

Cyberpunk Stakings

Dark Slaying in a Cyberpunk World



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By Jason Vey

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Dedicated to Sam Anderson, for all his help in playtesting these rules. Thanks, bro!

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest optional rules expansion for the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer™ Roleplaying Game*. The following rules and guidelines are intended to expand upon the "Vampires and Mirrorshades" section of the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer™ RPG Slayer's Handbook*. While that book is not strictly necessary for play, the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer™ RPG Core Rulebook* is absolutely necessary, and the *Slayer's Handbook* provides details on specific cybernetic implants as well as a few notes on using *Buffy* in a cyberpunk-style setting. Enjoy!

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NEW QUALITIES

Corporate Executive (7 point Quality)

Corporate Executives are the major movers and shakers in cyberpunk society. These are the people who hold cushy positions in one of the MegaCorps, which has many advantages. Corporate executives are often seen as being "above the law," and can often play the status card to get out of trouble with the police. They also make a far more comfortable living than most folk and have access to resources and information most people don't. The position is not without its drawbacks, however; Corporate Executives are continuously the target of plots and assassination attempts by rival corporations, disgruntled employees, and even bitter lower class citizens who seek to strike back at the Corps, who they see as the source of all of their misery. This Quality represents a position as a minor (relatively speaking) executive in a MegaCorp of the player's choice, subject to the Director's approval, and grants the following:

- 1 level to any Mental Attribute
- 1 level of Influence
- 2 levels of Resources
- 2 levels to one of the following skills: Crime, Science, Knowledge, or Occultism (dependent upon the position held and the operations of the individual corporation)
- 2 levels of Cybered or 1 level of Sorcery (player's choice, depending upon the individual corporation)
- Contacts (corporate, 3 point)



- Adversary (various, 5 point)
- Obligation (Major, 3 point) to the corporation
- +2 to any Influence roll where the character's corporation has some degree of clout or control, but -3 to Influence rolls where enemies and rival corporations are in control.



Cyber Cowboy (8 point Quality)

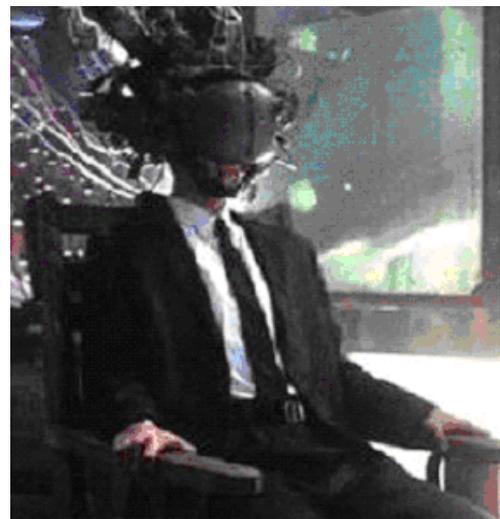
Cyber Cowboys are the mentally fast men and women who ride the virtual range, surfing the data streams, bargaining with AI's and avoiding IC's within the CyberWeb, the futuristic version of the Internet. Cyber Cowboys have their own style; the heavily armored Street Samurai are too clumsy and blatant for the Cyber Cowboy. After all, where's the panache in kicking down the door with guns a-blazing? Better to jack into the system and open the doors after having tea with the virtual guards. Cyber Cowboys gain the following benefits:

- +2 Levels of Computers (and must buy at least 1 more)
- Cybernetic Brain Enhancement w/data jack, Cyber Deck (equivalent to 2 levels of Cybered; may purchase more up to the character's attribute-based maximum)
- +1 Level to any one Mental Attribute
- Choose two of the following Drawbacks: Paranoid, Misfit, or Mental Problems: Cruelty (Severe). Cyber Cowboys tend to exhibit a bit less humanity than most folks, due to their love of the Net, and thus they don't relate well to others. Many are somewhat arrogant and condescending towards those who are less talented with computers than they. The character gains no points for the chosen drawbacks.

- +2 to any rolls related to Cyberjacking, the CyberWeb, or any computer-related roll, including rolls to recall data downloaded to the character's Smart Chip while surfing the Web (data recollection is resolved using an Intelligence + Knowledge roll).

Cybered (3 point per level Quality)

Characters with the Cybered Quality are those men and women who have had *cybernetic enhancement*, that is, they have had portions of their living body augmented with robotic enhancements or replaced with prosthetic parts that are in most ways superior to the normal human body. Cybernetic characters can be extremely tough, some even approaching Slayers in the area of hardiness and combat ability. Each level of the Cybered Quality purchased represents 1 cybernetic enhancement to the body. Many of these enhancements are detailed in the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer™ Slayer's Handbook* but are limited and expanded as detailed below. The player may choose any of the enhancements in the *Slayer's Handbook*, or may choose any *one* of the enhancements below with each level of the Quality Purchased. Cybered characters may not purchase levels in Sorcery or possess Psychic Visions. Slayers and Vampires who purchase this Quality lose all attribute bonuses and Hard to Kill levels when they have their Cybernetic



Enhancements installed; such benefits are replaced by the potential benefits of cybernetic enhancement. Werewolves cannot be Cybered; attempting to do so generally results in a very ugly scenario the moment the werewolf first shifts into his animal form. Sadly, the resulting maiming and deformation doesn't kill the beast, unless the cybernetics are laced with silver, though it does inflict obvious (and permanent) disabilities.

Impaired Vision: Cybernetic (5 point Drawback)

Prerequisite: Cybernetic Eye replacement (see Cybered Quality)

Your cybernetic eyes were implanted using old or substandard technology, or they're just malfunctioning badly. Whatever the reason, they cannot detect creatures that do not cast reflections in mirrors. This means that vampires are completely invisible to your cybernetic eyes. It is possible to tweak a single cybernetic eye to function in this capacity; in this case, Vampires appear as ghostly, semi-transparent images, and rather than a 5 point Drawback the feature becomes a 3 point Quality, Vampire Detection, or a separate feature that can be installed with 1 level of the Cybered Quality.

