator of a ward automatically knows if it is attacked in astral combat, wards also provide an excellent means of detecting astral intruders.

For better or worse, magic is not a mass-produced product. It is an art, requiring talent and a great deal of training. There are no assembly lines grinding out magical goodies. The magical goods market remains a cottage industry, with individual talismongers and enchanters working on their own or in small groups or trade guilds to produce their goods. So-called magical goods hawked to the mass market are generally harmless trinkets or scams to con the gullible.

Magic's greatest impact in the business sphere has been in the area of corporate security. Just as the advent of Matrix technology began an escalating "arms race" between deckers and corp-data security specialists, corporations battled to procure the services of the Awakened before their competitors could.

MEDICINE

The medical field uses less magic than most people think, for two reasons. The first is the limitations of magic and the heavy toll healing magic often exacts on the magician. The second is the medical community's long-standing resistance to change and development. It wasn't until accreditation programs were firmly in place in the 2030s that the medical community's attitude began to change.

The years since have seen a slow erosion of the more restrictive guidelines governing healing magic. Licensing procedures were simplified to provide an "emergency magical healer" certificate, allowing the holder to administer emergency magical first aid. Many hospitals and HMOs, as well as health-care corporations such as DocWagon™, have integrated magical healers into their staffs. The trauma teams of most major hospitals also include a healer these days.

POPULAR CULTURE

Magic—or, more accurately, the idea of magic—is big business for the pop-culture machine. Because the general public isn't any more interested in real magical theory than in real particle physics, however, media spin doctors have to use a little ingenuity to make magic interesting and fun for the common man. With a lot of creative license, they put magic in trideo shows such as Tales of Atlantis, with its high-fantasy backdrops and amazing special effects, or Tyee! on the Native American Broadcasting Network, which showcases the exploits of Native American freedom fighters and the wise old shamans who advised them during the Ghost Dance War.

Awakened characters as portrayed in popular culture come in three types: good, evil and funny. On-screen or on-stage, the Awakened are larger than life, whether as romantic heroes, terrible villains or comic relief. Writers looking to tell "the real story" of magic have to include dramatic magical duels or amusing spell backfires in their proposals to even make it past the door. Some trideo programs have magical advisors, and various documentaries have provided a more balanced view, but in general, magic is sensationalized.



MANA AND THE REALITY OF MAGIC

Mana is the stuff that makes magic work. Much like the air we breathe, mana is all around us but invisible, and often taken for granted. Like air, mana can whip itself up into a destructive whirlwind. These mana storms wreak havoc in the astral and higher planes. In rare instances, such as over Sydney, Australia, storms can last for years.

Magicians have identified three “realms” of existence: the physical world, the astral plane and the metaplanes. The physical world is the world in which metahumanity lives, with all its physical laws. The astral plane mirrors the physical plane, existing in the same space but “sideways.” The astral plane seems to be fueled by life force, emotion and spirit, operating under a different set of “physical” laws. Beyond these lie the unfathomable reaches of the metaplanes, home to spirits, which magicians explore to discover more about magic and themselves.

The “terrain” of the astral plane is made up of several components. Astral forms (such as spirits, projecting magicians, dual beings and so on) are solid and bright, especially the astral form of Mother Earth herself. The intangible “shadows” and auras of physical objects and beings are also visible but immaterial. Mana, which permeates the astral plane (as well as the other realms), is invisible yet everywhere.

POWER SITES

In some places, a high concentration of mana helps magic rather than hinders it. These places are known as power sites and manalines. Most power sites are quite small: hidden caves, grottoes, towers, mountains, beaches, wells, crossroads and cliffs. No one knows how or why power sites come into existence, whether they are reflecting a past event or representing some sort of natural effect. When they discover a power site, magicians, spirits and other Awakened creatures fiercely guard it to keep it from being despoiled or destroyed.