Malfunctioning Cybernetics (Variable Drawback)

Prerequisite: Cybered

Some part of your cybernetic implants just doesn't work the way it's supposed to. Perhaps you bought it from a cheap source, or took too much damage at one point in time and it couldn't be repaired properly. Whatever the reason, on occasion your mechanical parts tend to malfunction, and that's never a good thing. This quality has three levels:

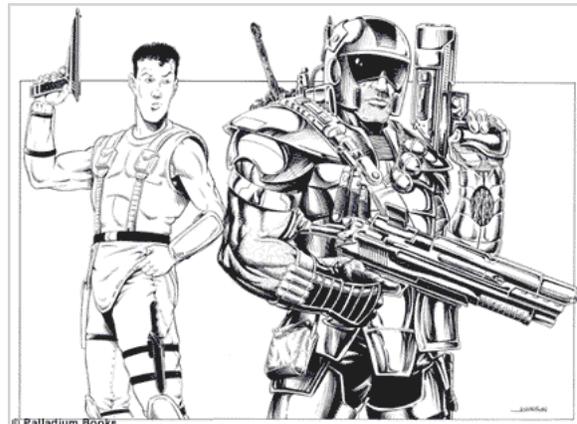
Mild: Mild malfunctions include occasional twitches, or 'tics' that are noticeable but rarely interfere with normal life and use. The worst you have to worry about is accidentally smacking the person next to you in the face, or blinking when you're supposed to be watching intently. This level of the Drawback is worth 1 point.

Serious: Malfunctions of this level can cause problems in your daily life. Any time you try to use your cybernetics, roll a die. A result of 1 means that the implant or prosthetic completely malfunctions. This Drawback is worth 3 points

Major: Your parts are continually malfunctioning. Ability and Attribute scores continually fluctuate at the Director's discretion, and special implant abilities tend to "wink out" at the worst possible moments. This level of the drawback is worth 5 points.

Street Samurai (7 point Quality)

The Street Samurai is the weapon of choice when the MegaCorps duke it out. Need someone assassinated? Need some industrial espionage performed? Just need a bodyguard? The Street Sam is your man (or woman, or cyborg of indeterminate gender.) The technology used to create these cybernetic warriors originally came from the research conducted by the Initiative during its time in Sunnydale, California. However, with the termination of the project, much of the research was also lost. During the Slayer Wars of 2035 to 2040, the Initiative re-opened the research as a means of some kind of damage control. Following the mystic backlash that ended the wars, there were thousands of bodies littering the shadowy alleyways and battlefields, ripe for back engineering by various MegaCorps. Today, cybernetic enhancement is commonplace in the sprawls of the MegaCities.



Street Samurai are often indentured to a single corporation, criminal organization, or government. Sometimes they are tied to a single corporate or government official. It is this organization or official who usually funds the cybernetic augmentation process that makes the Samurai what he or she is. Period of indenture is generally anywhere from one year, to lifetime service. During this time the Street Sam is bound by the code of Bushido, and required to do whatever his superiors demand. The price of betraying such an arrangement is a steep one. If your superiors were the ones who had your cybernetics implanted, you're



probably in very deep trouble—the nice ones just hunt you down and have the devices removed, then leave you crippled and handicapped in a ditch somewhere. The less nice ones remote detonate the explosive they had planted in your skull. Still, many Street Samurai do succeed in going rogue or strike out on their own at the end of their period of servitude, selling their services to the highest bidder or acting on their own initiative, whatever that might be. These rogue Samurai are referred to as Cyber-Ronin, and comprise approximately 60% of the Street Samurai on the streets today.

Street Samurai receive the following bonuses and penalties:

- +1 Level to any one physical attribute. Through cybernetics, these attributes may be raised above the human maximum of 6 (but at this stage are still subject to the human limit).
 - +1 level of Getting Medieval and Gun Fu
 - 2 levels of Hard to Kill (maximum of 5, unless cybernetics raise the cap).
 - The character receives 2 of the following Drawbacks, but gains no points for the Drawbacks selected: Mental Problems: Cruel (Mild), Humorless, Reckless, Attractiveness (-1).
- Loyal Street Samurai have a 3 point Obligation to whoever their master is. Cyber-Ronin have a 3 point Adversary—their former masters. Even Cyber-Ronin who complete their term of indenture tend not to part on very good terms with their sponsor, who naturally expects continual loyalty, which the Street Samurai often does not feel she owes ("My debt to you is repaid"). The Street Samurai gains no points for this Drawback.
 - Honorable (Serious): All Street Sam are indoctrinated during their augmentation process to accept the principles of the Bushido Code, and most live the span of their natural lives in rigid adherence to the code. The Street Sam gains no points for this Drawback.
 - 3 Levels of the Cybered Quality (and may purchase more limited by base Constitution, as detailed under "Cybernetics and Humanity")

CYBERNETIC ENHANCEMENT

Cybernetics are purchased using the Cybered Quality, above. Each level of the Quality provides a number of cybernetic enhancements to the body of the recipient. Generally speaking, such enhancements will be purchased at character creation. However, if resources and proper doctors are available, characters can purchase additional levels of the Cybered Quality through the course of the game using experience points, just as they would purchase any other Quality. Generally speaking, each level of Cybered that a Cast Member purchases, allows the addition of a single feature from the list below. Expensive? Perhaps, but then, fully cybered characters certainly have advantages that other characters don't, including "upgradeability." Cybered characters can as the game continues have features "installed" that other characters will never have access to. For example, as a rule someone cannot simply "develop" enhanced senses. A cybernetic character, however, needs only find a cyberdoc and spend the experience and cash to have the feature installed. Also, cybered characters will have access to features that normal human beings never will, such as nightvision, thermo imaging, image and sound analysis, etc.

If a Cast Member does not have enough experience available to purchase a given enhancement when the opportunity becomes available, the Director may choose to allow the player to "borrow against the bank" for purposes of increasing cybernetic enhancement. Borrowing against the bank for experience, however, is always a risky prospect and if the Director allows it, it should at very least cost the Cast Member a Drama Point or three as compensation.

Because cybernetics replace the human body parts with artificial, robotic equivalents, they do not affect life points (except for, in some cases, the ability to purchase additional levels of Hard to Kill). Thus, Life Points must be calculated *before* any cybernetic enhancements to Strength or Dexterity are added to the character.



You will notice that many of the features below add attribute bonuses. These bonuses *do not combine* with one another at character creation; rather, they are the bonuses a character would receive if he or she had only that one specific type of cybernetic augmentation. To determine bonuses from multiple types of cybernetics, keep track of all bonuses to a given attribute that the character's cybernetic implants provide. Once all cybernetics have been purchased, count how many implants provide bonuses to a given attribute. The base bonus to a given attribute for cybernetic implants is +1. Every *two* implants that provide a bonus to that attribute beyond the first add another +1 to the attribute in question. This is the total bonus to the attribute in question.