Manalines appear as mystical lines of energy, ribbons of magical power that crisscross a region. They are fairly rare, though they appear in all parts of the world. Often they connect power sites, acting as a sort of mana pipeline. They are known by many names: ley lines in Europe, feng lung in China, songlines and dream paths and more. Like other power sites, manalines are well guarded by magicians. It is rumored that some initiates have developed metamagical techniques for manipulating manalines.

Power sites and manalines wax and wane over time. Manalines have also been known to drift, changing direction or even spontaneously fading out or appearing.

MANA SURGES

Mana surges are like invisible storms of magical energy. Rarer and infinitely more volatile than the standard background count of mana, mana surges can cause the effects of magic to shift unpredictably. Mana surges seem to occur under certain conditions such as astrological conjunctions, but so far no one has been able to predict the formation, location or intensity of a mana surge. They can occur anywhere, at any time.

PLANES OF EXISTENCE

There are realms beyond the astral plane, places known only to initiates, who alone among metahumanity have the power to travel to them. These places are the metaplanes, often called the "higher," "inner" or "outer" planes of astral space, depending on whom you talk to. In truth, no three-dimensional reference can point toward the metaplanes. They are somewhere outside the physical world altogether.

There are an infinite number of metaplanes. It is known that four metaplanes correspond to the hermetic elements of earth, air, fire and water. Four others correspond to the classes of natural domains in shamanism: the realm of man, the waters, the sky and the land. Magicians may travel to any metaplane, regardless of their tradition: shamans can visit the Metaplane of Fire and mages can travel to the Metaplane of Man, if they find a need.

THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

To begin an astral quest, a character must astrally project to a metaplane. Initiates able to use astral projection can do so on their own. Every astral quest begins in the same way: with the questor floating in the dark void where the Dweller on the Threshold lives.

The Dweller guards the metaplanes. Some traditions say the Dweller represents the traveler's shadow, or dark side, while others believe it has acted as a powerful spirit guardian of the gate between worlds since time immemorial. Whatever the case, the Dweller always requires a test before a traveler can enter the metaplanes.

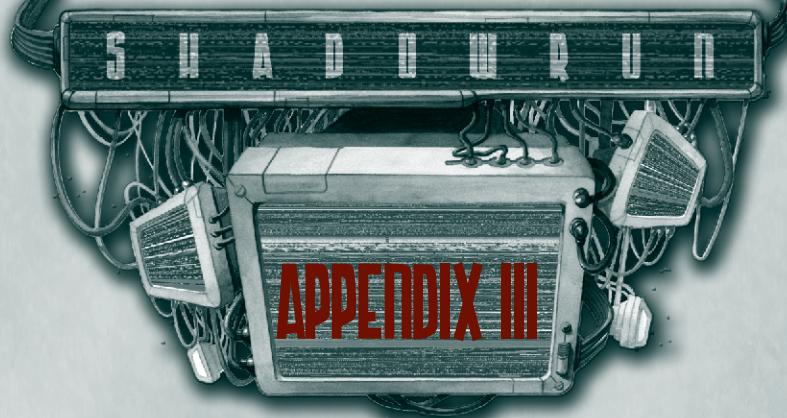
The Dweller has no set form, varying in appearance and attitude from meeting to meeting. Generally, the Dweller's guise is somehow relevant to the quest or the questor. An enemy, a loved one or a deceased comrade are all possible forms, as is an appearance that foreshadows things to come.

The Dweller also knows everything about an astral traveler: every crime, secret, alias, numbered bank account, everything.

BANNED MAGIC

There are some things that magic just can't do. The following are banned from the Shadowrun universe:

- ★ Bringing back the dead
- ★ Teleporting
- ★ Genetically changing a metahuman's race or sex
- ★ "Curing" metahumanity
- ★ Time travel



GLOSSARY

SHADOWRUN BIBLE GLOSSARY

14th Amendment. UCAS constitutional amendment of 2036 which established the System Identification Number (SIN) and requires all citizens to register. Anyone not possessing a SIN is designated a "probationary citizen" with sharply curtailed rights.

2XS. Amazingly strong BTL chip that direct effects the users body.