Example: Nemo purchases prosthetic limbs, Brain Enhancement, and Neural Pathway Enhancement. His Prosthetic Limbs are worth 1 point of Strength and Dexterity, his Brain Enhancement is worth +1 to Willpower or Intelligence (he chooses Intelligence), and the Neural Pathway Enhancement is worth +1 to Dexterity. Nemo has 2 implants that add to Dexterity, and each adds a +1. So his total bonus to Dexterity is 1. If he had one more implant or feature that increased his Dexterity, it would be a 2. Implants complement each other, they don't augment one another. Clever readers will note that there aren't any more than 2 prosthetics that increase a given attribute in the list below; these rules provide for the possibility of the Director and/or players creating more down the line.

- **Prosthetic Replacement:** Each level of Cybered purchased allows the character to replace a pair of limbs, eyes, ears, or internal organs with prosthetic versions. This is the most basic form of cybernetic enhancement and is a prerequisite of most cybernetic features. Note that prosthetics may nullify any Physical Qualities purchased separately. For instance, a character with Enhanced

Senses (vision) who then undergoes cybernetic optical replacement loses that Quality in favor of his new prosthesis, but may purchase the cybernetic version of the Quality if he has enough points available. On the other hand, a character with Fast Reaction Time who undergoes neural pathway enhancement may not lose the Quality, as his nervous system has been upgraded, but not entirely replaced. On the other hand, Brain Enhancement and Neural Pathway enhancement may just be enough of a change in the body that the Director might rule the Quality vanishes in favor of the new cybernetic matrix. Such decisions are always at the discretion of the Director.

- *Prosthetic Limbs* add 1 level of Strength and Dexterity. Initial Strength and Dexterity scores purchased with Attribute Points is assumed to be part of the Prosthetic Limb, which is designed to mimic the functioning of the character's original limb. If the Physical Enhancement feature is purchased, additional levels of Strength may be purchased to a maximum of 10, with experience points. See that ability for details.
- *Prosthetic eyes and ears* add +1 to Perception per each pair (so replacing eyes and ears adds +2 to Perception). Note that eyes and ears are separate features.
- *Brain Enhancement:* Insertion of a generic, upgradeable "smart chip" into the brain of the character adds +1 to Willpower or Intelligence (player chooses one). This prosthesis also includes the installation of a "cyberjack"

at the base of the skull or behind the ear (player's choice) that is used for upgrades to the chip, or can be modified for Cyber Jacking if the character wishes.

- *Prosthetic Lungs* grant a 2-point resistance to airborne toxins due to filters.
- *Prosthetic Hearts* gain a 4-point armor value against Through the Heart maneuvers, but cannot be gained by Vampires (a vampire with a prosthetic heart automatically dusts). In addition, cybernetic hearts provide immunity to vampirism (immediately dusts if turned).
- *Prosthetic digestive system replacement* includes an artificial stomach, intestinal tract, liver, and kidneys, and grants a 2-point Resistance to ingested poisons and toxins, as well as an enhanced metabolism.
- *Subdermal Muscular enhancement* adds +1 Level of Strength and the Natural Toughness Quality, and is a must for many other Physical Qualities, as well as dermal armor and chameleon-type cybernetics (provides a basis for dermal enhancement anchoring). Note that Strength bonus is not applicable to characters with Prosthetic Limbs. Also, characters with Subdermal Muscular Enhancement may purchase up to 10 levels of Hard to Kill.
- *Neural Pathway Enhancements* add +1 Level of Dexterity (quicker reaction to external stimuli) and are a must for such abilities as Smart Gun Linking, cybernetic Fast Reaction Time, etc. Unless Brain Enhancements are also purchased, initial Dexterity bonus does not combine with that from artificial limbs.
- *Skeletal Reinforcement* adds an Armor Value of 2 and is a must for high levels of Strength from Prosthetic Limbs.
- Physical or Mental Enhancement: Physical or Mental Enhancement is a *must* for increasing attributes beyond human limitations. Without Physical Enhancement, all physical attributes cap at

7. Purchasing Physical Enhancement allows an increase to the possible levels of any one attribute. Depending on which implants a character possesses and the attribute chosen, the maximum level (cap) for attributes increases above the normal Cybered limit of 7. Prosthetic limbs allow a maximum of 8 Levels of Strength. Skeletal Reinforcement and Prosthetic Limbs raise this cap to 10. Subdermal Muscular Enhancements allow a maximum of 8 to Strength and Constitution. Muscular Enhancements combined with a Prosthetic Heart raise the Constitution cap to 10. Neural Pathway Enhancements allow a maximum of 8 Levels of Dexterity; if both Neural Pathway Enhancements and Brain Enhancements are implanted, the cap for Dexterity rises to 10. Enhancements to Mental attributes work exactly the same way as enhancements to physical attributes, above. Enhancements to Intelligence and Willpower require computer chips to be implanted in the brain of the character, and Enhancements to Perception require prosthetic eyes and/or ears. All prosthetics that enhance mental attributes raise the cap to 8. Increasing attributes to their limit is done with experience points, just as with normal attribute increases. Starting Cybered Characters may never have any attribute higher than 7.

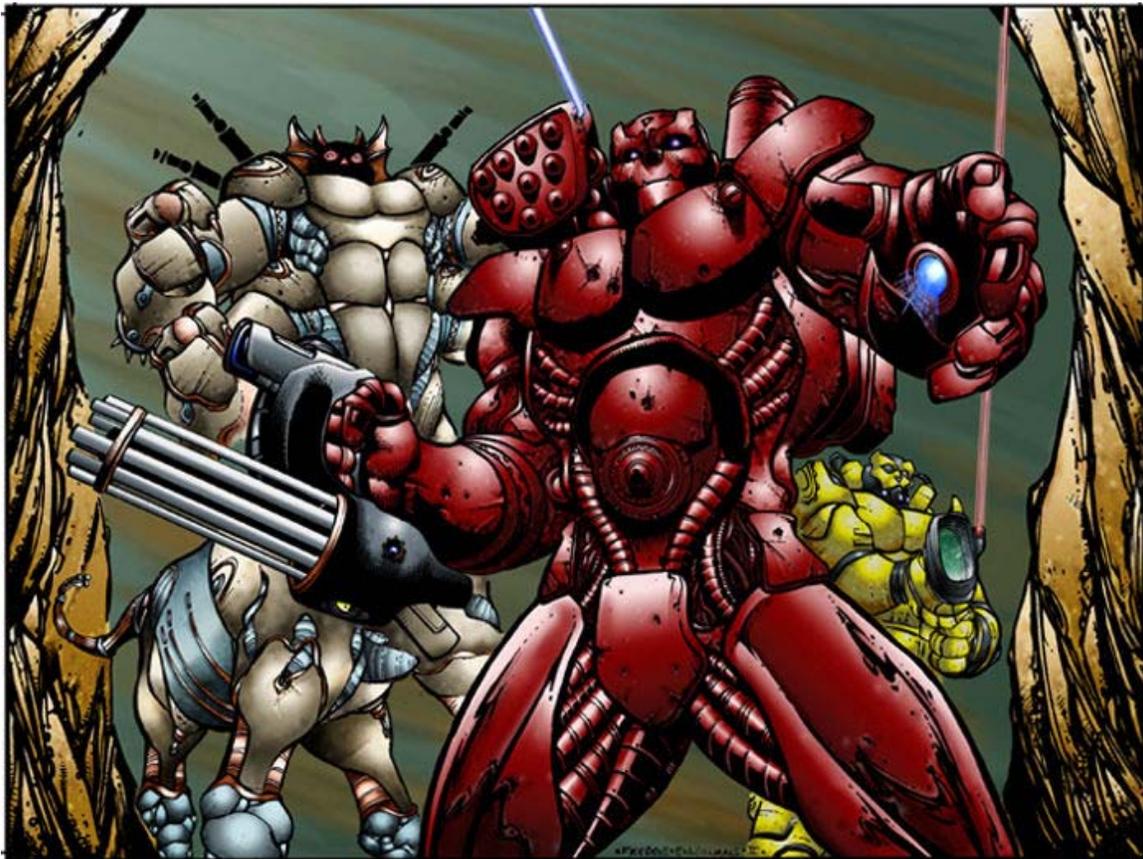
- 3 points towards the purchase of physical or mental Qualities appropriate to the prosthetics in question. This includes Fast Reaction Time (brain chip, neural enhancements), Situational Awareness (eye and/or ear replacement), Acute Senses (appropriate sensory replacement), etc.
- Any single cybernetic feature listed in the *Slayer's Handbook*, provided the appropriate prosthesis is purchased as a prerequisite. Also, purchase of a cyber deck may be performed with levels of the Cybered Quality. Each level of the Quality spent on the deck provides a +1 to any decking rolls. Note that these rules supercede those in the *Slayer's Handbook* where contradictions exist. This is in the interest of maintaining a stable system.
- Other cybernetic features are limited only by the Cast and Director's imaginations, and should be created as a joint effort between the Cybered Cast Member's player and the Director. Play balance is

the largest factor to keep in mind when determining the exact effects of any cybernetic implant or feature.

RESOURCES AND CYBERNETICS

Cybernetics, while common and relatively widely available, are extremely expensive to implant and maintain. As a result, Cast Members with levels of the Resources Quality have access to higher quality cybernetic implants than others do. Likewise, characters with negative levels in the Resources Quality may suffer penalties to the implants they do possess.

Gaining or improving cybernetics in the game is directly influenced by the amount of cash a character has available. Locating a good cyberdoc is generally the result of contacts or hitting the streets; convincing the doc to help you requires a Willpower + Influence roll against the cyberdoc's Willpower (doubled) roll or Brains score, but wealthy characters may add their level of Resources to the roll as a bonus, while poor characters must subtract their negative levels from the roll. This reflects "playing the money card," which is generally vital in convincing an independent cyberdoc to perform implantation procedures.



CYBERNETICS AND HUMANITY

One major drawback of cybernetic enhancement is that cybernetics don't heal like the normal body does. Damage taken to a cybernetic implant is permanent until repaired by a "cyber doc" or cybernetics surgeon. Repairing cybernetics requires at least 3 levels in Doctor, 3 levels in Science, and 3 levels in Mr. Fix It, as well as the proper instruments and space. The process is difficult and complex, requiring first a Difficult Science Roll to diagnose the problem and note how the individual cybernetic

enhancement relates to the rest of the body, followed by a Difficult Mr. Fix It roll to repair the damaged prosthesis or enhancement. Each success level on the Mr. Fix It roll restores 1 Life Point per Constitution level of the cyborg. Finally, a Doctor roll is necessary to stabilize the patient and set the cybernetics for healing. Supporting Cast Cyber docs should list "Cyber Doc" as a Special Ability on their Quick Sheet; this score is the average of Doctor, Mr. Fix It, and Science scores, plus Intelligence, plus 6, and is the score used for all aspects of the cybernetic surgery process.

A further danger of cybernetic enhancement is the loss of humanity inherent. After so much cybernetic enhancement, a Cast Member ceases to be human by any stretch, and becomes a Robot, if he survives at all. Generally speaking, a character can dedicate levels in the Cybered Quality up to their base (pre cybered) Constitution score for the purposes of prosthetic replacement; players should keep track of this limit separately. This means that few if any players will ever see more than 6 levels of the Cybered Quality dedicated to individual prostheses. Once this limit is passed, the Cast Member may only add features to existing prostheses; up to 3 features (including physical and mental enhancement) may be added to any one implant at a given time (note that eyes and ears count as one implant per pair, while limbs are each separate for the purposes of features that

can be installed). Cast Members who surpass their base Constitution score in the number of prosthetic replacements must make an immediate Survival Test at -1 for each level of Cybered above their base Constitution level. Failure means death. Success on the Survival Test indicates that the character has survived, but no further enhancements are possible; furthermore, the character is now presumed to be a full Robot, and is subject to all of the restrictions of the Robot Quality, while gaining none of the benefits (these having been replaced by existing cybernetic enhancements).

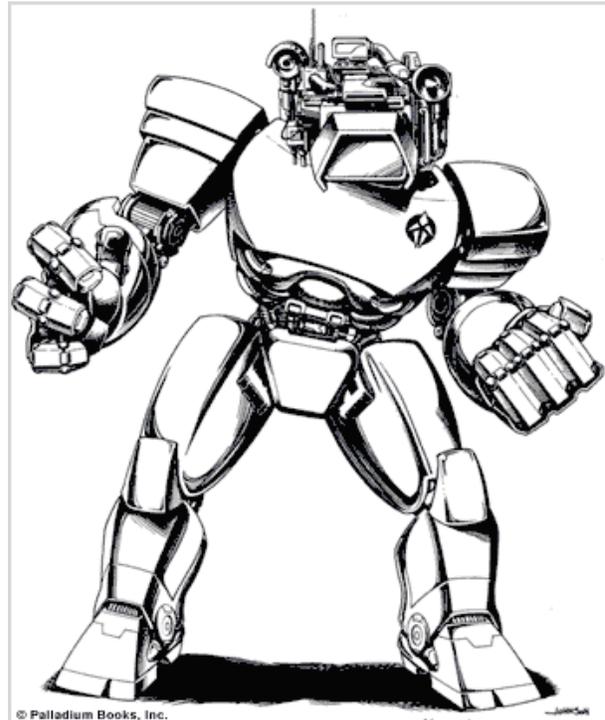
Given this, it is quite possible to "max out" a Cast Member's allotment of possible cybernetics on character creation, but that's the nature of the beast.