3-D. Three Dimmensional

405 Hellhounds. Gang in Seattle Metroplex.

Abraxis. A virtual club in the Matrix, popular with shadowrunners.

Aden. A greater dragon.

Agricorp. A corporation specializing in agricultural goods and products.

Ahtena tribe. Native American tribe.

Alamais. A greater dragon.

Algonkian-Manitou Council (AMC). One of the Native American Nations of North America.

Amazonia. The South American nation notably ruled by Hualpa, a greater dragon.

Amerindians. Peoples indigenous to North America.

Ancients. A Seattle Metroplex gang.

Arcology. A massive corporate owned enclosed complex that houses the employees and their families and all the social amenities as well as the corporations regional HQ's

Ares Industries. A megacorp that specializes in weapons and space exploration

Ares Macrotechnology. Former name for Ares industries

Ares Predator handgun..A popular street weapon.

Arleesh..A greater dragon.

Armante..A 21st fashion designer.

Art (of magic)..Term used by some magic practitioners when referencing the use of magic.

Artificial intelligence (AI)..Machines created that can independently reason and act upon reasoned decisions.

Artificial Sensory Induction System (ASIST)..The revolutionary software that allows Matrix users to perceive Matrix use as a fully sensory experience.

Astral plane..One of the known planes of existence accessed by magical creatures and magic users.

Athabaska..The major tribe of the nation of the Athabaskan council

Athabaskan Council..One of the Native American Nations of North America

Australia and New Zealand Allied Confederation (ANZAC)..The mutual defense group of the named nations

Auto-loading shotgun..Shotgun utilizing machine-gun technology

Awakened, Awakening..Terms to describe the reappearance of magic in the world

Ayatollah..A muslim holy leader. The term for the leader of Iran

Aztechnology..AAA level megacorp. One of the "big ten" They specialize in magical technology.

Aztlan..The Central and South American nation that extends from southern Texas to the Northern coast of South America

Balkanized..To be divide from a greater whole into smaller groups of individually lesser power. Bannickburn, Robert Lionel Bannickburn..A shadowrunner of Celtic descent.

Beetles (BTLs)..A slang name for the addictive sensory only ASIST, (simsense), chips

Better-Than-Life (BTL).. The addictive sensory only ASIST, (simsense), chips

Big Ten..Slang term for the ten most powerful megacorps

Bigio family..Mafia crime family of the Seattle Metroplex

Bio-implant..A bodily implant that functions as a metahuman organ.

Bioware..Items that are or use bio-implants

Black ops..Secret, illicit operations organized by corporations or nations.

Blood magic..Magic that uses blood as a central component

Blood Mountain Boys..Seattle gang

Blood Puppies..Seattle gang

Body Mall..A retail area in the Seattle Metroplex that specializes in bio-ware and bio-implants.

Bodyware..Technology that is designed to be incorporated by a metahuman body.

Bone lacing..Artificially strengthening metahuman bones with surgically techniques.

Breastplate..A piece of armor that covers the chest and abdomen and often the entire back.

Bullet train..A transit train that moves at near super-sonic speeds

Burnout..To overuse intrinsic magic to such a degree to destroy the capability of naturally using magic.

Bushido..The code of honor of feudal Japan and specifically their knights, called samurai

California Free State..North American nation that encompasses part of the former USA state of California

Captain Chaos..Popular System Operator for the illegal Matrix grid, Shadowland

Caribbean League..A loose political collection of Caribbean island states and southern Florida

Cascade Crow tribe..Tribe of the Salish-Shidhe Council that controls Vancouver

Cascade Ork tribe..Tribe of the Salish-Shidhe Council that is reputed to be involved in smuggling.

CDT-1000..An early Matrix cyberdeck

Celedyr..A greater dragon

Chiba Prefecture..A political region, much like a county, in Tokyo, Japan

Club Penumbra..A popular downtown club in the Seattle Metroplex

Commline..A fiber-optic communications line

Confederation of American States (CAS)..A nation in North America that loosely borders the former region of the 19th century Confederate States of America.