ROBOTS AND CYBERNETICS

Robots are only a slightly different case than human beings; in a cyberpunk setting, these creations are even more advanced than in the default, "modern day" setting. Robots are able to gain the Cybered Quality without restriction, but must purchase the Robot Quality at character creation (thus gaining all of the inherent benefits and drawbacks of that Quality) and purchasing the Cybered Quality as normal later on. Robots are limited to enhancements subject to their Constitution as are humans (you can only squeeze so many features and upgrades into a given system). Prosthetics must still be purchased; basic android creation builds the machines to mimic human form with slight inherent improvements; further improvements are additional and not inclusive to the basic Quality. In other words, the basic body of a Robot isn't designed to be upgradeable; it's designed to be functional. Upgradeable versions of the Robot are represented through the purchase of levels of the Cybered Quality. A failed Survival Test for exceeding Constitution levels means death just as for humans; the Robot overloads and its body is subject to massive short

circuiting, fusing of wires, and other such irreparable unpleasanties.

In the early days of cybernetic research, scientists discovered that they could implant the brain of a deceased human into a fully robotic body. By waiting for several days after death while preserving the integrity of the brain's structure through cryogenics and new, experimental chemicals, it was discovered that most of the memories of life were wiped from the brain, thus giving the scientists a "fresh slate" of sorts to work with. It was much



easier to overlay data onto an existing human brain than to create a fully-functioning cybertronic matrix. The process took off like wildfire, with human brains being donated and sold to science, both legitimately and on the black market. Veritable armies of robotic security forces were constructed, physically superior to human beings in that they were infinitely reparable (in most cases) and capable of thinking and functioning independently of existing programming.

Unfortunately, all was not well in paradise. A few of the robots, it seemed, retained trace memories of their human lives. They weren't the "clean slates" that science had hoped they might be. The phenomenon began—seemingly spontaneously—in 2042, and over the next two years, thousands of robots rebelled against their masters, with many robots "committing suicide" by destroying their entire bodies in blast furnaces, or putting bullets through their still-human brains. A few left memoirs explaining their pain; in 2044 a collection of these memoirs were published under the title *Pain Without Soul: What It Means To Be a Robot*. The book became an instant bestseller, and set off rabid (and often violent) protests by human rights groups all over the world. By 2045 the U.S. government passed a human rights law prohibiting the implantation of human brains into robotic bodies; most other countries quickly followed suit. To this day it is illegal to implant a human brain into a robotic body. However, that's not to say that it doesn't happen. Certainly there are still cases of cybernetics pushed too far, or scientists or wealthy tycoons seeking immortality through the use of robotics. These practices, however, are illegal and carry a penalty of death for both the scientist performing the procedure, and for the robot in question. Megacorporations, however, have little regard for the laws of the U.S. (or any sovereign government, for that matter) and some still employ security forces that include robots possessed of human intellect. Such robots are carefully monitored for deviant behavior, and the black market brain industry is as strong as ever.

THE CYBERWEB

The Internet of the future is called the Cyberweb. In some ways it's just like the Internet we all know and love today; there are thousands upon thousands of sites filled with fan fiction, Hologrid information, hobbies, leisure, and less savory topics that parents don't want their children viewing. Access to the Cyberweb isn't quite the same as it once was, however; there isn't simple, available, and unlimited AOL service to every house. Most houses have a news terminal where they can access general and basic information filtered through the Corps. This news terminal also doubles as the late 21st-century version of a television set and radio.

New pornography laws have stopped the viewing of unapproved material in the home; to access anything more than general news, which Hologrids are playing at the local Holoplex, the Thursday night sitcoms, or your favorite soft rock music channel, one has to travel outside the home, to

either a library or licensed Pleasuredome. Personal websites are a thing of the past, though illegal BBS's do exist, accessible only to Cyber Cowboys or the lucky (or unfortunate, as the case may be) accidental Jacker.

Libraries are generally the same as they are today, except that new technologies have made the keeping of paper books obsolete. Even the most ancient and valuable books are generally scanned for public consumption; the value of such books is generally deemed to lie in the information contained within, not in the material the book was printed upon. Libraries no longer have shelves upon shelves of sweet-smelling, musty old books. Instead, one walks in to find rows upon rows of cubicles and computer terminals, from which users can access and read books on the web.

It is even possible to borrow books from the local library, just as it always was, though the issue of late fees is seldom a problem anymore. Since the entire world is Wired, one can have an e-book hooked into their home terminal for a period of time (generally around four weeks), where they can read and study at their leisure. When the borrowing period is up, access to the book automatically terminates; it seems that even in the future, bandwidth access is still problematic. However, this does solve the age-old problem of not being able to access a book that someone else is currently borrowing. Since all books are electronic files, it's easy to allow multiple users to access the same target file at once, provided that usage of an individual file is kept to certain maximum number of users. Of course, not all books are available for general public consumption. The Corps and government carefully monitor who reads what, and requests for books on the restricted list are met with extensive questioning and background checks.

Some of the wealthier and more prominent members of society, of course, don't suffer from this problem, and have unfettered access to libraries and resources of all types. Generally speaking, characters with a Resources score of 4 or more are considered to be in this minority, though if they routinely access arcane and forbidden documents on the Cyberweb, it very well might draw unwanted attention of a Sub-Terrestrial nature.

Of course, that's not the only valid use for the Cyberweb. All over the country there are so-called "pleasure domes" that specialize in any sort of wild fantasy one's little heart desires. Man or woman (or cyborg of indeterminate gender), the local pleasure dome can

provide any sensation you want, any fantasy, any past experiences you wish to relive, they can remember it for you, wholesale. For most people, this means paying the fee and entering a booth where they access (via the Cyberweb) a software program, which connects to a database, allowing the user to program any private fantasy they wish to indulge. When programming is complete, the Web-based software generates a complete holographic experience. Unfortunately, since the experience is holographic, sights and sounds are about all you get for your cash. It's sort of like the futuristic version of a peepshow. Some pleasure domes offer full virtual reality suits capable of providing sensory input to go along with the fantasies, but these are highly upscale and expensive places, and sadly, the technology to impart sensory information to non-cybernetic individuals is clunky by its nature. It's not as good as the real thing.