Corp data (n.), corp-data (adj.)..Valuable data created and stored by corporations. Also called "pay-data"

Corporate Court..Judicial body that regulates the megacorporations, and thus influences most of the political policies on Earth

Corporate scrip, corpscrip..Money that is issued by megacorporations that can only be used on that corporation's property

Council Island..Formerly Mercer Island in Lake Washington. Site of the NAN's embassy to UCAS

Council of Denver..Ruling council of the Denver treaty zone

Council of Princes..Ruling Council of the nation of Tir Tairngire

Crash of '29..World wide computer grid crash in 2029

Crash Zone..Area in Redmond, WA that is the unrepaired site of a plane crash

Crash, the..See "Crash of '29"

Credstick..A crystalline plastic data storage device that serves as electronic money and can also serve as personal identification

Credstick reader..Electronic device that can read the information on a credstick.

Cross Applied Technologies Corporation (CATCo)..A megacorp based in the nation of Quebec that specializes in electronic technologies

Cyberassassin..An assassin that specializes on killing cyberdeck users of the Matrix.

Cybercombat..virtual combat within the Matrix.

Cybercommando..A special force unit, usually in the hire of a nation or megacorp that specializes in Matrix based operations.

Cybercriminal..A criminal who specializes in Matrix-based crime

Cyberdeck..The interface needed for a user to fully interact with the Matrix via their cranial datajack

Cyberdoc..Slang term for a doctor that specializes in cybernetic body implantation and repair.

Cyberimplant..A technological device that after surgical implantation improves a specific bodily or mental attribute.

Cyberlimb..A cybernetic metahuman arm or leg.

Cybermancy..The use of magic and cybernetics to keep a person alive and functional after that person has lost their bodily essence, and will to live.

Cybermodified..Someone or thing that has been modified by cybernetics.

Cybernetic..The study of communication and control processes in biological, mechanical, and electronic systems, in biological and artificial systems

Cyberspine..An artificial spine

Cybertechnician..A medical technician specializes in cybernetics

Cyberterminal..The Matrix interface that does not allow ASIST interface. Much like the 20th century internet.

Dante's Inferno..Popular Seattle club

Data haven..A Matrix-based data storage site popular with shadowrunners; ususally contain illicit information.

Datafile..An electronic data file.

- Datajack**..Cybernetic implant for metahumans that allows them to fully interface with the Matrix via a cyberdeck.
- Datajack plug**..Site for plugging in an active datajack to access the Matrix.
- Dataline**..An streaming electronic source of data.
- Decker**..21st century term for hacker.
- DeeCee Sprawl**.. The former Federal District of Washington
- Democrats Mondains**..Ruling poitical party of Quebec.
- Deus**..An artificial intelligence developed and eventually destroyed by the Renraku Corporation.
- Devil rat**..An awakened version of the standard field rat.
- Devil's Tower**..Large mesa in the North American Southwest.
- Direct Neural Interface (DNI)**..Term used to describe the interface between computer and metahuman.
- DocWagon™**..Private corporation that specializes in on-site trauma response. Preferred by shadowrunners.
- Dragon**..Awakened creature of several traditional mythologies. Greater dragons are intelligent and considered the most powerful creatures on Earth.
- Dream path**..Cultural name for continued lines of increased mana concentrations.
- Drone**..Mechanical device controlled by riggers. There are reconnaissance and combat versions.
- Druidism**..Traditional pagan Celtic religion and the magic therein.
- Dry docks**..Structure where ships are repaired.
- Dump shock**..Fugue state entered by deckers when they are suddenly and unexpectedly removed from the Matrix.
- Dunkelzahn**..A greater dragon and former President of UCAS
- Dunkelzahn's Rift**..Site of the astral rift created by the explosive presidential assassination of Dunkelzahn
- Dwarf, dwarfs, dwarven**..Terms used to describe persons and things associated with Dwarves.
- East Coast Stock Exchange**..The stock exchange located in Boston, formerly located in New York.
- Echo Mirage**..The first computer grid commando team. Sponsored and created by the United States.
- Electrode net**..Device used for users to sense the Matrix without the benefit of a more efficient, datajack
- Elf, elves**..Metahuman race noted for the characteristics of liteness, greater than normal height as well as almond eyes and pointed ears.
- Empire of Japan**..The former 20th century Nation of Japan. At it's height containing the nations of North and South Korea and many Pacific Islands as well as the Phillipines, (currently undergoing a civil war), and the San Francisco area, (currently seceding).