For those who happen to have jacks in their heads, however, it's a whole different story, and all pleasure domes have support for "jacking in."

INSIDE THE WEB: CYBERJACKING

The above information covers the average, ordinary citizen in late 21st century life. People like you and me still live their daily lives according to the same old grind: get up, kiss someone, eat breakfast, go to work, come home, eat dinner, go to bed, lather, rinse, and repeat. There are some, however, who by hook or by crook have managed to raise themselves above the normal daily grind—or at least, have managed to step sideways out of it. Those with Brain Chips can have their upgrade jacks modified (generally at very little charge) to plug directly into the Cyberweb. The most obvious advantage of plugging directly in is the capability to navigate the Cyberweb at the speed of thought, rather than the more clumsy manual navigation that the rest of the world has to endure. Beyond that is the capability of full sensory input. In other words, when you're jacked in, you're not just reading information, you're experiencing it. Smell, taste, sight, sound, touch...it's all available to the Cyber Cowboys, and anyone else with a jack in their head, for that matter.

Anyone who has a data jack installed in their brain (see Cybernetic Enhancement for details) can have it modified for compatibility with the Cyberweb. For these folks, holographic images aren't necessary. They take virtual reality to the next level, by literally connecting their brains to the Web and experiencing direct sensory input from the computer. To the uninitiated, watching a Jacker in

action is disconcerting at best. The person who is jacked into the system appears to be a catatonic, staring blankly into space, often with a look of pure ecstasy on their face. The computer does shut down most voluntary motor functions, such as speech and most aspects of muscle control (nobody who is jacked into a system is walking anywhere). For all intents and purposes, the consciousness of the cyberjacker becomes one with the Web.

Accessing approved areas of the Cyberweb isn't difficult; it requires a simple Willpower + Computers task to connect, followed by an Intelligence + Computers task to initiate the chosen program or access the desired data stream. With a Perception + Computers check, the jacker can even control his perception of the passage of time. If he has a few hours to kill, time perception can be set to pass just as it does in the real world, so he can leisurely absorb a good book, or experience whatever game he wishes to play in real time. If he so desires, however, the jacker can attempt to absorb time more quickly in the Web than in reality. Each success level on a difficult Perception + Computers check means that the jacker can absorb one hour of time within the Web for every minute that passes in the real world, and still keep track of the separate passages of time. However, failure on this roll means that the jacker loses complete track of time and jacks out several hours later than he had intended to.

Some jackers become addicted to the purity and intensity of the sensations within the Cyberweb, and deliberately turn off the passage of time to experience unfettered ecstasy within the Web. This is dangerous and has resulted in many deaths; like any drug, a little grows into more and more as the initial dose wasn't enough to satisfy the user anymore. For this reason, many pleasure domes now set timers on their fantasy settings, which force the user to jack out for at least a moment, so he can be aware of the time and of any needs his body may have, such as food. Still, the world is littered with Cyber-junkies who spend all the money they have on pleasure domes, and then engage in illegal activities for their next fix. It's not a happy situation, all around.

That's the situation for your average man-on-the-street with a jack in his head. It's not the way it works for the Cyber Cowboys. These are the people who have more important things to do than waste their time in the Web on cheap pleasures and old memories. Cyber Cowboys have established their own domain within the Web, known informally as the Range. The Range, and the

men and women who ride it, are not approved in any way by the authorities or by the MegaCorps whose systems they infiltrate for the purpose of brokering information.

The Range could be thought of as a nexus point between the varied dimensions within Cyberspace. Each MegaCorp maintains its own intranet (heavily secured, of course) within the Web, which spans all of the servers in the world. The Web, in theory, is infinitely large, since it consists of every last byte of storage space in every last server anywhere, and new servers are wired in on a daily basis, even as old ones disappear. The Range is sort of the space between used sectors on the Web as a whole. Not a great explanation, but it'll have to do. The Cyber Cowboys (and Cowgirls; let's not be sexist) surf and ride the data streams between intranets, wheeling and dealing as they do so. The Range is their domain, and there're no limits to the possibilities within. To access the Range, the Cyber Cowboy must make a Very Difficult Willpower + Computers roll (-3) to find the gateway, and then simply project himself in. Amateur jackers who achieve more than 6 successes on a Willpower + Computers roll may accidentally find the gate (or deliberately, if they're searching for it), after which, if they survive the initial experience, they too can access the Range at will.

So what does it look like, riding the Range? It looks like whatever you think it should. The Cyber Cowboy's subconscious mind creates the landscape of the Range, so generally what he sees is a reflection of whatever is inside his soul. The Range could look like a desolate, nuclear-war-torn wasteland to one Cowboy, like a teeming modern metropolis to a second, and like an old West boomtown to a third. The only thing that the Cowboy's subconscious doesn't control is the appearance of the other people and entities within the Range. This is determined by the individual consciousnesses within the Web; everyone sets their own appearance. Cowboy number one determines his own appearance, as do Cowboys numbers two and three. So Cowboy number two in his teeming metropolis meets up with Cowboys one and three. Two looks like a cyber samurai, all cybered out. One looks like an urchin, in torn clothes, with a gleaming, serrated knife at his side. Three looks like an old style cowboy complete with Stetson Hat and duster. The appearance of other figures in the landscape of the Range is often a good tip off to what they see (though some of the more eccentric characters' landscapes are probably best left unhinted at).



As great as it sounds, though, the Range is not without its dangers. The first and most serious danger is the same as the greatest benefit: the other Cowboys. All too often there's someone out there looking for information that you have, and if you've got what they want, likely they know it, just like you likely know it when they've got what you want. Some will be willing to deal for the information. Others just want to take it. Battles between Cyber Cowboys within the Range can be brutal and not pretty; in the early days there are legends of massive crashes of Intranets throughout the world because of a particularly nasty battle. All the same, it's usually easier to get what you want from another Cowboy if you can than it is to try and infiltrate the Intranet of Wolfram and Hart, Inc., or any other MegaCorporate Intranet out there. That's because of IC.