Enterprise Zone..Corporate zones where megacorporations enjoy that status of nation within a host nation, much like an embassy.

ESP Systems..Corporation where Dr. Hosato Hikita's groundbreaking research into ASIST technology occurred.

Essence.. The inherent connection a metahuman has to magic and life. Cybernetics destroys a bit with every implant into a metahuman body.

Euro-Wars..Period of warfare from 2031-2040 over much of Central and Eastern Europe.

Eye of the Needle..Restaurant in the Seattle Space Needle

Fastjack..Arguably the most famous decker ever.

Feathered serpent..Slang term for a dragon/greater dragon genotype.

Feng lung..Chinese name for mana lines.

Frag..21st century explicitive that can take the verb, noun, adjective, pronoun and adverb for.

Free State of Konigsberg..European nation created by a coalition of corporations.

Freelance..To work for oneself.

Fuchi Industrial Electronics..Former megacorp destroyed by company infighting in 2059.

Ganger..A member of a street gang; a youth resembling a gang street gang member

Ghost Dance..The great gathering of magical energy for the purpose of war by the Amerindian tribes.

Ghost Dance War..War between the Sovereign Tribal Council and the former nations of Canada and the United States 2014-2018

Ghostwalker..Native American fighting on the side of the Native Americans in the Ghost Dance War.

Giri..Japanese for duty

Global Financial Services..Financial Organization that replaced the World Bank in 2020. Later becomes the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank in 2032

Goblinization..Term used to describe spontaneous Unexplained Genetic Expression.

Go-ganger..A membeber of a go-gang

Go-gangs..Street gangs featuring street race quality motorcycles. Gangs seem more concerned with creating violence than anything else.

Gray market..The thin area of business between legitimate business and the illicit black market.

Grayware..Products designed for the gray market.

Great dragon..Intelligent and slightly larger version of the awakened dragon.

Great eastern dragon..Asian genotype of a great dragon.

Great feathered serpent..Hispanic genotype of a great dragon

Great western dragon..European and North American genotype of a great dragon

Headware..Cybernetics designed for the cranium

Hermetic mage..Magic practitioner who uses traditional European magic.

Hestaby..A greater dragon, ruler of the Shasta mountain range in California.

Hitcher jack..A non-intrusive data jack that allows a viewer to witness the Matrix via a connection with a jacked in Matrix user.

Hougan..A practitioner of voodoo necromancy

Hovercraft..vehicle utilizing hover technology

Hualpa..A greater dragon and ruler of the nation of Amazonia.

Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus (HMHVV)..Virus which causes vampirism.

Illegal-access jackpoint..An unregistered Matrix jack point.

In Imago Dei..Term meaning "In God's Image".

Intrusion Countermeasures (IC)..Security measures utilized in the matrix by corporations and nations.

Irenis..The class-less citizens of Tir Tairngire.

Jack.. point of entry to the Matrix for a user.

Jack in, jack out (v.)..To enter and leave the Matrix.

Jammer..Utility tool used by riggers.

Japanese Imperial State..See Empire of Japan.

Kachina Society..Secret Orgazization that is rumored to control the Ute Nation

Katana..A type of Japanese sword. Featured weapon of the samurai of feudal Japan.

Knight Errant Security..Security subsidiary of Ares Industries and rival of Lone Star.

Korean Conflict..The Japanese takeover of Korea.

Krewes..Creole name of organized crime gangs.

Lagrange Points..The gravitationally neutral points created by the balance of the moon and Earth's mutual gravitational pulls

Ley line..Another european name for mana lines.