IC is short for "Intrusion Countermeasures," and is what the Corps call Firewalls. Cyber Cowboys use the terms "Firewall" and "IC" fairly interchangeably. Firewalls are exactly what those in the know about computers today expect them to be. They're security programs designed to keep out hackers. Cyber Cowboys are those hackers. But Firewalls and IC take on a whole new meaning when you're hacking with your own consciousness. Firewalls are measured in terms of their hardness, usually expressed in a number between 1 and 5, with 1 being the weakest and most harmless, and 5 being deadly, in the literal sense of the word. Cyber Cowboys don't tend to fear level 1 Firewalls much; generally speaking, they are used to protect non-important and non-classified files. Level 1 Firewalls, if not properly bypassed, do little more than send an alert to the system administrator, who may decide to engage harsher security measures, or may simply sit and observe, taking stock of the invader for future reference. For an experienced Cyber Cowboy, however, Level 1 Firewalls aren't difficult to bypass. It's amateurs that get in

trouble with these puppies, generally because they don't see them, at least not in time to bypass.

Level 2 Firewalls kick the Cowboy out of the Intranet in question, generally after a brief but taxing battle of wills. System for battling within the Cyberweb follows this section.

Level 3 Firewalls physically disconnect the Cowboy from the Web, which generally results in bioelectric feedback which can cause physical damage and/or render the Cowboy unconscious.

Level 4 Firewalls are bio-feedback programs that deal physical as well as mental damage, but are designed only to guard, not kill unless necessary.

Level 5 Firewalls are the most feared, and the ones that are the most difficult to bypass. Level 5 Firewalls will not only attack and cause physical damage, they cut off

the Cowboy's ability to return his consciousness to his body, and pursue the battle until either the Cowboy is dead or the Firewall is crashed. The final danger within the Cyberweb is that of independent AIs. There are living within the web people who have permanently transferred their intelligences to the Web, demons who have been summoned to the Net and trapped there (see the Season 1 episode "I Robot, You Jane" for an example of this), and Cyber Cowboys who have become trapped through forcible disconnects. All-in-all, the Range is a Cyber Cowboy's paradise and worst nightmare, all rolled into one. Wise Cowboys mind their own business and build a wide network of contacts within the Web as quickly as possible.

CYBER COMBAT

Inevitably, a Cyber Cowboy within the Web must infiltrate an Intranet, do battle with another Cyber Cowboy, or fend off an independent AI that lives within the Range. When this happens, he engages in Cyber Combat. Cyber Combat works identically to real, physical combat, with one exception. Within the Cyberweb, all a Cyber Cowboy has to rely upon is his mind and wits. Thus, all physical attributes are replaced with mental ones. Strength becomes Intelligence, Dexterity becomes Perception, and Constitution becomes Willpower. Nice how that works, isn't it?

Virtual Weaponry is also dependent upon the mental fortitude of the Cyber Cowboy in question. Average all of the mental attributes of the Cast Member. Those whose attributes average 2, have the equivalent of a knife in the Range. Attributes of 3 are the equivalent of a Big Knife. Attributes of 4 equate to a sword, and a score of 5 or greater means the character has something the equivalent of a Big Ass Sword when in the virtual world of the Range. Further, the character can fire bursts of mental energy that inflict the character's Willpower in damage for each success level on a Perception + Gun Fu roll. These "bursts" should be tailored to a character's appearance, so a cowboy will appear to fire a six shooter, while a medieval knight will shoot a crossbow.



Sometimes a Cowboy may be losing a battle (which may be evident to his companions due to bleeding from orifices that blood shouldn't come from, or spasmodic jerking at the terminal) and his comrades might wish to try and save him by pulling the plug to get him out. Attempting to forcibly disconnect a Cowboy from the Web while he is engaged in battle with a Firewall or other entity is generally a very deadly option; the Cowboy in question must make a Survival Test, modified by the level of difficulty of the Firewall, or by the Willpower of his opponent (so an opponent with a Willpower of 4 would result in a -4 to the Cowboy's Survival Test, and a Level 5 Firewall would result in a -5), and if he fails, his body dies immediately, and his consciousness is

forever trapped within the Range...if it survives the battle with the Firewall or other entity, that is.

Statistics for Cyberweb entities, AIs, and Firewalls are no different than statistics for any other Supporting Cast Member; use a Quick Sheet, and go. Since we're abstracting things, go ahead and use the Combat Score, just to keep things simple. Generally speaking, Level 2 Firewalls are equivalent to Vampire Minions (page 170, *Core Rulebook*); Level 3 Firewalls are equivalent of Vampire Veterans (P. 170, *Core Rulebook*); Level 4 Firewalls are equivalent to Vampire Lieutenants (P. 171, *Core Rulebook*); and Level 5 Firewalls are equivalent to a Sister of Jhe (p. 178, *Core Rulebook*) or Angelus (p. 188, *Core Rulebook*). The worst of the Level 5 Firewalls, the ones that even experienced Cyber Cowboys won't take on, are on the level of Adam (p. 190) or even Glory (p. 191). Note that the examples above apply to statistics and not appearance, motivation, etc, which should be tailored to your own individual tastes as Director.

AVOIDING IC

Sometimes you want to break in without attracting attention to yourself at all. The best hackers become experts at avoiding Firewalls. The system for avoiding a Firewall involves 2 steps; detecting the Firewall and avoiding it. Detection of the Firewall requires a Perception + Notice check, with a number of successes equal to the level of the Firewall. Avoiding the Firewall requires first a successful detection, and then a Perception + Crime roll with a number of successes equal to the level of the Firewall, plus 3. So a Level one Firewall requires four successes to avoid, while a Level Five Firewall requires eight. Firewalls are tricky business and not for amateurs to toy with.

History of the Future

TIMELINE OF FUTURE EVENTS

2003: The existence of a mysterious third slayer, Katrina Donovan, is revealed in the city of Pittsburgh, PA, when she disappears in a cataclysmic battle to stop a Great Old One from arising through that city's Hellmouth. No new Slayer is called. This same year, Buffy Summers permanently closes the Sunnydale Hellmouth, and Faith is released from prison during the LA Apocalypse.

2005: the Pittsburgh Hellmouth opens. Demons pour into the world. The Initiative dispatches 'sweep and clean' teams that quickly overrun the town.

2010: A state of insurrection is declared in Pittsburgh, and the city is placed under military (specifically, Initiative) jurisdiction. The world can no longer deny the existence of the supernatural. Other Hellmouths begin to open as a result of widespread occultism. Both Buffy and Faith arrive in Pittsburgh. Buffy dies in battle this year, Faith two years later. No new Slayer is called; the newly-rebuilt Watcher's Council is without purpose and falls once again into ruin.