Lofwyr..Greater Dragon and sole owner of Saeder-Krapp Heavy Industries.

Lone Eagle incident..Incident in 2009 when a group of Amerindian guerrillas took control of a U.S. missile silo.

Lone Star Security Corporation..World's largest private security company.

Low-light goggles..Goggles that enable a person to see in low-light.

Low-light vision..The inherent natural ability to see in low-light.

Lung..Greater dragon of Asian genotype.

Mage..Practitioner of magic.

Makah tribe..Tribal group of the Salish-Shidhe nation.

Mana..The magical energy that resides in all living things.

Mana storm..Astrally based storm of mana energy that can violently effect the prime material plane.

Mana surge..A sudden upswing in the mana concentration of an area.

Manaline..A geographic line of concentrated mana energy.

Masaru..Greater dragon leading the Phillipino revolution vs the Empire of Japan.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Thaumaturgy..The former MIT university.

Matrix..The world wide computer grid that largely controls all communication, finance and data.

Matrix Service Provider..A, (usually), for profit group that provides access to the Matrix.

Matrix Warband..Matrix commando team of the Sioux nation.

Matrixware..Cybernetic implants and body products intended for Matrix interface.

Medkit..A medical kit

Medware..Products/implants intended for medical use.

Merlyns..A Seattle Metroplex based gang.

Metahuman, metahumanity..Term used to define the humanoid races of the 21st century.

Metamagical..Naturally occurring abilities in awakened creatures and metahumans.

Meta-nation..Nation created and governed by the metahuman races.

Metaplane(s)..An infinite number of extraplanar existences from earthly elements, (fire, water, etc), to human concepts, (anger, sadness)

Metaplane of Fire..Extraplanar dimension accessible to expert magic practitioners and native meta-creatures

Metatype..The Awakened or magical versions of flora and fauna

Metroplex, 'plex..A contiguous urban center, featuring 1 or more major cities

Micron..a metric unit of length equal to one millionth of a meter

Micro-optical processors..processors used in cybernetic eyes

Middleman..A person who facilitates dealmaking, both legitimate and illicite.

Mindbender..Slang term for BTL chips.

Mitsuhama Computer Technology..A megacorp specializing in all computer uses.

Mojo-man, mojo-men..Slang term for a magic user.

Mr. Johnson, Johnson..An agent or person who facilitates dealmaking between shadowrunners and their clients.

Mt. Shasta..Mountain in Northern California and lair of Hestaby, a greater dragon.

Mujaji..a greater dragon known as the "Rain Queen" of Africa, is a great feathered serpent with a lair near the Cape of Good Hope

Myomer, myomers.. Artificial muscles created of various polymers and other synthetic materials.

Nanomachine..Machine that is created with nanotechnology

Nanosecond Buyout..The famous stock buyout of 2033 Of Ares Macrotechnology by Damien Knight

Nanotech..Technology incorporates microbiology and electronics to create tiny biologic machines that can carry out programed tasks within a biologic host.

Narcoject..A type of drug administer that uses compressed are to "shoot" the drug into the recipient.

Native American Nations (NAN)..The collection of North American nations that were formed by the victorious Amerindian Sovereign Tribal Council

Nepean Act..Canadian act of 2009 that legalized forced internment of Amerindians

Nexus..The only world wide illicit computer grid .

Night of Rage..Massacre of hundreds of metahumans in Seattle in 2039

North American Indian War..War of Native American, (which they won), in North America from 2012-2018

Novatech Incorporated..Megacorp that was created out of the ashes of Fuchi Incorporated.

Nuyen..The world wide monetary unit of the 21st century.

Operation Reciprocity..Military operation sanctioned by the Corporate Court against the nation of Atzlan in 2048.

Ork Underground..Underground neighborhood of the Seattle metroplex dominated by orks and trolls.

Ork, orks.. Homo sapiens robustus, are much tougher, stronger and less charismatic than humans. They also seem on average to be less acute, or intelligent, than humans. They have low-light vision

Otaku..Tribal groups dominated by preteen children whom have been rumored to be able to access the Matrix without need of technology.

Oyabun..Japanese name for a boss

Paracreature..An awakened animal.

Paydata..The term to classify data stolen from the Matrix for profit.

Policlub..Racist, human only organizations.

Power site..Site of high mana concentration.

Probationary citizen.. Anyone not possessing a SIN in UCAS and many other nations

Pueblo Corporate Council (PCC)..Nation in the North American Southwest and NAN member.

Pueblo Grid..The Matrix grid created and run by the PCC and considered the world's most sophisticated computer grid.

Qu'ran..The Muslim holy book

Redmond Barrens..The burnt out and sparsely populated remains of Redmond, Washington.

Re-education and Relocation Act..(2009) US act that allowed the forced internment of Amerindians.

Renraku Arcology..Arcology of the Renraku corporation in Seattle.

Renraku Corporation..A megacorp specializing in matrixware and computer technology.

Rhine-Rhur Megaplex..The Corporate Headquarters of Saeder-Krupp and the lair of Lofwyr

Rhonabwy..Greater western dragon of Wales known to be a voracious art collector.

Rigger..A person who uses a specialized cranial implant, (vehical control rig), to pilot vehicles.

Runner..Another term for shadowrunners

Ryumyo..A greater Asian dragon who is the shadow power behind many Japanese corporations.

Saeder-Krupp Heavy Industries..German based megacorp owned by the greater dragon Lovwyr.

Keiji Saito, protectorate general, CFS..Rebellious Japanese general and dictator of the California Protectorate.

Salaryman..The term for the corporate "everyman" of Shadowrun society.

Salish tribe..Dominant Amerindian tribe of the Salish-Shidhe Council, a nation in North America.

Salish-Shidhe Council (SSC).. Nation in North America, dominated by Amerindians and elves.

Satchel of Flame..Magical talisman used in combat.

Scotsprawl.. the heavily urbanized swath of land between Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland

Smoke grenade..Explosive device that releases a blinding amount of smoke.

Songline..Aboriginal name for a mana line.

Sony Cybersystems..Sony's cyberware division

Soul patch..Varieties of short male facial hair growth between lower lip and chin

Sovereign American Indian Movement..Early 21st century Amerindian guerilla group that is often blamed for North American wars of 2012-2018

Sovereign Tribal Council (STC)..Governing council of the Amerindian separtists during the North American war of 2012-2018

Soyoko..Shadow power group within the PCC

Spaceplane..Plane capable of breaking free of Earth's gravity into orbit.

Spell(s)..Magic formulae that are used by many magic users and usually recorded.

Sperenthiel..The elvish language

Spikes, The..A policlub in the SEattle Metroplex

Spin doctor..Public relations professional whose job it is to improve media stories for the good of their client.

Sprawl..The vast stretches of sub-standard urban communities.

Stimkit..Dermal stimulants intended for medical use.

Street samurai..Slang term for shadowrunners who specialize in combat and physical persuasion.

Sun Dance..Annual magical ceremony of the Lakota Sioux

Sunni Muslim..Largest sect of the Islamic faith.

Sysop..Popular acronym for a systems operator of a computer network or grid.

System Identification Number (SIN)..The national citizen identification system instituted in the UCAS and adopted by most modern nations.

Tales of Atlantis..A popular UCAS trideo show.

Talislegging..The illegal collection and smuggling of magical talismans and artifacts.

Tan Tien..A level megacorp based in China with no specific specialization or emphasis.

T-bird..Slang term for the popular variations of the Thunderbird helicopter and its pilots.

Tehran..Former capital of Tehran destroyed by the greater dragon Aden.

Telestrain Industries..A level megacorp in the nation of Tir Tairgire specializing in heavy industry.

Tenochtitlan..Capital of Atzlan

Thermographic vision..The ability to see the infrared light spectrum.

Third-tier corp..Another name for A lever megacorps.

Thrill gang..A street gang whose sole purpose is violence for entertainment.

Tir Tairngire..Elven nation on the North Western coast of North America.