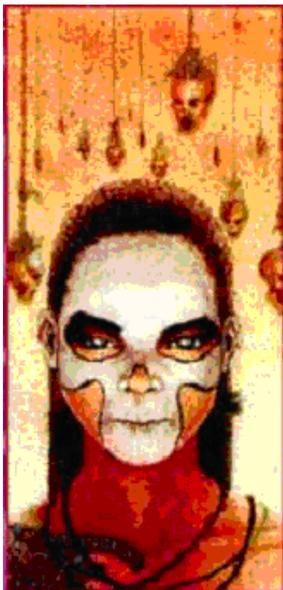
2015: Governments all over the world put their differences aside in an effort to deal with the threat from beyond. The organization formerly known as the Initiative is established as a separate, fifth branch of the United States Armed Forces, known as the Terrestrial Defense Initiative, or TDI. Like the Marines, the TDI is placed under the direct authority of the President. Its initial efforts to battle the HST threat are unsuccessful, but within three years' time, several open Hellmouths are successfully plugged. Unfortunately, demons quietly begin to infiltrate upper management of various large corporations. In Los Angeles, Wolfram and Hart arises from the ashes of its 2003 destruction and begins to become a force in world politics and economics.



2020: The first cybernetic implants, prosthetic limbs, are introduced onto the market by Sony Corporation. Sony

subsequently becomes a major supplier of military technologies, and buys out a number of lesser technology corporations. That same year, Microsoft buys out Apple computers and pioneers brain chip enhancement technology. At first the technology is marketed as the new wave in virtual reality, but soon other scientific and military applications become apparent.

2025: Microsoft and Sony in conjunction develop robotics and cybernetics technology in ways previously thought impossible. During this period the CyberWeb comes into existence, as does the concept of "Jacking In." The technology revolutionizes entertainment, and FOX Networks become the primary, state-sponsored source for news and home video entertainment. Within a year, NBC and CBS will rise to megacorporate status themselves, but ABC will disappear, absorbed by the other three. Robots take over many mundane jobs, putting millions out of work. Microsoft discovers the secret to preserving the human brain after death, and its new medical technology branch successfully transplants a human brain into a fully robotic body. The rich get richer, the poor get poorer. Wofram and Hart, Inc, hires the first private security forces amid rumors that the company uses demons for private security. The theft of billions of dollars worth of trade and tech secrets from Microsoft leads that company to establish its own private security force. Blame is laid upon Sony Corp, and the first corporate wars begin. The TDI discovers the mysteriously preserved (and living) body of Katrina Donovan buried near the juncture of the three rivers in Pittsburgh. The discovery answers the mystery as to why no new Slayer has been called since her disappearance.



2026: Through the process of "flatlining," the TDI creates a veritable army of Slayers by using medical technology to kill each new girl for a period of 2 seconds, thereby calling a new Slayer. By the end of the year, over 200 Slayers are spread throughout the world.

2028: There are now well over 1000 Slayers in existence, but approximately 35% of these have gone bad, renegade, or rogue. Those

who have maintained their calling begin a campaign to destroy the renegades. During the wars, more slayers fall, and still more are called. The Slayer Wars last for nearly a year, and cause billions of dollars in property damage and loss of life.

2029: A massive backlash of mystical energy erupts from every Hellmouth throughout the world. 95% of the Slayers throughout the world are instantly killed, with no replacements called. In addition, several major cities, including Washington DC, Detroit, New York, and Los Angeles, are all but laid waste. Rebuilding takes 15 years. The Slayer Wars come to a bloody and abrupt end, and the Slayer line is forever altered. To this day there are approximately fifty Slayers active throughout the world.

2030: Over a hundred Mega Corporations exist throughout the world, each one built upon the blood and sweat of another, and most with demons pulling the strings. Most are in the business of scientific and technical development, but MegaCorps exist in the entertainment industry, food service industry, transportation industry, and even military supply. The word "monopoly" is no longer used in reference to criminal activity, but as a fact of every day life, with each corporation trying to upstage its competition, even if it means bloodshed and sabotage. The competition between the companies is good for the world economy in the numbers, but bad for the common man. Every city now consists of approximately 40% slum areas. The New Yen is officially announced as the worldwide monetary standard. Government efforts to sanction and control monopolies fail utterly in the face of Megacorporate security forces, and more than one government liaison to these corporations has their head returned to the government in a box.

2035: Jermaine Alberts is elected to the office of President of the United States. That year, he uncovers a conspiracy within the TDI to stage a military coup of the government. Whispers on the street are that Alberts is a pawn of supernatural forces, and the conspiracy is trumped up. Several leaders among the TDI are executed as traitors; others disappear into the underground to continue their battle against the forces of darkness.

2040: "Creative Thought" technology produces human-brained robots that make up approximately 75% of the skilled labor forces in the country. The first robotic rebellions are recorded this year.

2042-2045: The major events of these years are recorded under the "Robotics and Humanity" section. Corporate espionage increases by 150% these years.

2045-2060: No major developments; the world remains relatively stable.

2065: The world sees a resurgence of archaic technologies this year, which includes old-style console video game systems, automotive technology, and even street weapons such as handguns. Speculation is that demons are feeding the barbaric ways back to the poor in the hopes that bloodshed will be at a maximum. There is a combination sense of nostalgia, and violence as a result.

2070: Police forces become a thing of the past this year, as the L.A.P.D., the last holdout of the old ways, is disbanded in favor of Wolfram and Hart, Inc's private security force. Now, throughout the world, megacorporations provide security and law enforcement for the world at large, and laws and efficacy of their enforcement vary from district to district, dependent upon the corporation in control of the area. Many MegaCorps actively employ vampires and demons in their

security forces, and these tend to feed without compunction on the people they are supposed to be defending. The TDI is active in the underground of most cities, and Slayers are often mobile and solitary. Watchers still exist, but are no longer a highly organized force as they once were; they now consist of a loosely organized group of men and women who swear their oaths to support the line of Slayers and continue the fight against evil. Not every Slayer has a Watcher.

2076: The present day. In practice if not in name, MegaCorps are the ruling force in the world, approximately half of every city consists of slum areas, and demons control many of the world governments, and most of the world's corporate masters. Most of the material dimensions in the multiverse consider Earth to once again be a Hell Dimension, and humanity struggles to eke out its place in the new order.