Toxic shaman..Magic user who specializes in the magical uses of toxic substances. Usually anarchic personalities.

Trancer..A slang term for BTL chips

Trans-Polar Aleut nation..The nation that is contiguous from North America to Asia along the polar region of the world and encompassing the ice cap.

Transys Corporation..AA level megacorp specializing in communications and cyberlimbs.

Transys Neuronet..Another name for the Transys Corporation.

Treaty of Denver..Treaty of 2018 that granted the Sovereign Tribal Council rights to most of Western North America that created the Native American Nations out of Canada and the United States.

Treaty of Richmond..Treaty of 2034 that created the Confederation of American States out of UCAS

Triad..The name for a Chinese organized crime gang.

Trideo..The name for the pseudo three dimensional video that now dominates film and home.

Trideo pirate..A news reporter that uses a pirate communications signal to send their message to trideo viewers

Troll, trolls..Homo sapiens ingentis, They are a lot tougher, slower, stronger, less charismatic, less acute and less willful than humans. They have thermographic vision, long arms that give them an advantage in hand-to-hand combat, and extremely tough skin with bony deposits that makes them more resistant to damage.

True American Coalition..Major political party in the CAS

Tsimshian..Facist nation on the North Western coast of North America.

Tukwila Vipers..Gang in the Seattle Metropolex.

Tyee!..Popular home trideo program in the Sioux Nation

Unexplained Genetic Expression (UGE)..Name of the birth of metahuman children to human parents.

United Canadian and American States (UCAS)..The former nations of Canada and the United States minus the NAN and CAS.

Universal Matrix Standards (UMS)..Global standards for the Matrix, which are loosely enforced by the worlds nations and megacorps.

Universal Omnitech..AA level megacorp, that is at the forefront of medical technology and service

University of Cheyenne..One of the top universities in the world. Specializes in technologic research.

Ute Nation..The Native American Nation in South Western North American.

Vampire..The term for someone who has become infected with the Human-Metahuman Vampiric Virus, (HMHV)

Vehicle control rig...The body implant necessary for riggers to have the visceral control of their vehicles

Vibro blade sword...A modern sword, with a vibrating edge capable of cutting through all but the toughest materials.

Vidphone...Phone with a video screen.

Vidscreen...Another name for a video screen

Virally Induced Toxic Allergy Syndrome (VITAS)...The devastating virus that renders humans & metahumans allergic to most substances. The first wave killed 25% of the global populace

Virtual office...A business office on the Matrix.

Virtual Stock Exchange...The Japanese stock exchange.

Voodoo...The traditional magic of Haiti.

Wakazashi...The short-sword of feudal Japan. Partnered with the katana, the wakazashi is the traditional symbol of the samurai.

Warpdrive Systems...A leve megacorp based in the Denver.

Watada clan...Controlling family of the Japanese Yakuza, the Japanese organized crime group.

Watergate hotel...Famous hotel in the DeeCee, site of President Dunkelzahn's assassination and subsequent astral rift.

Wicca...Pagan faith focusing on nature and a harmonious relationship with it.

Wildcats...Special Forces of the Sioux Nation. Considered one of the world's best SF groups.

Wuxing...One of the AAA level megacorps. One of the "big ten" Based in China and Siberia

Wyrm Talk...Former talk show to the greater dragon Dunkelzahn.

Yakashima...AA level megacorp, based in the Empire of Japan

Yakuza...The Japanese organized crime group.

Yamatetsu...AAA megacorp, one of the "big ten" formerly based in Japan now based in the free trade city of Vladivostok, Russia

Yucatan...The western peninsula of the Mexican coast. Site of a civil war within Atzlan.

Zeta-ImpChem...AA level megacorp based in the German Alliance.

Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank...Swiss based finance group which replaced the World Bank in 2020 as Global Financial Services. Renamed Z-OGB when moved to the Zurich-Orbital Habitat in 2032-33

Zurich-Orbital Habitat...The Ares Industries owned name for the former "Freedom" space station.